

TAALLN401A

Address language, literacy and numeracy  
issues within learning and assessment practice

Learner  
Guide





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Extracts of the following resources have been included with permission from the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), the copyright owner.

- *Make It Real: Workplace assessment strategies for Language, Literacy and Numeracy*, National Assessors and Workplace Trainers, 2002.
- *Frequently asked questions about language, literacy and numeracy issues in the Australian Quality Training Framework*, Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), 2002.
- *NRS Indications: Workplace pre-training assessment of language, literacy and numeracy skills using the National Reporting System*, DEST, 2000.
- *Built In Not Bolted On*, ANTA, 2000.
- *A New Assessment Tool*, ANTA, 1998.
- *Assessment Materials Development for Literacy and Numeracy Identification and Outcomes Reporting in Vocational Education and Training*, DEST, 1997.
- *Non-formal Literacy Placement Assessment in VET*, DEST, 2003.

## Learner Guide 1

Extracts from the following resources have been included with permission from the Queensland Department of Employment and Training (Qld DET).

- *Understanding and applying vocational language, literacy and numeracy within the Australian Quality Training Framework*, Qld DET, 2002.
- *Literacy Matters – Integrating Language, Literacy and Numeracy with Vocational Training*, Tropic Education and Training Consultants, Qld DET.

## Introduction 4

Before you begin 5  
Context 5  
Your background and experience 5  
Pathways 5  
Icons 6  
Compiling your own resources 6  
Glossary 6

## Assessment 7

Assessment requirements 7  
Negotiating assessment 8  
Suggested assessment activities 8

## Learning Topics 9

### 1. Where do I start? 10

What is LLN? 10  
Communication and LLN 11  
What is the LLN obligation for training organisations? 13  
Which AQTF standards apply to LLN? 13  
Which is the most relevant AQTF standard for LLN? 14  
Where does LLN fit in vocational training? 14

### 2. How do I get the balance right? 16

What is known about the LLN skills of Australians? 17  
Adult learning styles 18  
Create a comfortable learning environment 19  
How do I work out the learner's LLN levels? 20

### 3. What tools can help me? 21

Validated tools and other sources of information 21  
Semi-formal methods 22  
Non-formal methods 22  
Formal language tests and indicators 24  
The NRS 25  
Parts of the NRS 26  
Levels of performance in the NRS 29  
Determining a learner's LLN skill levels 33  
Which LLN skills are required in the training specification? 33  
Accuracy and performance 36

Which LLN skills are required to successfully participate in training? 40  
LLN in assessment materials 42

### 4. How does it affect me? 44

Your LLN skills at work as a trainer and/or assessor 44  
Other support strategies 51  
Specific preparation for assessment 59

### 5. Where do I go for help? 63

Why get help? 63  
When do I get help? 63  
How do I find who can help? 64  
Types of help 64

## Extras 70

### Glossary 70

### Resources 72

Websites 72  
Publications 73  
Video/DVD 73

### Appendices 74

# Introduction

Language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills are used every day by all people for a range of reasons – personal, social and work. The skills required differ according to the reasons for using them. Every single learner who engages in vocational training will be taking on LLN challenges or, at the very least, will be using existing skills in different ways. Your role as a trainer is to assist learners to adapt their skills to suit new environments, training and the workplace.

This Learner Guide supports *TAALLN401A Address language, literacy and numeracy issues within learning and assessment practice*, an elective unit of competency in the *TAA40104 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment*.

This unit addresses the skills and knowledge that trainers and assessors must possess to provide appropriate instruction and assessment to learners with LLN needs within their vocational program, drawing on the expertise of relevant professionals as required. Relevant professionals include specialist adult LLN practitioners.

Competence in this unit does not indicate that a person is a qualified specialist adult LLN practitioner.

The content of this guide is based on the following elements from *TAALLN401A Address language, literacy and numeracy issues within learning and assessment practice*. By working through this guide and completing the learning and assessment tasks, you will develop the skills and knowledge to:

- determine the LLN requirements of workplace training specifications, the learning program and the assessment process
- draw on the assistance of specialist advice when required, and interpret and apply validated tools and other sources of information to determine the LLN skill levels
- develop vocational learning program and assessment methodology to take account of learner's LLN skill levels and those required in the training specification
- deliver and monitor a vocational learning and assessment program that takes account of learner's LLN skill levels and those required in the training specification
- access specialist learning support where required on the basis of evidence.

## Before you begin

To help you work through this resource, make sure you read the:

- *Introduction to the Learner Guides*, a separate resource that outlines general information for learners
- unit of competency *TAALLN401A Address language, literacy and numeracy issues within learning and assessment practice*.

## Context

To complete this unit, you need to identify a training and assessment environment where you can access information and apply the skills that you are developing. This setting is called the practice environment throughout this resource.

## Your background and experience

This Learner Guide has been developed to support a range of different backgrounds, experiences, knowledge and skills in training and assessment. You may:

- be completing this unit alone as part of a professional development program to develop skills in addressing LLN within learning and assessment practice
- be completing this unit as an elective in the *TAA40104 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment*
- be an experienced trainer and want to gain certification of your existing competence in addressing LLN within learning and assessment practice
- have never trained, but have a trade or an area of vocational competence and/or subject matter expertise and want to move into the training field as a new career.

## Pathways

Knowledge about LLN is no longer just about a set of specialist skills. All those who deliver and assess in vocational education and training (VET) need an understanding of how these skills are used in the training and assessment practice environment and functionally within the workplace. That is why the unit *TAALLN401A Address language, literacy and numeracy issues within learning and assessment practice* has been included within the *TAA40104 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment*.

This Learner Guide is designed to be contextualised or adapted to support your needs. How you use it will depend on your background in training and assessment and the mode of delivery.

If you have experience in training and assessment, and in LLN, you may negotiate the assessment activities with your trainer and/or assessor without completing the Learning Topics.

If you have limited experience in the area covered by this guide, you may work through all or some of the Learning Topics and complete the assessment activities.

Your facilitator will help you map out an appropriate learning pathway to suit your needs and negotiate evidence gathering for assessment.

## Icons

This guide uses a series of icons that will help you through the learning program.



This icon prompts you to consider a matter. Your facilitator may ask you to:

- reflect on your own work – what you do now and how it can be extended or improved
- discuss a topic with a group, a colleague or with your facilitator
- make notes for your Resources Pack.



This icon directs you to suggested resources to assist you, including:

- websites
- journals
- books
- people and groups
- policies and procedures.

Note that websites can change from time to time.

If you are unable to access a website, use a search engine. If you can access the website, but cannot find a document in it, search for it using the website's search engine or sitemap.



This icon indicates an activity that, once completed, can form part of your portfolio of evidence for assessment. You could also use these activities to get feedback from your facilitator about your progress.

## Compiling your own resources

Accompanying this Learner Guide is a Resources Pack that includes information and resources which are useful in addressing LLN within learning and assessment practice. It is designed to form the basis of a kit that can become your resource companion. It has a pocket at the back for you to add information that will assist you with your own professional development.

Start adding to this Resources Pack as you work through this Learner Guide. What you decide to put in this pack will depend on your own purposes. You may include, for example, information that you print out or 'bookmark' from websites, customised learning/assessment activities, checklists, information about changes in your industry and specific policies or procedures.

This Resources Pack is for your own professional development and is different to any file that you may keep for assessment purposes, although some resources may be included in both.

## Glossary

A general glossary of training and assessment terms is included in the *Introduction to the Learner Guides*. Use the glossary to clarify the meaning of any training and assessment terms used in this Learner Guide.

An additional glossary of LLN terminology is included at the end of this guide.

# Assessment

## Assessment requirements

To demonstrate competence in this unit, you must be able to provide evidence that you have the required knowledge and skill to create a supportive learning environment for your learners, and have a range of appropriate strategies to adjust your practice to accommodate their LLN needs.

Assessment is based on observation, documentary evidence of planning and training activities, and oral questioning and reflection.

Specific evidence must include:

- documentation setting out activities
- resources and individual learning plans for a particular learner.

It should also include third party observations of your work with a range of learners.

The evidence that you provide to show competence must be gathered in the workplace, or where no workplace is available, through a simulated workplace. The evidence must relate to a number of different performances assessed at different points in

time. In a learning and assessment pathway, these assessments must be separated by further learning and practice.

You may complete assessment activities specific to this unit or this unit can be assessed as part of an integrated assessment activity involving other relevant units in the *TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package*. Suggested units include, but are not limited to:

- *TAAENV401A Work effectively in vocational education and training*
- *TAAENV402A Foster and promote an inclusive learning culture*
- *TAADEL401A Plan and organise group-based delivery*
- *TAADEL402A Facilitate group-based learning*
- *TAADEL403A Facilitate individual learning*
- *TAADEL404A Facilitate work-based learning*
- *TAADEL405A Coordinate and facilitate distance-based learning*
- *TAAASS401A Plan and organise assessment*

- *TAAASS402A Assess competence*
- *TAAASS403A Develop assessment tools*
- *TAAASS404A Participate in assessment validation.*

## Negotiating assessment

You and your assessor need to negotiate how you will complete appropriate and sufficient assessment to demonstrate competence, reflecting the scope of the role as indicated in all components of this unit of competency.

Completion of the suggested activities will contribute towards your assessment. They are not necessarily the total assessment requirements for this unit.

## Suggested assessment activities

Below are some suggestions for activities to be used as assessment evidence. You are encouraged to negotiate activities with your assessor that are relevant to your practice environment and/or future work roles.

### Portfolio of evidence

Assemble a portfolio of resources to address LLN issues in training and assessment within your practice environment. A template is included in Appendix 1 of this guide to help plan the evidence you will present.

This means finding, developing or modifying resources that are relevant to your training and assessment practice and your learners. For example, the portfolio may include:

- observation checklists or video recordings of your training and assessment practice where you address LLN issues
- third party reports about your training and assessment practice where you address LLN issues

- learning and/or assessment resources designed for a specific audience
- analysis of the LLN within units of competency or job tasks
- analysis of a learner's LLN competence against the National Reporting System (NRS)
- a journal reflecting on your training and assessment practice where you address LLN issues
- completed activities from this guide.

### Presentation

Make a presentation to an assessor (perhaps as you would to a new member of staff) and explain how you would use each of the resources in your portfolio. Alternatively, explain the approach you would take to meeting the LLN needs of a learner or a group of learners.

### Recognition

A self-assessment tool produced by Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) will allow you

to conduct a self-assessment of your skills against the unit of competency. By completing this tool, you can determine whether you have the skills to seek recognition of your competence.

The self-assessment tool is available from IBSA at <[www.ibsa.org.au](http://www.ibsa.org.au)>.

There are also many other useful resources to help you through the recognition process. Investigate what is available in your state or territory through your state training authority.



# Learning Topics

This section includes a number of Learning Topics, each containing background information and activities. Speak to your facilitator to determine which topics you need to complete. Some of the activities may be contextualised to suit your needs. These activities can be used as evidence for assessment.

This Learner Guide covers the following topics.

- Where do I start?
- How do I get the balance right?
- What tools can help me?
- How does it affect me?
- Where do I go for help?

# Where do I start?

## What is LLN?

LLN underpins all aspects of our lives, and the types of LLN we use depend on the circumstances in which we are operating. The language we use to speak to family members, for example, will be different from the language we use when speaking to an employer. In the same way, people need to use different literacy skills when reading a book compared with, for example, reading customer specifications for building a barbeque.

Have a look at the following definitions and then think about how these skills are used in a workplace.

### Language

Language commonly refers to spoken words. Language involves listening as well as using verbal and non-verbal forms of communication, such as gestures and body movements. Together these enable people to communicate meaningfully with each other.

Language can be:

- English words, verbal structures and gestures used to convey meaning
- first or Indigenous language
- languages other than English
- forms of communication based on visual communication skills, such as Australian Sign Language (AUSLAN).

Workplaces also have their own particular languages.

### Literacy

Literacy can be defined as:

*'The ability to read and use written information as well as to write appropriately, in a range of contexts. Literacy also includes numeracy, such as recognition and use of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text. Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing.'*

Source: Workplace English Language and Literacy Programme, 2001 Guidelines and Application Kit, p 13.

Although this definition of literacy encompasses spoken and written text as well as numeracy, in its more common usage literacy refers to the ability to read and write. It is also the ability to use higher order skills of thinking about what is read in a written text, the background of the text and how the text is used.

*'To be literate in a workplace means being master of a complex set of rules and strategies which govern who uses texts, and how, and for what purpose. (To be literate is to know)...when to speak, when to be quiet, when to write, when to reveal what was written and when and how to respond to texts already written.'*

Source: Hull, G. (1995) 'Controlling Literacy: the place of skills in 'High Performance' work' in Critical Forum 3 (II&III), pp 3-26.



**What do you think about this quote? Does Hull make a valid point?**



The definition of literacy is often contested. To read more about the definition of literacy, see the paper titled *Literacy in the new millennium* at <[www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1490.html](http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1490.html)>.



How do you think literacy should be defined?

### Numeracy

Numeracy involves the practical application of mathematical skills to absorb, use and critically evaluate information in numerical or graphical form.

Depending on the context, this can include basic number skills, spatial and graphical concepts, use of measurement and problem solving. Numeracy may also involve literacy, for example, when extracting mathematical information from written text.

Numeracy also covers everyday tasks, for example, counting money, calculating numbers, estimating weights and distances, and using measures of time.

In the workplace, communication is integral to getting the job done. Communication is a part of key processes within the workplace, such as recruitment, reading or using standard operating procedures, teamwork, providing instructions or feedback, and organising workloads and scheduling.

In most instances the communication skills used are so closely connected to the skills of a specific job that they are not thought of as separate LLN tasks. Reading a workplace memo and deciding what needs to be done is easily identified as a reading task, but LLN skills can be overlooked in tasks such as checking customer accounts, calculating the amount of paint needed on a job, loading a furniture van or adding chemicals to mixing vats. It may be easier when trying to identify LLN within the workplace to think in general about workplace communication and then unpack, identify and examine more specific tasks, such as reading, writing or speaking.

How LLN skills are used in a training and assessment setting will differ from how they are used in a workplace.

As a trainer and/or assessor, you will need to read Training Package competencies, write assessment tools, provide verbal feedback to learners, present training sessions and write and assemble learning materials. You place LLN demands on your learners when you expect them to read background material on key knowledge or skill areas, discuss their learning in groups, or complete assignments as part of the learning program. Assessments that ask for written answers of any kind require both reading and writing skills. Verbal questioning for the purposes of assessment or checking a learner's understanding requires both listening and speaking skills.

In addition, the skill of working out what to do with information that is read or heard, and whether and how to convey a message to someone else – the skill of critical thinking – is a fundamental skill to

a worker and a learner. It requires a judgement to be made about what to do with information once it has been received and analysed.

As a trainer and/or assessor, you need to be aware of the LLN skills required within the workplace, and the units of competency in which your learners are being trained and assessed. This way, your learners acquire the correct workplace communication skills so they succeed in the vocational training environment. It is important to keep up with theoretical industry knowledge as well as current workplace practices to maintain vocational currency.

## Snippet

### Literacy in a horticulture workplace and training setting

Stephanie listened to the instructions that the on the job supervisor gave.

“Those Malus domesticas down the back of the propagation area are going to be espaliered. You need to prune them to get the cordons established and then guy them to keep them flat against the wall.”

In Stephanie’s class at TAFE, the trainer explained:

“Espalier trees or shrubs are trained to grow flat against a trellis, a wall or a fence. They rely on ‘cordons’ to carry the growth upwards. Have a look at this diagram to see what I mean.”

Stephanie looked at the diagram and wished she’d had the diagram at work – it would have helped her prune the vines with much more confidence. The diagram clearly explained the names of the parts of the plant that she was overwhelmed by initially.



Think about what literacy means in your vocational area. Discuss with a colleague.

## Snippet

### Language of a workplace

Cameron was building a small table with Jason, a trainee who had started with the company a few days before.

“Grab me a couple of biscuits from the back shelf, will ya Jason?”

“No worries!” said Jason. Jason returned with the whole packet of chocolate biscuits just in case Cameron was hungry.

Cameron looked up and had to suppress his smile. “Sorry mate, I should’ve explained that biscuits can also be the small disks that are put into a horizontal joint for strength. Come and I’ll show you.”



What terms, phrases, jargon, or acronyms (letters that stand for phrases, for example VET stands for vocational education and training, SOP stands for standard operating procedure) are used in your vocational area?

## Activity

### LLN of your practice environment

Think about LLN within your practice environment. Make a list of the language that is particular to the vocational setting.

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Think about the language of training and assessment. Have you come across words that you use in your training and assessment practice that others interpret differently? For example, what is your interpretation of 'flexible delivery'?

## What is the LLN obligation for training organisations?

For VET to provide relevant skills for learners that result in effective workers, there has been a national push to create a more relevant quality training delivery system. Because LLN skills are so central to workplace performance, they have been made an integral part of industry competencies. Trainers who deliver vocational training need to be aware of 'built-in' LLN within these competencies and address LLN within their training and assessment practice.

The process of understanding the relevant LLN for each Training Package or accredited course through detailed analysis involves finding the relevant LLN and determining the levels of complexity for this LLN.

The revised training standards, known as the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), include a 'built-in' LLN policy. Providing appropriate LLN identification, training and support is now an expectation within all vocational training. However, LLN issues are not just the responsibility of the trainer. The training organisation that employs trainers and

assessors has a role in providing policies and procedures that support learners' needs, including LLN.



The revised AQTF can be downloaded from [www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training\\_skills/policy\\_issues\\_reviews/key\\_issues/nts/aqtf/default.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/aqtf/default.htm).

## Which AQTF standards apply to LLN?

Some standards are explicit in their reference to LLN but others are less obvious.

### Standard 1

The requirements in systems for compliance with Registered Training Organisation (RTO) standards (1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 1.10). This standard covers getting all the documentation right about RTO policies and procedures.

### Standard 6

The access and equity issues surrounding LLN support and the explicit right of learners to access LLN assistance as required (6.1, 6.3 iv, v).

### Standard 7

The need to ensure a minimum skill level in unpacking LLN within a Training Package or accredited course as explicitly determined by equivalence to the current *TAA40104 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* (7.2, 7.3, 7.4).

### Standard 8

The need to ensure that assessment methodology, tasks and practice adhere to the explicit requirement for fairness (8.1 iv, viii).

### Standard 9

The requirement that needs of learners be identified, that the LLN of the vocational competence be addressed in training and that LLN demands of training not exceed those required of the job methodology (9, 9.2, 9.3).

## Which is the most relevant AQTF standard for LLN?

The most explicit standard about LLN in training and assessment practice is standard 9.



### Standard 9

The RTO identifies, negotiates, plans and implements appropriate learning and assessment strategies to meet the needs of each of its clients.

More information about the AQTF is included in the Learner Guide for *TAAENV401A Work effectively in vocational education and training*.

### Standard 9.3

The RTO must ensure that in developing, adapting or delivering training and/or assessment products and services:

- methods used to identify learning needs are documented
- LLN skills required are consistent with the workplace demands specified in the relevant units of competency or module and that these skills are developed in learners
- delivery modes and training and assessment materials that meet the needs of a diverse range of clients are identified.

## Activity



### AQTF in practice

How are the LLN requirements of the AQTF addressed in your practice environment? Are there policies and procedures within your practice environment to meet the requirements of standard 9.3? Collect any relevant information or guidelines.

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## Where does LLN fit in vocational training?

Learning a new skill is a complex and highly variable process. It involves drawing on a range of current experience and skills, being open to learning skills and applying these in a new environment. It can be an unsettling experience and it may take some time for learners to feel confident that their new skills are bedded down.

To gain new vocational skills, learners will draw on current LLN skills and build on them within the context of their training, work and industry. In many cases vocational learning will involve taking on new LLN skills, just as you have in this unit of competency. New LLN learning often involves skills and tasks that are not taught in school and are best learned as part of vocational training itself.

### LLN and the Australian Qualification Framework

Each vocational area has a unique set of reading, writing, communication and numeracy tasks that are part of everyday vocational tasks.

Some qualifications, such as engineering or refrigeration, have only limited writing demands at a Certificate IV level but require specific and complex numeracy, even at entry level. Other qualifications, such as business administration, may require increasingly difficult writing skills as the qualification level increases but limited numeracy demands at any level. Qualifications in retail are often very demanding in the speaking and listening area, but include reading and writing tasks at a lower level.

The skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and numeracy are most often at different levels within any particular qualification as well as across qualification levels. It is incorrect to assume that basic skills are required at lower Certificate levels and complex skills are only required at higher Certificate or Diploma levels. LLN skill does not progress in complexity against the progression of the Australian Qualification Framework. It depends on the application of the

**Activity**

specific skill within a particular unit of competency. Therefore, each qualification and the job tasks related to that qualification must be analysed for LLN skills. This analysis is part of the unpacking of a Training Package or accredited course and is essential information for the planning and delivery of any vocational training program.

**Cutting through the jargon**  
 Start a glossary of words and phrases that you would use with other trainers and assessors, but may not use with your learners. This will include words that may be familiar to you but are used differently in this Learner Guide, for example, text, unpack, or two words joined to describe a new concept, for example, practice environment, vocational area.

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**What is the role of the trainer in LLN?**

The development of relevant LLN skills at the appropriate level is part of vocational training and is an integral part of the training and assessment practices of every vocational trainer.

The trainer needs to ensure this LLN skill development occurs to maximise all learners' chances of a successful outcome against the training specification requirements.

To do this, all vocational trainers should:

- understand the LLN skills that need to be part of vocational training for all learners
- model the appropriate LLN skills as part of training for all learners
- evaluate training materials and methods for appropriate LLN levels
- allow their learners to practise the appropriate LLN skills included in training
- evaluate assessment tasks and methods for appropriate LLN levels

- develop LLN materials that are relevant to learners' needs within vocational training
- identify learners experiencing significant LLN difficulties who may need specialist assistance
- collaborate and communicate with LLN specialists who can undertake LLN assessments
- integrate any additional recommended LLN support with the vocational training through collaboration.

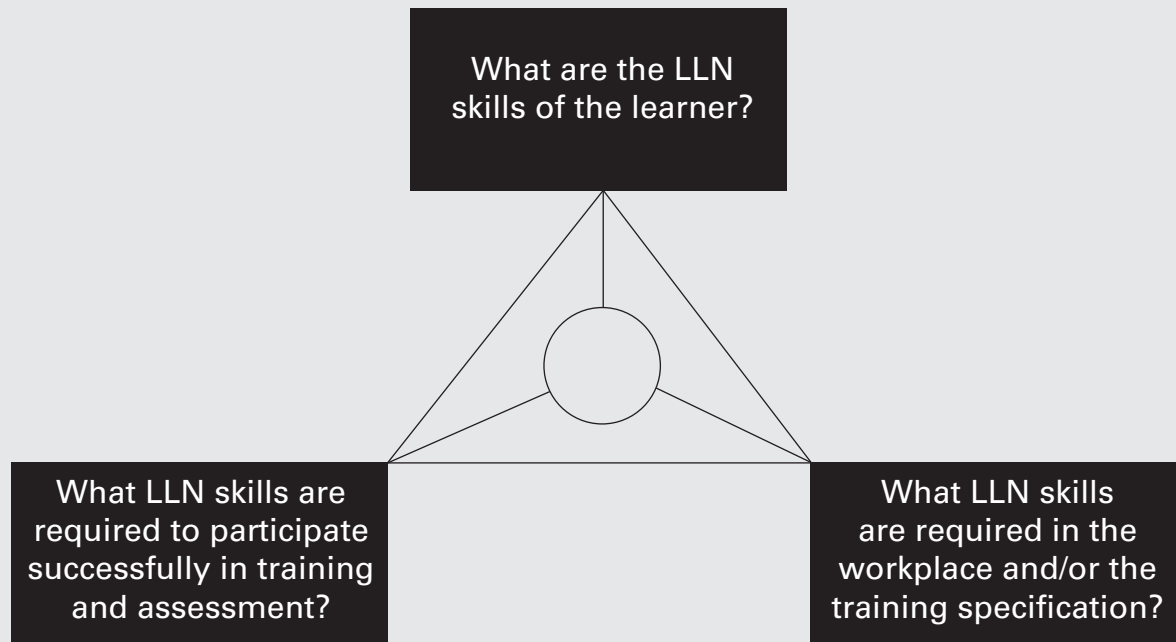
Each of these activities relies on:

- a clear understanding of LLN within vocational competence
- application of that LLN knowledge.

LLN knowledge is gained by trainers and/or assessors through a thorough examination of what learners have to learn, whether it is based on:

- a Training Package
- an accredited course
- other identified skills and knowledge.

# How do I get the balance right?



This diagram illustrates a challenge facing all trainers and assessors – keeping the LLN balance right in training and assessment practice. The challenge is to address all three points of the triangle so that a perfect balance is maintained between the learner's skill levels, the training skill levels and the workplace skill levels. To be able to maintain balance, trainers and assessors need to gather answers to the questions at each point of the triangle.



## What is known about the LLN skills of Australians?

The International Adult Literacy Survey conducted in 1996 showed that proportions of populations worldwide have inadequate literacy skills. Research has confirmed this is also the case in Australia.

The Australian Survey of Aspects of Literacy analysed the skills needed to process information from printed material at work, at home and in the community. Researchers found that in Australia:

- 19% of people could be expected to have considerable difficulties using printed materials in daily life
- 28% of people could be expected to have some difficulties in using many of the printed materials encountered in daily life
- 36% of people could cope with a range of printed materials found in daily life and at work
- 17% of people had good to very good literacy skills, with the ability to effectively use complex information processing skills.

Source: The International Adult Literacy Survey Coordinated by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Statistics Canada, 1996.

This research shows that the need for attention to LLN is widespread, and that it is not confined only to groups or individuals with special needs.

Based on this research, it can be assumed that almost 50% of learners in VET do not possess an adequate toolkit of basic LLN skills and concepts or the ability to apply those skills and concepts to their course of study. This means that, for training providers, up to 50% of their training (or even higher percentages in some industry areas, learner groups and activities) is at risk of being ineffective because of learners' inability to use and apply the skills they are being taught.

Each individual will have different requirements, including preferred learning styles. However, research also shows that some clients may be more likely to need LLN support than others. These clients may include:

- people whose first language is not English

- people who have been educationally disadvantaged, for example non-completion of an equivalent to compulsory schooling in Australia
- people in older age groups
- people whose training has been disrupted by disability
- males, in understanding and using information from various kinds of prose texts, and females from older age groups
- people who are unemployed
- people from specific cultural or ethnic groups
- people from an oral communication tradition
- people who have good English speaking and listening skills but low literacy
- people who have good skills in language background other than English, but who need to use English language in an Australian context.

You should consider your client profile to get a general indication of the LLN support that may be needed. Remember that there are no hard and fast rules about who will need support, and judgements about stereotypes should be avoided.



**How have you found out about your learners' backgrounds? When have your learners had difficulties with LLN? How have you found out about these difficulties?**

## Adult learning styles

It is also important to consider how your learners learn. There are several theories and models that explore the different ways that people learn. A popular model is that based on the work of Richard Bandler and John Grinder, who refer to visual, auditory and kinaesthetic approaches to learning. They say that visual learners learn through seeing, auditory learners learn through listening, and kinaesthetic learners learn through a hands-on approach where they can touch and move.

Some other theories include:

- multiple intelligences, developed by Howard Gardner
- left brain / right brain developed by Dr Roger Sperry
- 4-MAT System® based on the theories of David Kolb.

Understanding how your learners learn will inform how you go about teaching new information and concepts. Some groups may include learners with similar learning styles and others will include a mixture. But not everyone falls conveniently into

defined styles – learning styles can be fluid, depending on the environment, the group dynamic, the mood and the subject matter. Learners will use a range of styles, depending on the circumstances, but usually tend to prefer one style.

## Activity

### Learning styles

Investigate the material available on learning styles and think about your own learning style. The following websites would be good places to start:

- <<http://flexways.flexiblelearning.net.au/learning/index.asp>>
- <[www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1600.html](http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1600.html)>.

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How can you find out how your learners prefer to learn?

## Snippet

### Mixing the delivery strategies

Ikram was working with a new group of learners. He wasn't sure of the learning styles within the group, so he decided to mix his delivery strategies.

Ikram's first training session was to cover *SFIFISH209A Maintain the temperature of seafood* and his session plan included a mix of delivery methods. First he would give a short talk about the importance of maintaining the temperature of seafood and seafood products at appropriate levels on fishing vessels, and at all premises involved in the production, handling and distribution of seafood and seafood product.

After the talk Ikram would show a video to demonstrate the techniques used to maintain the temperature of seafood, including icing, preserving in chilled brine and freezing. He also had some sample materials to show the learners at this point.

Ikram would then break the larger group into small groups.

He would hand each group a written scenario that they would work on together to problem solve.

At the end of the session, Ikram would hand out some notes he had prepared on various ways that the temperature of seafood is maintained, for the learners to take home and read.



More information about preferred learning styles is available in the Learner Guide for *TAADEL401A Plan and organise group-based delivery*.

Understanding how your learners learn, together with understanding your learners' LLN requirements, will help you to identify particular strategies to support their learning. Be careful not to stereotype.

## Create a comfortable learning environment

Creating a comfortable environment to learn LLN skills is no different to creating a comfortable learning environment in general. This involves responding to learner needs, goals, skills and learning styles, including acknowledgment of different cultural beliefs.

To do this you need to get to know your learners and acknowledge and build on their existing strengths. The decision making responsibilities about a learning or assessment process should be shared with learners so they feel as if they 'own' it and are fully involved. By involving learners in this way, you will get rich feedback about their existing LLN skills.

Individual learning plans will allow you to track the development of learners' LLN skills alongside the skills required for competence. For some learners this may mean breaking down goals in the individual learning plan into smaller steps, suggesting learners develop personal word lists of language used in the workplace, or asking them to practise mental additions.

You may also make adjustments to your delivery for some groups by giving introductory sessions that include simplified explanations of underpinning principles and concepts. Support this through video or audio recordings for learners who need reinforcement of the material.

### Inclusive training

It is also important that the learning environment you create is inclusive of learners' different cultures. Provide opportunities for interactions between your learners to discuss any cultural differences that may exist, and develop understanding and respect for culturally based behaviours and values. Although not directly addressing LLN issues, an inclusive learning environment will help learners feel comfortable about being there.

## Snippet

### Direct and indirect questions

Tessa was working with a number of Indigenous learners who she knew weren't comfortable with being asked direct questions. Instead of asking "What does the plant look like?" she said "Tell me what the plant looks like. Tell me about the leaves and about how high it grows."

The learners then began discussing the appearance of the plant and Tessa observed their discussion.

These are some questions you will need to ask when you are conducting training in a culturally diverse classroom.

- Why is this person behaving or communicating in a different way?
- How might this person's culture be affecting behaviour?
- Are there other factors I need to consider?
- What do I need to do to get some common understanding?
- How can we all benefit from these differences in experience?



**What cultural factors exist in your practice environment? How can you respect and acknowledge these cultures?**



For further information about creating inclusive learning environments, see the Learner Guide for *TAAENV402A Foster and promote an inclusive learning culture*. Also refer to *Culture at Work*, a guide available at the Literacynet website at <[www.dest.gov.au/literacynet/resources1.htm#Language](http://www.dest.gov.au/literacynet/resources1.htm#Language)>.

## How do I work out the learner's LLN levels?

Learners come to VET with histories that shape them as individuals, community members and learners. When a person participates in on the job training, signs up for a traineeship or apprenticeship, or enrolls in a vocational course, it is useful to have an indication of whether that person has the language skills to engage in and successfully complete the training. However, there is no single measure of LLN that can indicate competence in a particular situation. An adult may be perfectly literate in one situation but struggle to communicate in another. Adults display a wide variety of skills that reflect their life experiences.

You can get a feel for and make judgments about learners' LLN levels by using a number of different validated tools and other sources of information.

# What tools can help me?

## Validated tools and other sources of information

Validation is an important aspect of training and assessment practice. It is important that the decisions you make about a learner's performance are based on fair, valid and reliable evidence. To ensure that your assessment of an individual's LLN is valid, make sure you use well thought-out, validated LLN assessment tools.

Validated LLN assessment tools can be used to:

- place people in appropriate learning environments
- monitor learners' progress and adjust support
- assess that what has been taught has been learned
- report outcomes to key stakeholders.

### Formal methods

There are various commercial literacy tests on the market. These are often directed at schools and used to test the developmental language learning of children. As such, they may not be appropriate for use in a vocational context with adults.

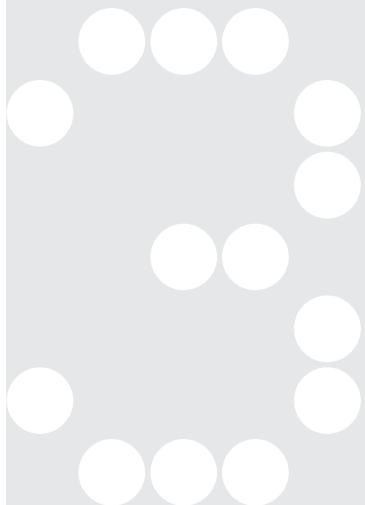
However, when customised or specially developed for a VET context and administered by skilled personnel, formal tests can have a place. They are sometimes used to screen learners before they enter a VET course, where particular LLN levels are set as an entry requirement. Remember that some learners who successfully complete LLN entry tests will still require ongoing support to develop the LLN skills of the specialist vocational area.

There is also a series of tests used to indicate the language proficiency of people who come from a background other than English. Further information is provided in the following section titled *Formal language tests and indicators*.

Note that formal tests given to learners who are not prepared usually result in poor performance that does not indicate true competence. They can also be extremely confronting for learners who have LLN difficulties.

Formal tests mean different things to different people. Some learners think that assessment has not occurred unless there has been a formal test, and others shy away from tests. This may be due to the learner's cultural background or past experiences.

If there is a genuine need to give a test, make sure learners know it will happen and are prepared.



## Snippet

### The written test

Liz welcomed the learners to the first training session and announced that she would start off by giving them a test to check what they already knew about customer service.

Shannon wasn't expecting a test. She looked through the pages and pages of multiple choice questions and felt overwhelmed at the amount of reading she had to do. She pushed her chair back, got up and walked out muttering "You can bang your test up your ...!"

Even though Liz was assessing specialist vocational industry knowledge (customer service) and not LLN directly, Shannon was still confronted by being unprepared for a formal test.



**Do you think a written test was the best way to assess learners' existing knowledge of customer service skills? What would have been a better way to find out what the learners already know?**

## Semi-formal methods

Semi-formal methods include benchmarking LLN performance of individuals against agreed external levels. In Australia the main benchmark document used is the NRS.

Benchmarking a learner's reading, writing, speaking and listening, and numeracy skills against external levels can provide you with reliable information if the tasks you ask the learner to do are culturally appropriate, unbiased, relevant to the context and specific to the training and assessment methodologies used.

## Snippet

### Using the NRS

Troung was attending a Language Literacy and Numeracy Programme (LLNP) in the west of the city when he decided to move interstate with his brother. Troung's teacher, an LLN specialist, arranged for him to join an LLNP class in Sydney and gave him a report to take with him to the new centre. It included NRS details that the new teacher would be able to interpret easily, continuing on where his previous teacher had left off.



**Is it useful to have a report that uses agreed terminology to describe a learner's skill set? How would such a report assist the learner and the new teacher?**

## Non-formal methods

Self-assessments, interviews, observations, third party reports and enrolment information are additional ways to get a picture of a learner's LLN skills.

You may decide to use less formal options to get a general sense about which learners are likely to need LLN support, and in which part of the training program this might be required.

Your organisation's enrolment processes may already involve some activities that collect useful LLN information, such as level of schooling achieved or examples of a learner's writing. The enrolment process may have included an interview where learners were given information about training, assessment and the learning environment. Learners may have been asked to offer information about their preferred learning styles, interests and future plans. These interviews can be used to cover a range of needs in training and assessment practice, including LLN.

## Snippet

### Observation of enrolment

Maria watched the new learners fill out the enrolment forms that she'd just passed around. Ollie slowly added the details of his name but needed to refer to a sheet that he had in his bag to add the details of his address to the form. Maria was concerned that this meant that Ollie might not be able to deal with the large amount of reading that was required in the course.

Later Maria had a talk to Ollie about his reading and writing skills. Ollie emphasised that he was able to read and write effectively. Maria wasn't convinced so she requested that a specialist conduct a literacy assessment to make sure that Ollie could cope with course materials.

The assessment showed that Ollie had well-developed LLN skills. Ollie did have some problems with writing due to a missing finger, and just a couple of days before he had moved into a new apartment and hadn't yet learnt the postcode.



**What are some of the repercussions of making ill-informed assumptions around LLN skills?**

Self-estimation of relevant skills is frequently a valid source of information, as few learners over-estimate their LLN abilities. Learners' attempts at relevant LLN tasks, when undertaken in a supportive environment, can also provide trainers with useful information. Through showing examples of required work, sample assessment tasks and discussing expectations, learners often disclose or indicate that they may have difficulties. Observations made in a training environment can also be really useful.

## Snippet

### Self-assessment

Pham announced at the beginning of the course that support was available for learners with particular needs. He asked anyone who thought they might need some assistance with the course to see him after the training session had finished.

Jack approached Pham afterwards and told him that he'd never been much good at school and had left as soon as he could. He found it really hard to read some things and was worried about being able to understand documents that he might have to read for the course.

Pham reassured Jack that he wasn't alone – three other learners had also indicated that they needed assistance. Pham invited Jack to a group meeting to discuss the types of support that may help and made a note to include the LLN support on the training plan.



**Have you asked learners to use self-assessment techniques in your training and assessment practice? What are the advantages and disadvantages of self-assessment?**

## Formal language tests and indicators

Learners in a VET setting from a background other than English may have undergone formal language testing in the past. They may present you with the results of these tests, in which case it is useful to have a basic understanding of what they are about.

### Language proficiency tests

There are a number of different tests used internationally to test English language proficiency. It is not important to know them all. However, you may come into contact with people who have undergone testing to comply with Australian Government immigration suitability, or by education and training course providers to determine their English language proficiency and course suitability.

The International Second Language Proficiency Rating (ISLPR) is the Australian Government approved assessment scale. People from overseas may have had an assessment using the International English Language Testing System

(IELTS) or Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

All of these tests are delivered by specialists or certified facilitators. At the end of each test, the applicant is given a rating that indicates a certain level of proficiency. The rating scales for each vary.

The ISLPR is the test used by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) for entry to the Adult Migrant English Program. All newly arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants who do not have functional English are provided with an entitlement of up to 510 hours of English language tuition, or the number of hours it takes to achieve a functional level of English, whichever comes first. Functional English is defined as level 2 on the ISLPR scale.

The IELTS is also recognised by the Australian Government as a test of English language proficiency for immigration purposes and is a prerequisite test to gain visa entry into Australia, particularly under the skilled

migration program. Applicants must have what is termed 'vocational English' or have made arrangements for their sponsor to help them improve their English up to this required level.

Students from overseas wanting to come to Australia to study may have also taken the TOEFL. The TOEFL is accepted by some Australian providers as an indicator of proficiency for admission into courses where instruction is in English.

The following table is an approximate comparison of the scores for each test.

Level	ISLPR	IELTS	TOEFL
Beginner English	0 to 1-	1 to 3	
Elementary English	1 to 1+	3 to 4	450 to 475
Intermediate English	1+ to 2	4 to 5	500
Advanced English	2 to 5	5 to 10	580 to 600

The point of these tests is that they are meaningful to those who have sat them and may in some cases make individuals uneasy about further 'assessment'. As a trainer and assessor, you should take an individual's past experiences into account when formulating training and assessment pathways.



## Snippet

### IELTS scores

In the lunchroom after an occupational health and safety (OHS) training session, Waseem proudly presented Stan, the trainer, with his IELTS certificate, which stated he had achieved an IELTS score of 5. Stan was a bit baffled – he didn't know what it meant but he could see that Waseem was very proud of the certificate so he took a photocopy and handed the original back.

Waseem was new to the town, having been recently employed as a specialist slaughterman with skills in Halal slaughter practices, but Stan didn't know much more about him. He seemed very eager to listen in the training session and even asked for more notes! That was something the other guys would never do.

Stan rang Yasmin, who had previously delivered Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) training at the site, to ask what it was about. Yasmin explained what IELTS was, and told him that the rating meant Waseem had qualified as 'vocationally proficient' in order to get his visa through the employer nominated migration scheme.

"But that doesn't mean he will know everything about the Australian meat industry though. He may need extra time and assistance to develop specific vocab that you use there," she said. "He's probably been through a lot to get there and may be a bit nervous about how his English skills are being viewed." She explained that Waseem probably had language skills to satisfy everyday needs and social situations, but that he most likely learned English in a formal way overseas and may not know some of the ways of doing things in Australia. "Just remember to have a chat to him every now and then to see how he's going. Maybe set up a personal word list or something. And Stan..."

"Yeah, what?" said Stan.

"Take him to the footy on Sunday," replied Yasmin.

## The NRS

The NRS provides a national benchmark for generic LLN indicators of competency. It is a useful validated tool for analysing LLN levels as built into Training Package units of competency or in learning outcomes of accredited courses.

The NRS provides a set of descriptors, grouped at five levels, against which achievement of reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy can be reported.

The Australian Government uses the NRS to measure and report on the LLN skills of participants in the LLNP and WELL program. Providers are required to use the NRS to report LLN levels attained by learners.



For background information about the NRS, go to <[www.nrs.dest.gov.au](http://www.nrs.dest.gov.au)>. Also, check out the case studies that describe different ways in which the NRS is used.

To understand and use the complete NRS requires specific professional development. In its entirety it is a complex document, but it is an extremely useful tool.



A shortened version of the NRS is included in the Resources Pack. Take a look.

### Macro skills

In the NRS, the term used to describe the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and numeracy is macro skills.

The NRS includes information about the following macro skills:

- reading, for example:
  - basic reading, such as letters of the alphabet, own personal details and/or OHS signage, to reading, interpreting and integrating a range of sources of complex information
  - texts from the everyday environment relevant to learner needs, including first language or bilingual resources
  - text in formats other than paper, for example, reading off a computer screen
- writing, for example:
  - copying letters of the alphabet, own personal details and signature, to writing a report in the appropriate format
  - tracing, copying, scribing, and independent and collaborative writing of texts
- discussion of topic/content area, brainstorming, vocabulary development, mind mapping, planning outlines, drafting text
- planning, reviewing, proofreading and editing skills
- accuracy with handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation as appropriate to the purpose
- composing text on screen, manipulating a mouse, using a keyboard, using a communication aid
- speaking and listening, for example:
  - skills ranging from using single words or common expressions, to providing information on a topic of relevance to a group of peers
  - speaking and listening skills for collecting and providing information, or exchanging/ providing services
  - negotiating meaning by clarifying intended meaning, showing interest or attitude, making constructive additions, using language to build relationships

- numeracy, for example:
  - skills ranging from reading and writing numbers, naming familiar shapes and calculating money in personally relevant contexts, to applying formulae
  - using calculators to assist with calculations
  - evaluating results of calculations in relation to personal and work related knowledge.

The following snippet illustrates the macro skills used in a particular job role.

### Dita's LLN skills

Dita is a customer services officer at a retail outlet that sells electrical goods. She is in a relationship and has two small children. The NRS macro skills she uses at home and in her work include the following.

Workplace communication skills / NRS macro skills	Tasks in Dita's job	Tasks in Dita's home life
Reading	<p>Reading memos from managers</p> <p>Reading latest product information, including product instructions</p> <p>Reading promotional literature</p> <p>Reading price lists</p> <p>Reading OHS information</p>	<p>Reading school notices</p> <p>Reading bills</p> <p>Reading catalogues and newspapers</p> <p>Reading recipes</p> <p>Reading motocross magazines</p> <p>Reading maps at motocross meets</p> <p>Reading superannuation and insurance documents</p>
Writing	<p>Writing addresses on home delivery forms</p> <p>Writing memos to supervisor</p> <p>Operating cash register</p>	<p>Writing notes to school</p> <p>Writing shopping lists</p> <p>Writing emails to family and friends</p>
Speaking and listening	<p>Speaking to customers to give information about products and payment options</p> <p>Making friendly conversation with customers and colleagues</p> <p>Asking colleagues for price checks</p> <p>Communicating information to supervisors about problems with customers or with cash register</p> <p>Listening to customer requests</p> <p>Listening to intercom announcements</p>	<p>Negotiating with her partner, Liz, and children</p> <p>Talking with teachers</p> <p>Asking questions about products in the supermarket</p> <p>Listening to instructions about motocross races</p>
Numeracy	<p>Giving customers change</p> <p>Checking totals on receipts</p> <p>Reconciling cash</p>	<p>Working out the weekly budget</p> <p>Measuring ingredients for cooking</p> <p>Setting the timing on the rotor</p>



How does this information impact on the learning plan?

## Activity



### Your macro skills

Think about the LLN skills you need for everyday life. What LLN tasks do you carry out?

Consider the following questions.

- What do I like to listen to and understand?
- What do I talk about?
- What do I read?
- What do I write?
- What calculations do I need to make?
- What diagrams, pictures or symbols do I read?

Think about the LLN tasks you carry out as part of your work. Ask yourself the questions above in relation to your work and complete this chart.

NRS macro skill	Tasks for job	Tasks for home life
Reading		
Writing		
Speaking and listening		
Numeracy		

Do the tasks or literacies between each area differ?



Think about your learners and the differences that may occur between their everyday LLN skills and the LLN skills they need for their work.

## Levels of performance in the NRS

For each of the macro skills, the NRS identifies performance indicators at five levels, with level 1 being the most basic and level 5 being the most complex.

See a more complete description of the levels of the NRS in the Resources Pack that accompanies this guide.

The factors that distinguish the five levels from each other are:

- the complexity of a text or a task – some texts or tasks learners are required to read or to produce are more difficult than others
- the complexity of the mathematical procedures or ideas – because there is an interplay between mathematical activities and language and literacy activities
- the familiarity of context – because learners will find text types they already know easier to deal with than others that are less familiar
- support required – because a learner may need different levels of support in order to perform an activity.

## Activity



### Your skills at home and at work

Using the chart in the previous activity, think about the levels of LLN skills you use at work and at home. Does the complexity of the skills vary? For example, do you read more complex information at work than at home?

For one task for each macro skill that you use at home and at work, try to rate the performance level of the skill. Rate the performance level as '1' for the most basic and '5' for the most complex.

Here is an example of the levels of Dita's skills.

Workplace communication skills / NRS macro skills	Tasks in Dita's job	Performance level	Tasks in Dita's home life	Performance level
Reading	Reading memos from managers	3	Reading school notices	2
	Reading latest product information, including product instructions	3	Reading bills	3
	Reading promotional literature	2	Reading catalogues and newspapers	3
	Reading price lists	2	Reading recipes	2
	Reading OHS information	2	Reading motocross magazines	2
Writing	Writing addresses on home delivery forms	1	Writing notes to school	2
	Writing memos to supervisor	2	Writing shopping lists	1
	Operating cash register	3	Writing emails to family and friends	2
	Speaking and listening	Speaking to customers to give information about products and payment options	3	Negotiating with her partner, Liz, and children
Making friendly conversation with customers and colleagues		2	Talking with teachers	3
Asking colleagues for price checks		2	Asking questions about products in the supermarket	2
Communicating information to supervisors about problems with customers or with cash register		4	Listening to instructions about motocross races	3
Listening to customer requests		2		
Listening to intercom announcements		2		
Numeracy	Giving customers change	2	Working out the weekly budget	3
	Checking totals on receipts	2	Measuring ingredients for cooking	2
	Reconciling cash	3	Setting the timing on the rotor	4

NRS macro skill	Tasks for everyday	Performance level	Tasks for work	Performance level
Reading				
Writing				
Speaking and listening				
Numeracy				



Were the levels all the same?  
Does that surprise you? How  
might this impact on the way  
you train your learners?

## Snippet

### Aspects

In the NRS, the term 'aspects' describes the purpose or context of the communication.

The purpose might be:

- procedural – to carry out a task
- technical – to use tools or equipment
- personal – to express personal needs
- cooperative – to interact in a group
- systems – to participate in an organisation
- public – to interact with the community.

When LLN specialists do an analysis of skills against the NRS, they may use the aspects to determine which types of skills a learner needs to develop. They may notice that an individual can read the newspaper (public) but not technical information in table format (technical).

These types of communication allow you to categorise the type of workplace task (or training and assessment task) you are expecting the learner to perform or to learn. There is no need to get too bogged down in this detail, but keep it in the back of your mind when thinking about LLN in the workplace and in the training and assessment environment.



There are sample activities relating to each macro skill, as it may be performed in the workplace, at [www.dest.gov.au/literacynet/resources.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/literacynet/resources.htm). Select and download them from the *Key national tools and resources* section of the Literacynet website. You may like to print out this document for your Resources Pack and bookmark Literacynet for future use.

### Aspects of communication

Helen works as a cook. She's familiar with the recipes that are used on a daily basis and she sometimes has to use multiplication to produce several batches of the same meal (for example, three times 1½ cups of flour). The multiplication of these measurements varies according to the orders. She does this every day, and sometimes in a hurry without any aids, such as pen and paper or calculator. Therefore, while this numeracy task is challenging, she does it daily and it has become routine.

Ben is a construction worker who has to read safety signs in the workplace. Usually illustrated and colour coded, the signs are all familiar to him because they are highly visible and used every day. While he can't understand the words on all the signs (for example 'highly flammable'), he can work out what the signs mean and what the implications are for his workplace practice. The safety signs Ben reads are basic and familiar.

Julie works in an office. She takes an average of 15 telephone messages every day. While she sometimes makes a spelling mistake, the reader of the message is able to interpret what she has written. The messages are mostly familiar (for example, the monthly meeting is cancelled), but sometimes the message will contain unfamiliar ideas and vocabulary. Julie often has to 'think on her feet' to make sure she gets the main idea. The writing text is simple but can be unfamiliar at times.



What aspects of communication are being used in these case studies?

## Activity



### LLN in the workplace

Gather materials from your practice environment that cover the different types of LLN that learners are expected to deal with in the workplace. For example:

- timesheets or forms
- instructions on how to operate office equipment
- instructions on how to operate machinery
- instructions on a process or procedure
- poster advertising a social event
- incident report form
- OHS guidelines.

Consider the following questions.

- What does the worker need to listen to and understand?
- What does the worker need to talk about?
- What does the worker need to read?
- What does the worker need to write?
- What calculations does the worker need to make?
- What diagrams, pictures or symbols does the worker need to understand?

Also refer to 'Gathering information on modes of communication (or LLN)' in the Resources Pack to help gather information about the LLN skills used in the workplace.

Match to the levels of the NRS.

NRS macro skill	Task	NRS performance level
Reading	For example, follow recipes	2
Writing		
Speaking and listening		
Numeracy		



## Determining a learner's LLN skill levels

An individual's LLN skills will differ according to cultural background, educational experience and experience in the specific vocational area. Learners may find the formal training environment more challenging if English is not their first language. They will be learning a whole new language as well as the language of the vocational area.

On the other hand, learners working within the vocational area in which they are training will already be familiar with the LLN for the area but may need assistance with the LLN requirements of the training and assessment, for example, how to do multiple choice questions for licensing tests.

Other learners may have had some theoretical experience or background knowledge but will need assistance with learning how that relates to a real-life work situation.

## Which LLN skills are required in the training specification?

### Finding literacy in the training specification

A training specification may include:

- Training Package units of competency
- learning outcomes from accredited courses with a vocational outcome
- non-accredited industry specific learning programs.

In order to 'unpack' and then analyse a training specification, you need to know some of the language you are looking for within the document. This language can be found throughout a training specification.

The following table of trigger words may help you to identify LLN skills in a training specification. You may like to add additional trigger words to it as you analyse your own training specifications.

Reading	Writing	Speaking and listening	Numeracy
Interpret and monitor	Written reporting	Follow instructions	Measuring techniques
According to (specified documents)	Maintain records	Access relevant information	Calculations
Identify	Document	Questions are used	Perform
Instructions obtained, understood and clarified	Label	Verbal reporting	Computations
Appropriate documentation	Tagged/marked	Team discussions	Check calculated answers
Follows procedures	Identify and monitor	Contribute	Estimate
According to signs, codes and labels	Outline	Identify and monitor	Determine and interpret charts and graphs
Legislative requirements	Complete reports	Feedback	Converted
Marked out	Chart	Explained	Proportion
		Procedures identified and followed	Allowance
			Formula
			Adjust

## Unpacking the training specification

This method works best if you are training and assessing a single unit of competency or if you are 'unpacking' LLN from a unit for the first time.

Examine the training specification, such as a complete unit of competency from a Training Package or a complete module from an accredited course. It is important to examine all parts of the unit or module as LLN can be 'built-in' or embedded throughout the document.

### A unit of competency includes:

- title
- description
- elements
- performance criteria
- critical aspects of evidence
- underpinning knowledge and skills
- concurrent assessment
- method and context of assessment
- key competencies / employability skills.

### A module includes:

- title
- description
- purpose statement
- learning outcomes
- assessment criteria
- relationships to competency standards
- pre- and co-requisites
- methods, strategies and conditions of assessment
- modes and strategies of delivery.

As part of your training and assessment practice, you should build a working knowledge of the LLN content of the training specifications you are using. To do this, examine the units of competency you are training and/or assessing thoroughly and separately to identify the LLN in all the elements, performance criteria, variables and assessment guidelines. You will get a feel for how these LLN skills are used on the job from your knowledge of vocational competence.

A successful LLN scan of a Training Package or accredited vocational course can be a complex process. Some units of competency are obviously about workplace communication skills, such as *AURC251356A Read in the workplace* from the *AUR05 Automotive Industry Retail, Service and Repair Training Package*.

This unit contains a single element that covers the competence required to read business texts and manuals, or interpret manuals to enable assistance to others for problem solving.

Element	Performance criteria
1. Read texts that contain specialist knowledge and may be organised in a variety of formats	1.1 Purpose of text is understood and correctly described 1.2 Main points or ideas presented are described 1.3 New technical words are comprehended 1.4 Meaning of key words and phrases are explained 1.5 Effectiveness of text as an instruction is assessed

In other units, however, the LLN content is embedded. It can be teased out with a careful examination of the elements, performance criteria, range statements and evidence/assessment guidelines, but in some cases you may need to seek assistance from an LLN specialist. Embedded LLN is shown in the following excerpt of two elements from the four element unit *AURR346266A Diagnose and repair rope, cable and chain systems* from the *AUR05 Automotive Industry Retail, Service and Repair Training Package*.

This unit covers the competence required to diagnose and repair rope, cable and chain systems to a safe working condition.

It includes the identification and confirmation of the work requirement, preparation for work, the diagnosis of faults, the determination and application of repair techniques and procedures, the testing of outcomes and the completion of work finalisation processes, including clean-up and documentation.

Elements	Performance criteria
<b>1. Prepare for work</b> For example, read and understand  For example, clarify and relate to tasks  For example, through reading signs or SOPs  For example, through SOPs or supervisor's instructions	1.1 Work instructions are used to determine the job requirements, including method, process and equipment 1.2 Job specifications are read and interpreted 1.3 OH&S requirements, including personal safety needs, are observed throughout the work 1.4 Equipment and tools are identified and checked for safe and effective operation 1.5 Procedures are determined to minimise task time
<b>2. Diagnose faults from symptoms and decide on repair action</b>  For example, from observation or from manufacturer's specification sheets  For example, through diagnostic tests and print outs  For example, written notes, checklists, log-books, verbal reports  For example, read and understand documents, comprehend verbal information	2.1 Information is accessed from appropriate sources to inform action required to assist in distinguishing between 'symptoms' and 'causes' 2.2 A diagnosis strategy is developed that can be used to determine a fault with the vessel or system 2.3 Identification of faults is made from test results and a plan of action is decided upon to rectify faults 2.4 Faults are diagnosed without causing damage to any component or system 2.5 Findings are documented and reported 2.6 All inspections are carried out according to industry regulations and/or guidelines, OH&S, environmental and legislation and enterprise policies and/or procedures

## Activity



### LLN in units of competency

Go to the National Training Information Service (NTIS) at <[www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au)> and download the following units of competency:

- *CUEOH08A Process incoming customer orders* found in the *CUE30303 Certificate III in Venues and Events (Customer Service)*
- *PMBPROD240B Cut materials* from the *PMB20101 Certificate II in Plastics*.

Or choose two units of competency that you use to deliver training.

What are the LLN requirements of each of these units?

Consider the following questions.

- What does the worker need to listen to and understand?
- What does the worker need to talk about?
- What particular terms does the worker need to know?
- What does the worker need to read?
- What does the worker need to write?
- What calculations does the worker need to make?
- What diagrams, pictures or symbols does the worker need to understand?

Use the tools in the Resources Pack to assist you in identifying the LLN requirements of each of these units.

Using the list on page 33 as a guide, highlight the words in the units of competency relating to LLN.

## Accuracy and performance

One of the questions to ask about the importance of the skills described is 'How accurate does the particular skill have to be in the performance of the workplace task?' This is a useful question because you can make judgements about when the learner must have the skill and when complete accuracy is required.

The following questions may help you to make decisions about accuracy and performance.

- Is the LLN activity a complete workplace task?
- Does the successful performance of a workplace task rely on LLN activity?
- Does the LLN activity contribute to the achievement of the workplace task?
- Could the workplace task be achieved to some degree without the LLN activity?

## Snippet

### Numeracy on a minesite

Pete was the shotfirer in charge of the blast to create a new quarry. He'd worked out all the requirements and a plan for the blast, cordoned off a safety zone around the site and notified personnel that the haul roads would be closed during the blast.

The blast would be set off by an electronic detonator system which would trigger the ammonium nitrate mix that was fed into drill holes. It was really important that the amount of explosive in each drill hole was measured accurately to control the size of the blast.

Pete knew there had been incidents in the past where the drill holes had been filled with too much ammonium nitrate mix and the blast had extended beyond the safety zone. There were also incidents where the mix wasn't accurate and the blast didn't go off. Either situation had the potential for real danger.

There are some situations where near enough is not good enough!

## Snippet

### Complexity of communication

The degree of difficulty of LLN in the workplace task can be affected by its context in the particular workplace. Issues to consider include:

- how routine the particular task is in the work role
- what support and assistance are typically provided
- how much technical information the task requires.

Given that units of competency form the basis for competency assessment, it is important that the LLN skills required to complete workplace tasks are not over-interpreted or made too difficult. The wording of units of competency can assist here. For example, workers at Certificate I or Certificate II must follow OHS legislative requirements but it is unlikely they would ever have to read complex OHS legislation – the requirements would be provided to learners in simplified workplace documents. Therefore, the unit of competency should say learners must ‘follow’ rather than ‘read and understand’ legislation.

### LLN in *WRH07A Schedule and check out clients*

The following chart is an analysis of LLN in the unit of competency from the *WRH00 Hairdressing Training Package* titled *WRH07A Schedule and check out clients*.

This unit relates to those competencies required to provide full receptionist services.

NRS macro skill	Task
Reading	<p>Read client times in appointment book</p> <p>Read operator availability timetable</p> <p>Read delivery documentation</p>
Writing	<p>Record appointments</p> <p>Record details of service</p> <p>Record items sold</p> <p>Record stock received in stock control systems</p> <p>Record client service history on appointment card</p>
Speaking and listening	<p>Listen and question about appointment times and product choice and availability</p> <p>Use verbal and non-verbal communication skills</p>
Numeracy	<p>Time</p> <p>Calculate bill x, + and –</p> <p>Use credit card vouchers</p> <p>Compare actual stock numbers against stock control system</p>

## Activity



### LLN in a unit in your vocational area

Locate a unit of competency that you deliver in your practice environment. Use the table on page 33 to analyse the language within the unit that indicates an LLN macro skill. Describe the texts, operations or actual tasks that involve the macro skill. For example, if you are describing a reading activity, explain that the learners must read manufacturers' instructions on products.

What are the LLN tasks required in a unit of competency that you deliver or assess? Record the tasks and the performance levels in the following table.

Think about each unit of competency as it applies on the job. Depending on your industry currency, you may need to discuss this with other trainers and with industry people and enterprises. The more authentic your industry perspective, the more complete your LLN information will be.

In the following table, the LLN tasks have been analysed and the most difficult tasks assigned an NRS level.

Macro skill	Most difficult task	NRS level
Reading	Product details and information for selling purposes – will read many similar descriptions	3
Writing	Recording personal details of clients and service details – has client there to check spelling of name etc	2
Speaking and listening	Will need to maintain conversations for some time	3 to 4
	Minor complaint issues	4
Numeracy	Calculating bills and using simple unvaried ratio in mixing instructions	3

Remember, the decisions you make about which tasks are the most difficult and the levels you assign are approximations only. They will assist you in developing LLN tasks to incorporate into training and in evaluating the appropriateness of your training and assessment methods. They do not represent definitive statements about the qualification or the NRS levels. To have reliable NRS levels assigned, you will need to consult a specialist in the LLN field.

Unit name and code:			
NRS macro skill	Task	On the job level of performance	NRS level
Reading			
Writing			
Speaking and listening			
Numeracy	For example, follow recipes	Must get quantities right but can estimate	3

## Checklist for trainers and assessors

When analysing LLN on the job, consider the following questions.

- Is the LLN activity a complete unit of competency? For example, maintain workplace records.
- Is the LLN an element? For example, use the telephone to take a customer order.
- Are there LLN trigger words in the performance criteria? For example, read or document.
- Is LLN information given in the range of variables and the evidence guide? For example, read OHS compliance documents.
- How important is the LLN skill to the overall performance of the task? If the LLN skill could not be demonstrated, could competence in the workplace task still be demonstrated?

- What degree of independence is required by the worker in demonstrating the LLN component of a task? Can the worker complete the task alone, or is assistance required?
- What support materials are available? For example, calculator, manual, advice from mentor.

## Activity



### Locate the LLN in a qualification

Work through a cluster of units of competency or modules from the core of a relevant vocational qualification until you have completed a comprehensive list of LLN tasks and activities.

Use the blank proforma on page 9 of the Resources Pack to help you record this information. Keep the information in the Resources Pack for your own reference. This analysis will be useful for your ongoing training and assessment practice.

## Which LLN skills are required to successfully participate in training?

The analysis of LLN within the training specification will have highlighted the vocational LLN skills that are required by the learner. But the training and assessment environment may well require an additional set of skills that are even less familiar and more challenging to the learner.

It is important for you to analyse your training and assessment practice to check that the methods you are using to deliver training, and the assessment methods you are using, do not inflate or play down the level of LLN required.

Remember, the idea is to keep the LLN triangle in balance (refer to the diagram at the start of this Learning Topic).



## Activity



### LLN in training and assessment materials and methods

Locate some training and/or assessment materials and methods that you use. The materials and methods may include, for example:

- training books
- face-to-face training sessions
- note taking
- practical demonstrations
- research
- verbal instruction
- calculations
- written assignments
- multiple choice questions
- written short answers.

List the macro skills required, the type of task and the NRS performance level in the proforma included in the Resources Pack. Following is an example.

Training and assessment activities		
NRS macro skill	Task	NRS performance level
Reading	Self-paced workbooks	4
	Overhead projection slides	2
	Underpinning knowledge in textbooks	4
	Instructions for assessment tasks	3
Writing	Short answer questions	3
	Reports	4
	Note taking	2 to 3
Speaking and listening	Group work for projects	3
	Presentations	4 to 5
	Videos	3
Numeracy	Maths tests	3
	Calculations to solve problems	4
	Time management	2

Is there a match between the LLN requirements of the unit of competency and the training and/or assessment materials that you use for that unit? Explain any differences to a colleague.

If there is no match, think about how you might change the training and/or assessment materials to match the requirements of the unit of competency. Discuss the options with a colleague.

Assessment tasks need to be designed so that they accurately assess competence. To be fair, valid, reliable and flexible, they must allow the candidate to demonstrate all the skills. The assessment task should only require the same level of LLN skills as the unit of competency. The LLN skills required by the assessment method should not become a barrier to the candidate being able to demonstrate competence if LLN skills are not part of what is being assessed.



See the Learner Guides for *TAAASS402A Assess competence* and *TAAASS403A Develop assessment tools for further information about LLN and assessment*.

### Testing underpinning knowledge

Anika decided that she was going to give her learners a multiple choice test to see if they had grasped the information in the fire safety booklet she'd distributed last week. It was really important the learners knew this underpinning knowledge before heading off on their excursion.

Anika prepared the test and gave it to the learners on Monday afternoon. She sat down to mark the test on Monday evening and found that lots of learners had circled wrong answers and lots of questions weren't answered at all! What was she going to do? The group was heading off on their trip on Thursday!

On Tuesday Anika spoke to a colleague, Juan, who specialised in LLN. He asked Anika about the group of learners she was working with and then asked if she thought they had the LLN skills to be able to read the information in the fire safety booklet. Anika had a look at the fire safety booklet and, on reflection, she thought the language used was pretty complex and difficult to read.

Juan suggested that evidence based on a single assessment of the learners' knowledge was questionable. It would be better if Anika could use an assessment plan that covered a range of evidence collecting processes, for example, problem solving, role play, small group discussions based on scenarios, and analysing learners' personal experiences.



What methods do you use to test underpinning knowledge?

**Activity**



**Resources and learning plan for an individual learner**

Choose a learner and develop a learning plan and a range of learning resources for a particular training specification. Ensure the materials address the learner's LLN requirements.

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**Activity**



**Observations of your practice**

Arrange for your delivery and/or assessment practice to be observed at different stages by a supervisor, an experienced trainer or someone who can provide a valid report on your practice.

Ask this person to provide a report. The checklist in Appendix 2 may be useful for this activity.

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# How does it affect me?

Now that you have covered what is required in a training specification, and the skills of the learner, think about the LLN requirements of your own training and assessment practice.

## Your LLN skills at work as a trainer and/or assessor

Part of effective training and assessment practice requires that you use your own set of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and numeracy skills to demonstrate to the learner what is expected in a workplace context and to provide explanations and examples of what is required. The important thing is to make your expectations clear and to involve learners in the learning process – checking if all is 'on track', and then modifying or reinforcing as you go.



Check the Assessment Guidelines for the *TAA40104 Training and Assessment Training Package* and make a checklist of the LLN skills required by a person undertaking the course in which you are now enrolled.

## Snippet

### Speaking and listening

Trainers use speaking and listening skills to communicate information. Therefore, it is important that you give clear instructions and explanations, present concepts clearly and respond to learner questions effectively. To do this you may need to adapt your own vocabulary and delivery to match learner comprehension levels. You may also need to explicitly demonstrate spoken language skills required in the training specification to learners, for example, ordering parts on the telephone, using the exact style that would be required in a workplace.

### Communicating in the workplace

Sue observed Darren and Fatima in a role-play practising 'dealing with a difficult customer'. Fatima was proving too good and Darren was becoming really stropky, "Geez, if you're going to be like that you can just get..."

Sue stepped in. "OK, Darren. I can see how a customer like this could make you really angry and you might feel tempted to 'let 'em have it' but the best thing is to just breathe deeply and then say something like this. I'm sorry that you feel that way – let me contact my manager, who'll address this issue as soon as she's available."

Sometimes learners don't know how to deal with difficult situations and may need you to provide them with clear examples to put them on the right track.



Think about how you could model clear communication to your learners.

## Snippet

### Observation and practice

Cheryl is teaching skills used in providing information to visitors at an animal park tourist centre. She incorporates observation and practical activities, using:

- videos showing good and poor examples of presenting factual information to guests
- structured discussions with the group to discover what they think makes a good or a poor presentation
- discussion about the type of language that works well in presenting factual information
- opportunities to role play within the group and to provide informal feedback
- opportunities to use the feedback to alter performance
- video equipment to record learners and provide clear feedback during the training session.

Cheryl uses technology and input from the group to offer models, analysis and opportunities for learning in a supportive environment in order to give explicit LLN training around the job task.



What are some strategies you could use in your practice environment to support learners' speaking and listening skills?

## Snippet

### Reading

Trainers and/or assessors need to produce written documents appropriate for learners, settings and topics. Trainers also need to make judgements about which documents are suitable for their learners to read. It is important to encourage learners to focus on their purpose for reading by helping them recognise the features of different types of documents. By giving learners clues such as common layout features on the page, typeface, use of graphics, and the way the text is structured, learners become selective about what they read and the reading strategies used for different texts. For example, standard operating procedures need to be read really carefully, while product information sheets may be skimmed for particular information.

Sometimes when you read, you just want the facts and figures. You do not have to read every word.

### Reading the features of a document

Beth held up the product order sheet and pointed down the right hand column to the bottom line on the right.

“In an Excel spreadsheet like this one you don’t need to read all of the information to check if an order has come in,” she said. “When you’ve got someone on the phone and you’re in a hurry, just scan down to here and look at the date in this column.”

She indicated a place on the spreadsheet. “That’ll let you know when to expect the product to arrive.”



### When is it appropriate to scan information? When is it important to read text thoroughly?

If learners are expected to read information to absorb underpinning knowledge, give clear reasons why they need to read a text, and ensure they know who wrote the text and why it was written. If they want to know the details of a text they have to read every word. If they are reading instructions, they should read every word and check diagrams.

- Pre-read all documents and make sure that learners have the background knowledge required to read the text beforehand. This may involve pre-teaching words that are central to the understanding of the text.
- While reading, encourage learners to mark unknown words as they read and check their meaning later with you or in a dictionary.
- After reading, encourage learners to ask questions about the concepts surrounding the text and support them in getting value out of their reading through follow-up questions or group discussions.

Also encourage learners to get value out of their reading and document the key points they need to know. You may need to support some learners in doing this by showing them how to take notes, providing a checklist for them to fill out or showing them how to write down key questions as they go.

If learners have none of the skills required, you may need to get specialist assistance to support their learning.

## Snippet

### Modelling

Dave developed a list to check that his training provides opportunities to develop LLN around the stock forms used in the workplace.

Dave's checklist covers that he has:

- used models of the forms in training (blank order forms and a range of completed forms with different customer orders)
- explained how the form works (its key points, purpose) to ensure that learners will recognise key features when the form changes or they change workplaces
- stepped learners through the process of filling out the form
- picked up on difficulties any individual is having with the form – reading or writing
- given opportunities for practical activities with support
- given opportunities for independent practice.

If all these points are covered, Dave can be sure he has provided explanation, modelling and practical opportunities for the learners. As well, through the fourth point in the list, Dave notes specific difficulties encountered by individuals. This will be important when considering support activities to be designed either by Dave or by an LLN specialist.



Think about your own experiences as a learner. Can you think of valuable examples of modelling that have helped you learn? What are the features of good modelling practice?

## Activity



### Reading support checklist

Prepare a checklist that includes the options you could use to help your learners to access written information. Use the information in the previous section to help.

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## Snippet

### Writing

As with reading, it is important that learners know the reasons why they are writing something. In the workplace they need to know what to write, who needs to read it, why it needs to be written and to what standard. Is a quick set of handwritten notes sufficient or does the writing need to be word processed in a specific template?

When learners have to write something, trainers should be clear about what they are expecting them to write and the style in which it needs to be completed, for example, standard operating procedures in dot points using appropriate instructional words.

Always provide examples of tasks learners need to produce and explain the features that are most useful to learners. Provide opportunities for learners to practise their skills before expecting them to be assessed.

### Explaining features

Rina explained that, when converting a 'quotation for work' from personal notes to the paperwork that was given to the customer, there were a number of key features to remember.

"Your notes can be as rough as you like when you're doing the measuring – as long as you can read your own writing! But when you send something to the customer you have to make it clear what the job is – in words they will understand. Note how much it will cost, including GST. I've given you a blank quote sheet that we'll now fill out together..."



In your practice environment, what opportunities are there for using examples of written tasks required within the workplace?

If the written work is being assessed, the following should be made clear to candidates:

- the criteria to be used in assessing the task
- how the candidate should present the written task.

Remember to set tasks that keep the required competencies, the learner skill levels and the requirement for evidence in balance. Avoid setting tasks that are too difficult for the sake of extra evidence, for example, asking learners to write a report on a recent excursion covering six points is a more difficult LLN task than asking learners six questions about the excursion.

Remember you are setting an example for learners in the way you present written material. Provide learners with many opportunities to get it right and encourage them to be self-sufficient by providing access to resources they will need to complete a task, for example, readings or library resources.

## Snippet

### Setting a good example

Kim and Ari sat at lunchtime discussing the assignment on planometric drawing that they'd been given.

"I can't make out the diagram 'cos it's photocopied too dark," said Ari. "And where do we get other good examples of planometric drawings?"

"I don't really know what we're supposed to draw," said Kim. "Is it the sample kitchen here on page 3 or does it say something later on about drawing our own kitchen?"

"What's this bit about writing the main technical features of isometric and planometric drawings?" shrugged Ari.

"Man... I don't know half the bloody words in here – what's isometric? I'm totally lost."

"How does the teacher expect us to do work when he gives such shonky instructions? If I fail this, I'm going to be really angry!" said Kim.





How does the quality of your instructions build sound relationships with your learners?

### Numeracy

Every vocational area has associated numeracy tasks within it. Some areas require low level incidental skills, for example, the time it takes to warm a pie in a microwave, and some require high-level specialist skills, for example, calculating the amount of explosive required to open up a quarry. You may not be a numeracy or maths expert but you should still be able to use your own numeracy skills to identify or locate the numeracy strategies required to solve a problem. This may involve assisting learners to do the calculations and/or measurements by demonstrating how to use measuring equipment or calculators accurately. Or it may involve demonstration of simple formulae to work out ratios, or the interpretation of graphs or numerical information in written documents, such as technical specifications.

Be clear about when it is important to be accurate, for example, construction of a pattern to cut sheet metal, and when estimation is appropriate, for example, the time it will take a group to complete a walking trail as part of an outdoor recreation activity.

Learners often carry a large degree of anxiety about maths and struggle to see the related numeracy skill in a workplace task, for example, calculating change without use of a register. It is crucial to create a supportive group atmosphere in which learners can relax and be themselves, and to make learning new maths related skills as practical as possible.

## Snippet

### Getting the ratios right

Lola was conducting a session on ratios as a lead up to mixing chemicals. She demonstrated the differences between 2:1 and 10:1 ratios using red cordial. The learners could see the difference in colour between the solutions, and some tasted it. Lola asked the learners to decide the differences – they suggested words like ‘stronger’, ‘weaker’ and ‘more concentrated’.

After the demonstration she asked learners to mix a 5:1 solution of cordial. In the next session she would ask the learners to wear the appropriate safety gear and mix a 10:1 solution of glyphosate to use to spray weeds.



Think of a numeracy task from within your vocational area that could be demonstrated to learners as in the previous snippet.

## Snippet

### Using the known to teach the unknown

Joe asked his learners what sort of car they would prefer to drive. Out of 20 learners, six said a Holden, nine said a Ford, three said a Toyota and two said a Mazda. Using this information, Joe moved onto a lesson about percentages, explaining that  $\frac{6}{20}$  would be equal to 30%. He drew a picture of a pie divided into sections to explain what he meant.

Joe was using the known to explain the unknown in this activity.



Could you use the idea of moving from the known to the unknown to teach a numeric skill within your vocational area?

### Information communication technology

LLN skills can also encompass information communication technology (ICT). You may be required to use your ICT skills in a training situation to assist learners with the use of ICT technology, such as computers, internet and intranet learning. Or you may need to demonstrate ways of communicating within a workplace, such as using a portable digital assistant (PDA), text messages or radio handsets. In some settings, learners may need to be familiar with common software packages used in workplaces, such as Word, Excel and email management systems.

## Snippet

### Finding the form

Nerida was training a group of hospitality industry trainees. Part of the program involved teaching trainees to use electronic ordering software. Nerida showed the trainees that they could scan the menu and select the required items.



What ICT is used in your practice environment? Are you aware of your learners' learning preferences in the use of ICT? Is the use of technology part of the training for vocational competence?

## Other support strategies

The design of your training sessions and the way you structure the learning within a particular session will assist learners to develop and consolidate LLN skills. Sometimes learners having difficulties with the LLN requirements of the workplace or training environment will find the following approaches useful.

### Demonstrate it

Where possible, it is a good idea to demonstrate the application of an abstract concept to give it meaning and build in opportunities to practise. Learners are often motivated by a practical demonstration, an example or an activity. Also, while you are demonstrating you are often talking about concepts, so you address different learning styles.

## Snippet

### Stepping it out in the paddock

Rif was giving a lesson about the application of fertilisers. To be able to work out how much fertiliser to apply to a specific area, learners needed to be able to work out area using a length by width calculation. Rather than going through this concept on the whiteboard, Rif decided to take the learners out into a paddock and estimate the length and width. He got the learners to walk around the paddock using metre-length steps and then explained how they would use the numbers to make the calculation. Rif then showed them how to work out the area using the length and width estimations. From that calculation, the learners could work out the fertiliser amounts. Rif encouraged the learners to ask questions about the concepts, which they did.



In what ways do you think Rif's technique supports learners' skill development?

### Talk about it

Learning new language is enhanced by talking about how the words are used in practice or by putting the words into a context or real life situation.

## Snippet

### The perimeter

While Rif was out in the paddock, he thought he'd make the most of the opportunity and mention the term 'perimeter'.

"Now we've worked out the length and width of this paddock, it'll be easy to work out the perimeter," he said. "The perimeter is the distance around the outside of the paddock – how could you work that out using the information that we already have?"

"You could add up the length plus the width plus another length plus the width," said one of the learners.

"Yeah – you're right," said Rif. "Why would we want to work out the perimeter?"

"Maybe we're gonna build a fence and we need to make sure we buy enough wire."

"Right again," says Rif. "Keep that word 'perimeter' in mind for when we talk about fencing next week."



Why is this an example of good practice?

## Snippet

### Keep your language clear and simple

This sounds obvious, but it is very easy to use unnecessary terms or phrases to explain information, without realising. Watch out for informal slang (also called colloquialisms), for example, 'kangaroo court', 'bottom line', when explaining information, principles and concepts. Also avoid euphemisms. That is, using expressions to cover up what might be socially inappropriate, for example, 'going to powder my nose' is a euphemism for going to the toilet. Euphemisms and colloquialisms may confuse learners, so think ahead about how you will ensure that your language is clear and simple.

### Colloquialisms

Micky was a young Indigenous man from a remote northern community whose third language was English. He seemed to be losing interest in the *RUH30901 Certificate III in Rural Operations* that he was enrolled in and often appeared distracted. Just before Micky headed off to cut some hay, his work supervisor called him in to have a chat...

"Micky, you've nearly got this course squared away – is there anything I can give you a hand with? I want you to know that I'm here to help... the gate's always open, mate," said the supervisor. "You know you can level with me about anything that might be playing on your mind."

I wasn't so sure that Micky really understood what his supervisor was talking about, so later I quietly asked him what his supervisor had said.

"I'm not real sure, but I think he wants me to go and cut some hay at his place," said Micky.

Micky had a strong understanding of the practical requirements of the course, but was often confused by communication loaded with colloquialisms. I resolved to have a chat to the supervisor about making instructions clear and straightforward.

## Activity



### How clear is your language?

Make a videotape or audiotape of yourself training and/or assessing and analyse your language. Is it as clear as it could be?

### Provide reader friendly documents

When you provide your learners with written information, make sure the information is as clear as possible.

Plain English is straightforward writing that communicates simply and effectively. But it is not about 'dumbing down' or being overly simplistic.

Much of what we read today contains buzz words and is long-winded, ambiguous or confusing.

Plain English focuses on the message. When we use plain English we write documents for the people who will be reading and using them, using words they will know. This means that a document can use technical or specialised terms and still be plain English. For example, an article in an engineering journal may use specialised language that engineers will understand. But an article on the same topic written for a popular magazine will use terms familiar to the general public.

Even complex concepts can be explained in plain English. Many legal documents, such as contracts and legislation, have been rewritten in plain English and are still legally accurate.



For further information and tips about writing in plain English, go to <[www.dest.gov.au/archive/publications/plain\\_en/contents.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/publications/plain_en/contents.htm)>.

### The reader comes first

One of the most important principles of plain English is that documents are developed and written from the reader's viewpoint. This means that you may need to rethink the structure and purpose of your documents. What do readers need to know? How much do they understand about the subject? What is the best way to organise ideas so that they make sense to readers? Is your document really necessary or would another method of communication work better?

The test of success is not just that a document reads well, but whether it communicates to your readers. And the only way to really know whether you are getting your message across is to talk with the type of people who will be reading your document.

### Checklist for training materials

Ask yourself the following questions to check if your materials are reader friendly.

- Have I used plain English?
- Have I put the reader first?
- Is the text summarised into key areas using lots of headings?
- Is the text broken down into small chunks?
- Have I used words the reader will know or will learn to use?
- Have I highlighted new or important key terms and language?
- Have I used dot points where effective?
- Are the sentences and paragraphs short?
- Is the page uncluttered, with plenty of white space?
- Have I used diagrams and graphics to illustrate key points?
- Have I included examples or case studies to demonstrate concepts?

## Activity



### Reader friendly training materials

Select a written training activity that you have used in your practice environment. Use the previous checklist to determine whether the material is reader friendly. If not, how can you change it?

## Activity



### Plain English assessment questions

Re-write the following assessment questions in plain English.

- What precautions should be taken by the operator when a leak in the fuel system is suspected or detected?
- What is important about having your desk chair properly adjusted for your height?
- What is the minimum distance you should keep your forklift truck and load away from power lines?

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### Does it have to be written down?

Use written information or written processes for learners who have the LLN skills to be able to deal with written information, but think about offering an alternative to other learners.

Consider using audio and/or video tapes to explain information and required knowledge. Tape important parts of written information to provide alternatives for learners who have a preference for auditory learning or who find written texts difficult to read and understand.

## Snippet

### Training alternatives

Learner booklets, with large amounts of written information about the science and principles behind plant nursery practice and equipment use, were distributed to give learners the underpinning knowledge and skills needed to gain the competencies in horticulture.

After comparing the demands of the vocational competencies and the industry, trainers found that the LLN demands in understanding the information in these booklets were much higher than those required in the industry. At the end of the investigation, the trainers found the following:

- reading demands on the job – simple
- reading demands of the training materials – unfamiliar to challenging.

As a result of the investigation, alternative versions of the training materials were prepared.

This included a substantial editing of the material to reduce both the volume and the complexity of the material. Plain English principles were used. The resource was also supplemented by a video produced by the RTO. The video allowed learners to see and hear the information and this reinforced the written materials. Learners could also replay sections as needed and were supported in overcoming difficulties they had with the text.



Could some of the written information that you provide to your learners be presented in a different format? Would it better suit the needs of your learners?

## Snippet

### Reasonable adjustment

Reasonable adjustment is the process of adjusting or changing the assessment process to meet the needs and requirements of the candidate being assessed. Reasonable adjustments sometimes need to be made to accommodate a candidate's LLN requirements. Any reasonable adjustments to the assessment process must ensure that the integrity of the unit of competency being assessed is maintained. Reasonable adjustments to accommodate LLN requirements may include:

- verbal assessment
- presentations
- demonstration of a skill
- use of diagrams.



See an example of an assessor making reasonable adjustment for LLN skills in the video that accompanies *Guide 4: Kit to support assessor training*, from the *Training Package Assessment Guides*. See the Resources section of this guide for details on how to access this resource.

### Offer a verbal test instead

Paulo was working with a group of trainees. During his first meetings with them, Paulo explained he could offer a verbal test to anyone who had difficulty with reading.

Two learners, Renee and Luke, took Paulo up on the offer and sat a verbal test instead of the written test. Renee and Luke were really happy about this arrangement.



What other ways could you provide reasonable adjustment to meet a candidate's LLN requirements?

### Interpreting

Sometimes it is appropriate to seek assistance from an interpreter when working with learners from a background other than English. Interpreters are often used for assessment purposes to ensure that learners are treated fairly. When using interpreters, ensure that you find out not only the correct language, but the correct dialect. Some languages differ according to the region they are spoken in and are not understood by all who speak that language, for example, Mandarin Chinese has many different dialects and Indigenous languages vary enormously in different parts of Australia.



Tropical North Queensland TAFE has developed a DVD titled *One Way Street*, which highlights the difficulties faced daily by Indigenous adults and children whose first language is not English.

Sometimes it is appropriate to use an interpreter. You should only use qualified interpreters because just using workmates can cause problems, such as:

- not everyone who speaks a language can interpret effectively
- personal issues, such as friendship or antagonism between the parties, may affect the training and/or assessment
- some countries have many dialects and you cannot assume that two people from the same country will understand each other
- political and religious difference may divide groups from similar ethnic backgrounds
- issues of confidentiality – learners may not want the interpreter to know their business.

There are also issues to be considered when using qualified interpreters:

- you do not have to deal with the potential problems of asking a fellow learner or workmate

- it supports the principles of fair, valid, flexible and reliable assessment
- it needs to be organised in advance
- you need to know exactly in which language the candidate is fluent
- it adds to the cost of training and/or assessment.



Interpreting services are available through the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) – see the website at <[www.naati.com.au](http://www.naati.com.au)>. DIMIA also provides information about interpreting and translating services. See the website at <[www.dimia.gov.au](http://www.dimia.gov.au)>.

## Activity



### Interpreter for your practice environment

Find out about the services for interpreting and translating in your practice environment. This may involve researching your practice environment, the state training authority, or one of the services previously listed.

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## Snippet

Due to resourcing or funding restrictions, it is not always possible to employ an interpreter. Use your professional judgement to decide whether the situation really requires an interpreter, and if so, for how long.



**What would you do if you were training in Adelaide and one of your learners spoke only Walpiri (a Northern Territory Indigenous language)?**

### **An interpreter for assessment**

Jing is Chinese and has been in Australia for one year, working in the production area. She has engineering qualifications, but they aren't recognised in Australia. She speaks English well enough to get by in her job. Whenever the supervisor needs to give her instructions he uses plain English, as few words as possible and a lot of gestures. The factory is implementing competency standards. Jing has done a self-assessment and rated her competencies way below her work performance. The supervisor wants her assessed.

The assessment is organised and the assessor decides that an interpreter will be provided to give Jing a fair go. The supervisor is asked to organise an interpreter, so he asks Wang Yong, the only other Chinese worker in the plant, to help.

On the day of the assessment, Jing arrives at the plant. She doesn't know that there will be an interpreter present. At the start of the assessment, Wang Yong is called in. Neither the supervisor or the assessor are aware that Wang Yong speaks a different dialect to Jing. Neither Jing or Wang Yong could say anything. The assessor, overwhelmed by the silence and the look of panic on Wang Yong's face, abandons the assessment.



**How could an experience like this affect the learner?**

**How could this situation have been avoided?**

## Snippet

### Mentoring

It is likely that a group of learners will have varied levels of LLN skills. Encourage learners to support each other and consider establishing mentors or buddy arrangements between learners to give support where appropriate.

### Giving support to a fellow learner

When starting off with a new group of Indigenous learners, Nisha sets up a buddy system where she pairs learners with more developed LLN skills with learners with lower level skills. Nisha encourages the buddies to support each other with LLN, when training sessions are missed, and however else they can.



What are the advantages and disadvantages of a buddy system?

## Activity



### Reflect on your delivery approach

Reflect on your own delivery approach for a particular unit of competency or cluster of units. Ask yourself the following questions.

- Do any of the activities help learners to develop their LLN skills?
- Is the LLN that they address essential to the vocational competence involved?
- Is there enough modelling of LLN skills?
- Is there opportunity for learners to practise?
- Do learners have a chance to talk, question and understand?

Discuss your reflections with a colleague and think about ways that you may be able to improve your delivery with regard to LLN.

## Specific preparation for assessment

As well as the general preparation that you give learners before assessment, and the support you provide throughout the training program, there are some additional tips that you can incorporate into your practice that will specifically assist them to deal with the LLN demands of the assessment itself. Assessments are often first and foremost an LLN test and secondly a test of underpinning knowledge or skill. You must be clear, and learners should be clear, about what the assessment is assessing.

### Recognition

Assessment is increasingly carried out through recognition pathways. This process may require high level LLN skills in order to gather appropriate evidence, analyse evidence for relevance and substantiate evidence. Many people may have years of experience but may lack the skills and confidence to assemble a recognition portfolio of evidence. People may need support for this process. At the very least they

would need to see clear examples and have an opportunity to discuss whether they are on the right track.

## Snippet

### Recognition or delivery pathway?

A group of aged care workers wanted to complete the *CHC30102 Certificate III in Aged Care Work*. They were older women from a non-English speaking background who had worked in the industry for more than ten years. The women could have provided evidence of experience, but although they had the practical skills they opted to do on the job training as it was difficult for them to show evidence of the underpinning knowledge. The women also developed their confidence through the training.

Often a decision needs to be made about the resources available to support the people through the recognition process versus the resources available to deliver the program.

### Multiple choice tests

This form of test requires high-level language skills to understand what to do, and how to reason through the options and choose the correct answer. For general assessment purposes they should be avoided but, as they are often the preferred mode of testing for industry licensing purposes, they may be unavoidable. If learners are required to be assessed by multiple choice tests, explain how these tests work by pointing out how they are constructed – one or two distractors or wrong answers and usually two likely right answers. Explain the link between the first part of each question (the stem) and the possible response choices (the answers). You will be surprised how many learners will find this new information!

Go through some old multiple choice tests to familiarise learners with the way they work and allow for plenty of practice. Remember to reinforce the importance of following the instructions for entering responses, for example, use ticks or crosses. Many learners risk their success in the test by not following instructions accurately.

## Snippet

### Which of the following...?

Narelle explained a few points about multiple choice questions to her learners...

“Multiple choice questions often use word order that is different from what you’re used to seeing in the everyday documents you read, like newspapers, information sheets or books,” said Narelle. “For example, ‘Which of the following...’ is often used in multiple choice questions.”

“The phrase ‘Which of the following...?’ limits your choice of answers only to the list given. This means that if you think none of the answers offered below are correct, you can’t add your own,” she added.

“You need to select one of the options given. Let’s have a look at question three on the first page...”

Narelle found that explaining how multiple choice tests worked in advance made her more confident that her learners would pass their forklift test the first time they sat it.



Is explaining how a multiple choice test works cheating?

### Written short answer

Some learners will find getting the answers down in a written form quite stressful if it has to be done under test conditions. It is a good idea to include practice runs of the same tasks when there is no pressure.

Discuss marking criteria and the purpose or focus of assessment ahead of time. It is important that learners know how to anticipate which answers are more important than others by checking the weighting (or number of points) assigned for each task. Instructions should be clear on the amount of detail required in each answer.

### Extended written responses

Extended written responses may take the form of an essay, a report, a plan or an assignment. When asking learners to carry out extended written responses, be sure that the task is appropriate or valid for the training specification and that the LLN component is at a suitable level.

## Snippet

### To essay or not to essay

Nick’s learning program included getting learners to write a 500 word structured essay explaining several techniques in Swedish massage. He specified that the essay should be proofed and must incorporate correct spelling and grammar.

After comparing the LLN demands of the vocational competence with those of the assessment task, Nick found that the type of writing skill and the level of precision demanded were not in keeping with the type of LLN tasks and the level of LLN tasks found in the unit of competency.

In this case:

- writing demands of job – simple to unfamiliar
- writing demands of assessment task – unfamiliar to challenging.

As a result of this investigation, the assessment task was altered. Instead, he asked his learners to select two techniques that they might use with a range of clients. For each of the techniques, learners had to explain:

- the purpose
- the values to clients
- any risks associated
- the outcome intended for the clients.

This alternative assessment allowed for a greater range of learners to demonstrate competence and was more closely aligned to work practice.



Does your practice environment require that your learners write extended essays or reports? Is this consistent with the requirements of the workplace?

If you need to have learners demonstrate their written skills and ability to research and synthesise information in written form, make this clear in your instructions. Provide an example of what you are looking for and examine the structure and key language features of the example – that is, how much detail is included, how neutral the writers seem about the information, acceptability of the information/arguments, presentation features and how the writers acknowledge sources.

Only use larger assignments where they match the requirements of the training specification and would be the type of work done on the job. Where possible, break a larger assignment down into discrete chunks so that learners practise producing the same kinds of writing as required in the assessment task prior to the assessment event.

To deal with the issue of plagiarism, show learners how to acknowledge sources of information.

## Snippet

### Writing a report

Emma was delivering the unit of competency *LGAEHRH604A Develop and implement environmental health education promotion and awareness strategies*. This unit requires learners to prepare reports with recommendations and supporting information. Emma sets the writing of a report as an assessment task.

In introducing learners to the task, Emma showed examples of similar reports that had been prepared for various councils and outlined the headings that the learners should use:

#### Background

- Description of the community setting

- Description of existing health education services

#### Public health needs

- Health surveys

#### The proposed health education program

- Goals of the program

- Promotion of the program

- Maintenance of the program
- Establishment and maintenance of community support networks

- Evaluating the program.

Emma explained that the language to be used in the report, and the amount of information provided, should be similar to the examples – straightforward and to the point, stating facts and giving reasons why suggestions had been made. Emma also warned that any descriptions of current programs that weren't working particularly well should avoid blaming people personally.

Suggesting that it would be a good idea to include appendices showing examples of promotional material, health surveys and evaluation forms, she went on to explain how appendices are referred to in a report and how they are arranged at the back of the report. She also showed examples.

Emma was confident that she had captured the underpinning knowledge required by learners and that they had developed the required report writing skills for the job.



What types of skills are required for the trainer to deliver training in this way? What are the benefits of such a structured model?

### Spoken presentations

Standing up and talking in front of others can be a daunting task for many people. If you decide on this as a form of assessment, prepare for the task by providing plenty of opportunities for learners to speak for short bursts, with the class as audience, without pressure.

Generate an agreed set of guidelines for assessing spoken presentation performance by discussing different ways of presenting information, for example, in written or diagrammatic form, using PowerPoint slides, speaking directly to an audience or using the whiteboard. Get learners to comment on the positives and negatives of different approaches and use this to guide an assessment tool to assess the particular vocational competence.

### Spoken word tests or interviews

Providing verbal answers forms a large part of how information is exchanged in the workplace and a large part of many assessments. It is a powerful skill but is very

different from everyday speech. It requires clear thinking and discipline to provide a focused answer. Explain the kinds of questions that might form part of a spoken test, for example, open questions may be used to draw out knowledge and experience of learners, while closed questions usually require a specific answer.

Look at videos of tests or interviews and discuss strengths and weaknesses of interviewees' performance. Allow for short practice runs with learners testing or interviewing each other in pairs, changing partners.

### Individual or group projects

Individual or group projects are useful for holistic assessment. Identify the end products or expected outcomes of the project and provide examples for learners to observe, analyse or evaluate. Once they are clear on the process and agree on the steps required to achieve each outcome to an acceptable standard, they are likely to perform more effectively and

this will make the assessment process clearer and more effective.

If written documentation is required, provide opportunities for consultation and feedback on stages of the project and the opportunity for group members to produce several 'drafts' or attempts at the products before assessment. As with all assessment tasks that are used to decide whether an individual is competent, the assessment tasks are more valid if they mirror the way skills and knowledge would be applied in the workplace.

## Activity



### LLN in assessment

Select an assessment activity that you have used in your practice environment. Reflect on the preparation you gave your learners for the LLN demands of the assessment. Consider the preparation that is currently provided to learners who undertake the assessment activity. Could they have been better prepared? How would you prepare them in the future?

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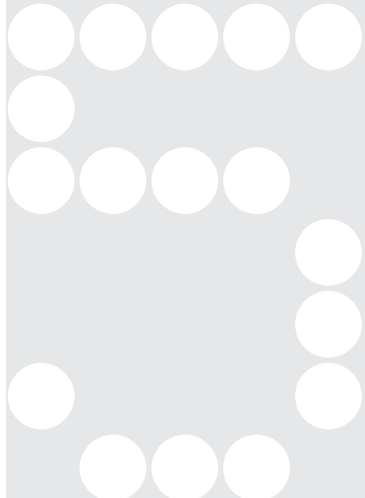
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# Where do I go for help?



LLN support not only develops learners' LLN skills. It also helps them to adapt to independent learning strategies and various training and assessment methods. Most VET learners need some help to deal with workplace literacy and numeracy demands. In most cases, a vocational trainer spending a few hours a week working with an LLN specialist will significantly improve learners' understanding of how to apply theory to practice, improving their achievements in VET. LLN bridging courses are not usually required.

To provide effective and successful learning experiences within economic realities, each organisation will need to draw on a range of expertise to find solutions that work. Depending on the size and configuration of your training organisation, you will have differing resources available to you. You should clarify these by drawing on the policies, protocols or guidelines covering LLN within your training organisation.

## Why get help?

Many functions relating to LLN in training will need to be carried out by training organisation staff. However, not all training organisations will have sufficient internal expertise to carry out these functions without assistance. Sometimes it makes sense to call in a specialist.

LLN specialists know a great deal about the acquisition and function of language skills, developmental issues in learning, and learning difficulties, but cannot know about the intricacies of every vocational area. Vocational trainers know a lot about the vocational area, Training Packages and courses, and how that applies in an industry setting, but may have limited LLN expertise.

Collaboration will allow you to provide essential LLN training and support to your learners.

## When do I get help?

You will know you need help when either you feel you do not know enough about a particular learner's LLN skills or a group's skills to make appropriate adjustments to your practice, or you find that all the adjustments you make have limited effect on a learner's ability to succeed against the competencies. It is your judgement about the impact that specialist assistance will make to the success of the training program that will indicate if help is required.

## How do I find who can help?

This will differ depending on where you are training and/or assessing. Industry organisations could contact:

- local private or public LLN providers
- Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) to find out about how others in the industry provide LLN support
- the Reading and Writing Hotline by telephoning 1300 655 506 or by emailing <info@literacyline.edu.au>.



Industry organisations may also consider setting up a WELL program. For information about WELL, go to <[www.ibsa.org.au/content/well\\_training.html](http://www.ibsa.org.au/content/well_training.html)> or <[www.dest.gov.au/literacynet/programmes.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/literacynet/programmes.htm)>.

Some organisations have specific LLN departments or resources that can be drawn on for help. But there may not be established processes for working across departments. You may need to ask your supervisor or manager to assist you in navigating organisational policies, protocols or guidelines.



**What LLN support strategies are outlined in your practice environment's policies and procedures? How have trainers utilised these policies in the past?**

## Types of help

When trainers consider additional LLN support, they often think immediately of segregating the learner for specialist assistance. However, it is well known that the more integrated the solution, the more effective LLN support is likely to be. Segregating learners has advantages and disadvantages, but is only one approach to LLN support. There are a number of ways that support can be offered. The choice will depend on time available, resources, the will to collaborate and what is realistic.

Where possible, a combination of approaches should be taken to provide the learner with the most appropriate blend of support. As a guide, maximise the integration and minimise the negative impact of segregation.

The range of possible models for working with LLN specialists include the following.

### Ongoing liaison with LLN specialists

Sometimes trainers and LLN specialists can liaise closely to



## Snippet

resolve specific LLN difficulties identified for one or more learners. Each collaboration may be resolving quite different LLN issues. Solutions arrived at through this method fully integrate LLN and the vocational area. The support is then delivered by the trainer as part of the vocational training. Learners requiring support are not being singled out or segregated and do not have to attend extra classes. An added advantage is that the support benefits all the learners in the group. Each time the process occurs, the trainer's knowledge of LLN training and support is enhanced, improving training skills for the future.

It is difficult to provide very intensive support this way and trainers must feel comfortable with the amount of follow-up they are providing without feeling out of their depth. The model relies on very good communication between the trainer and the LLN specialist. Funding for this model could be accessed through professional development.

### Ongoing liaison

Klynton was working with a group of first year apprentice plumbers. He identified that there were several learners who would have difficulties reading the written material. He transcribed what he could on to tapes so the learners could listen to the information, but there were still documents and forms that the learners would need to know how to fill out. Klynton was daunted by the task of supporting the LLN needs of his group.

Klynton spoke to his supervisor, who said there was some money in the budget for professional development. The supervisor suggested that Klynton get in touch with Michelle, an LLN specialist they had called on in the past because she was familiar with the LLN skills required in the industry. His supervisor suggested Klynton organise some time to sit down with Michelle and work out specific strategies that Klynton could use.

Together Klynton and Michelle developed a checklist of strategies and specific activities to support Klynton's learners. After the initial meeting, Klynton had a couple of follow-ups with Michelle to discuss how he could address ongoing concerns.

As a result of their partnership, Klynton had a lower drop out rate than he had experienced in this class in previous years – he thought this was probably due to the extra LLN support within his teaching.



If you were to call on an LLN specialist, who would you call on? Is there an LLN specialist within your training organisation with appropriate industry knowledge? Usually LLN specialists who have delivered in WELL programs have a knowledge of what is required in the workplace.

## Activity



### Interview an LLN specialist

Make contact with an LLN specialist who has supported learners' LLN skills within industry – preferably someone from within your organisation. If this is not possible, locate an LLN specialist through your ISC or through your state literacy council. You will find a list of state/territory literacy councils on the Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL) website at <[www.acal.edu.au](http://www.acal.edu.au)>.

Your facilitator will assist you to locate the most appropriate specialist.

Interview the LLN specialist and find out about ways that your work could be supported. Record the possible options for future reference.

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### **One-to-one LLN tuition delivered by a specialist**

Where learners have very specific and intensive needs, one-to-one tuition may be necessary to support them in learning. But this only works well when what they are learning is linked directly to the skills they need in their main vocational training. Close collaboration and ongoing communication and liaison between the trainer and the LLN specialist will be a critical factor in the learner succeeding in both segregated and mainstream training.

One of the main negatives of this model is that learners can experience isolation and low self-esteem from being singled out in this way. One-to-one tuition is also expensive to deliver.

### **Small group LLN support delivered by a specialist**

Where the LLN needs of learners are identified as being beyond the scope of intervention by the trainer, more intensive, separate LLN

training may be required. However, this is not a 'send 'em off to get fixed up' solution. The content and delivery of the separate training needs to be developed in close cooperation with the trainer. It is very important that learners continue in mainstream training where possible while participating in the separate LLN support at another time. It is unlikely that segregated training will 'fix' learners. The two skill sets need to be developing concurrently. The programs need to be carefully coordinated and parallel to be effective so that development of LLN skills enhances learners' vocational competencies.

Learners can feel embarrassed about being identified as having LLN needs. Timetabling can be challenging when learners are already working and participating in full time training, and small group training can be expensive to deliver.

### **Team teaching**

In the team teaching model, the two trainers (content expert and LLN specialist) meet before each session to discuss their learning plan for the lesson and integrate their content material. The LLN support is delivered to the whole group in a team teaching situation with both content expert and LLN expert present. The learners then have access to both sets of expertise as they learn. This model benefits all learners as well as both professionals through a deeper understanding of each other's role in learning.

It can be expensive to deliver this way but the professional development advantages should be considered in the cost benefit analysis. Western Australia has developed the Course in Applied Vocational Study Skills (CAVSS). Several states have implemented CAVSS or developed their own model of LLN support. The CAVSS funding model supports this type of team based delivery. Experience has shown that LLN support is only feasible when both trainer and

specialist are committed to the model and care needs to be taken that learners with very specific LLN needs are targeted.



**What is offered at your training organisation, or within your state or territory, to support LLN?**

## Snippet

The following snippet describes a situation where it was felt appropriate to bring in a language expert to assist with the training of a group of Australian-born employees with low literacy skills. It is necessary to be aware of the particular problems that people with low levels of literacy may have. Many of these employees perform their jobs well and may have hidden their low level LLN skills from their employer, not wishing this difficulty to be made public. The issue of confidentiality arises.

### Getting a forklift licence

Len is employed in a transport and distribution company that is also an RTO. He left school early and has been working in the industry for many years. His first language is English but his reading and writing skills are extremely limited. The company is aware of the language difficulties of some of its employees and wants to ensure that they all get their forklift licences. Because of the communication skills required in the evidence guide of the *TDTD1097B Operate a forklift* unit of competency, the RTO has to ensure the language of the training program can be understood by the employees.

The trainer and the LLN specialist from the local TAFE institute meet to plan the program, which has to comply with state licensing requirements. This means the candidates have to understand and be able to read and interpret various notices and labels on the forklift in English. The LLN specialist conducts individual language assessments before the course starts. Together the trainers reassure employees of the confidential nature of this. Each week the two trainers meet before the lesson to plan the material they will deliver to the class. This involves some rewriting of the training materials. The LLN specialist undertakes the training for the licence test herself so that she is aware of the difficulties the employees may have, not just in meeting the performance criteria but also in gaining their licences.

Because the training program closely matched the requirements for the licence testing, the trainers were able to develop employees' skills successfully so they could gain their licences.

In this case, the trainer has called in the LLN expert to design the learning materials so that they are understood by the employees.

This has involved a preliminary assessment of the communication skills of the employees, and preparation of the written materials (in conjunction with the trainer) in language that is meaningful to the employees. Some vocabulary development has occurred in the training program, where appropriate. Finally, the theory assessment has been conducted verbally to give employees the best chance of successfully demonstrating their knowledge.



What guides the degree of LLN development in a training program?

## Snippet

### Language expert working alone model

If there is a stand-alone unit of competency on communication skills in the course you are delivering, you may need to call in an LLN specialist to deliver that unit. The role of the specialist would be to assess the level of communication skills of your learners and to devise an LLN delivery program that would address the unit of competency.

### LLN specialist in the plastics industry

Piroska is a process worker at a polymer product manufacturing company. The company is in the process of developing a training program for Piroska and her colleagues. Most of the employees undertaking the unit *PMBWKOPS309A Maintain and organise workplace records* have been in Australia for 20 years or more and have incomplete secondary schooling in their own country. The LLN specialist assesses the employees before starting the training to ascertain their levels of English, particularly their reading and writing skills. She then designs the training, taking account of their language needs as well as the LLN requirements in *PMBWKOPS309A Maintain and organise workplace records*. The training is adjusted to accommodate the particular language needs of Piroska and her colleagues using the documents required in their workplace.

In this case, *PMBWKOPS309A Maintain and organise workplace records* is a stand-alone unit that all employees have to undertake. The program is delivered using materials from the workplace. Because the program is customised to the workplace, the activities are meaningful and of immediate use. The assessment is conducted in the workplace.



What kinds of barriers might an LLN specialist face?

### But who pays?

Funding for LLN support differs according to the funding source. There are different funding models for:

- trainees and apprentices
- existing workers
- WELL programs.



For information about WELL funding, go to <[www.dest.gov.au/literacynet/programmes.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/literacynet/programmes.htm)>.

### Activity



#### LLN funding to support your learners

Investigate the funding available to support your learners in developing LLN skills.

How do you access this funding?

How could you use the funding in your practice environment?

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You may be interested in investigating ways to get ongoing professional support with others also interested in addressing LLN issues within learning and assessment practice. Some options are available through:

- assessor networks – contact your state training authority or ISC for a list of local networks
- Reframing the Future communities of practice projects – for more information visit <[www.reframingthefuture.net](http://www.reframingthefuture.net)>
- National ISCs that produce resources relating to LLN – visit <[www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training\\_skills/policy\\_issues\\_reviews/key\\_issues/nts/lmk/advisory.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/lmk/advisory.htm)> for a list of national ISCs.

### Activity



#### LLN specialists

Compile a list of LLN specialists who you could call on for assistance with learners in your practice environment.

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# Glossary

## **Assessment materials**

are any resources that assist in any part of the assessment process. They may include information for the candidate, assessment tools or competency standards.

*From the Training Package Assessment Materials Project*

## **Assessment method(s)**

means the particular technique used to gather different types of evidence. This may include methods or techniques such as questioning, direct observation, structured activities, third party feedback, portfolios and review of products.

*From the Training Package Assessment Materials Project*

## **Assessment process**

is the series of key steps in the assessment cycle.

*From TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package*

## **Assessment tool**

contains both the instrument and the instructions for gathering and interpreting evidence:

- instruments/s – the specific questions or activity developed from the selected assessment method/s to be used for the assessment (a profile of acceptable performance and the decision making rules for the assessor may also be included)
- procedures – the information/ instructions given to the candidate and/or the assessor regarding conditions under which the assessment should be conducted and recorded.

*From the Training Package Assessment Materials Project*

## **Competency standard/s**

set out and define the requirements for effective workplace performance in a discrete area of work, work function, activity or process and are used as the basis for learning and the benchmarks for assessment within the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

Competency standards are expressed in outcome terms and specify knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standards of performance required in the workplace.

Competency standards have a standard format defined by DEST and are referred to as unit/s, unit/s of competency, competency/ies, competency specifications.

*From TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package*

## **Evidence**

is information gathered to support a judgement of competence against the specifications of the relevant unit/s of competency.

Evidence can take many forms and be gathered from a number of sources. Assessors often categorise evidence in different ways, for example:

- direct, indirect and supplementary sources of evidence, or a combination of these
- evidence collected by the candidate or evidence collected by the assessor
- historical and recent evidence collected by the candidate and current evidence collected by the assessor.

*From TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package (adapted from the Training Package Assessment Materials Project)*

**Inclusivity**

is a term used to define behaviours which actively acknowledge, respect and build on individual differences and individual needs to create a positive and inclusive learning culture and environment.

*From TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package*

**Language proficiency**

is the skill of being able to use language. For example, to be a proficient English speaker is to be able to speak English well.

**Learning and assessment pathway**

means a path or sequence of learning that involves the combination of learning experiences, formative assessment opportunities and summative assessment to determine competence.

*From TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package*

**Learning materials**

are the tools used to convey learning content, meaning in training and to provide opportunities for practising new skills, for example: group-based activities, role plays, written activities, case studies, simulations, audio or visual activities, practice or demonstration, individual assignments, individual group projects, workplace practice and research.

*From TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package*

**Learning plan**

refers to the plan developed between the trainer/facilitator and the individual learner, in a learning/facilitation relationship, to meet individual learning needs. This plan contains the learning goals to be achieved and the structure and logistics of the learning relationship.

*From TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package*

**National Training Information Service (NTIS)**

is the National Register for recording information about Registered Training Organisations, Training Packages and accredited courses. Information held on the NTIS is searchable and publicly accessible via the Internet. The NTIS contains comprehensive information on endorsed Training Packages which have been approved by Ministers and includes full details of competency standards; a listing of NTQC noted support materials with contact source; details of AQF accredited courses/ qualifications; and contact details and scope of registration of all Registered Training Organisations.

*From AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations*

**Prose text**

is the ordinary form of spoken or written language.

*From the Macquarie Dictionary, Revised Third Version*

**Reasonable adjustment**

is the process of adjusting or changing the assessment process to meet the needs and characteristics of the candidates being assessed and any equity requirements. The determination of 'reasonableness' requires judgement that must take into account the impact on the organisation and the need to maintain the integrity of the unit of competency.

*From TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package*

**Training specification**

specifies the performance levels that must be met, or what is to be achieved through the training. A training specification may be:

- a Training Package unit of competency
- learning outcomes from accredited courses with vocational outcomes
- non-accredited industry specific learning programs.

**Trigger words**

are words that alert the use of LLN, such as read, interpret, report, label.

**Unpack**

means to read and closely examine or analyse.

**Validated tools**

are tools used to measure performance that are based on well thought-out, agreed standards. Validated tools used to assess LLN include:

- tools based on the National Reporting System (NRS)
- International Second Language Proficiency Rating (ISLPR)
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

*From TAALLN401A Language, literacy and numeracy issues within learning and assessment practice in the TAA40104 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment*

### **Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) – National Training System**

<[www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training\\_skills/policy\\_issues\\_reviews/key\\_issues/nts](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts)>

This site is a hub of useful information for VET practitioners – become familiar with it and visit it frequently. It provides lots of useful, comprehensive information about VET and has links to other sites about Training Packages. It also includes publications about LLN and workplace communication issues in Training Packages. The publications page contains a complete list of DEST publications, some of which are available by post and some that can be downloaded.

### **National Training Information Service (NTIS)**

<[www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au)>

This site covers Training Packages, including all the units of competency that make up a full Training Package.

### **National Reporting System (NRS)**

<[www.nrs.dest.gov.au](http://www.nrs.dest.gov.au)>

This site provides lots of information about the NRS, including background and case studies.

### **DEST Literacynet**

<[www.detya.gov.au/ty/litnet/default.htm](http://www.detya.gov.au/ty/litnet/default.htm)>

The Literacynet website includes information about national tools and resources that provide support to trainers and assessors, LLN trainers and LLN providers.

This site includes LLN resources developed through Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) funds, or through Adult Literacy National Projects. Many resources are downloadable.

### **Vocational Numeracy Online**

<[www.dest.gov.au/archive/ty/litnet/numeracy/home/nh\\_0000.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/ty/litnet/numeracy/home/nh_0000.htm)>

Vocational Numeracy Online is a resource for learners in VET to help improve numeracy for work and training.

### **Numeracy and computing**

<[www.dest.gov.au/literacynet/numcomp/0203.html](http://www.dest.gov.au/literacynet/numcomp/0203.html)>

This resource demonstrates how trainers can use computers to enhance adult numeracy learning. It shows how to integrate technology and numeracy to provide innovative and effective learning experiences. It includes a collection of numeracy and computing activities with accompanying notes for the trainer.

### **WELL database**

<[www.aris.com.au/welldata](http://www.aris.com.au/welldata)>

This database lists all the resources developed with WELL funding, including general and industry specific products. The site lists information about where each item can be accessed.

### **Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL)**

<[www.acal.edu.au/index.html](http://www.acal.edu.au/index.html)>

ACAL is a professional association that aims to raise awareness of adult literacy issues and promote the recognition of adult literacy teaching as a profession. ACAL provides information on current policies and services in adult literacy practice in Australia and promotes community awareness on these issues.

### **Training Package Assessment Guides**

This resource comprises ten guides that include practical tools and resources for improving assessment practices. It is available from the Resource Generator at <[resourcegenerator.gov.au](http://resourcegenerator.gov.au)>. Once at the site, follow the steps outlined below:

- select 'Tell me more'
- select 'Log on as guest'
- choose an industry area from the drop down menu, then select 'Update'
- select 'Training Package Assessment Guides'
- choose one of the ten guides that are then presented in chapters.

This resource is also available from Australian Training Products at <[www.atpl.net.au](http://www.atpl.net.au)>.



### **Frequently asked questions about language, literacy and numeracy issues in the Australian Quality Training Framework**

This resource provides information to help trainers and assessors understand how LLN fits into the delivery of quality training and assessment. The electronic version includes hotlinks to useful resources.

Download this resource from the DEST website at <[165.12.253.219/publications/publication.asp?qslD=435](http://165.12.253.219/publications/publication.asp?qslD=435)>.

### **Make It Real: Workplace Assessment Strategies for Language, Literacy and Numeracy**

This resource has been developed to help assessors identify and address the LLN levels and needs of candidates in an assessment process. It includes a handbook and video.

*Make It Real* is available from the Innovation and Business Skills Council. Details can be obtained from <[www.ibsa.org.au](http://www.ibsa.org.au)>.

### **Culture at Work**

This is a PDF resource for trainers and assessors to assist with learners from a background other than English in either an employment or pre-employment setting. It includes strategies that aid 'culturally inclusive' practice, an overview of intercultural communication and a range of activities. It will assist trainers and assessors to work more effectively with people from a background other than English.

This resource can be downloaded from the Literacynet website at <[www.dest.gov.au/literacynet/resources1.htm#Language](http://www.dest.gov.au/literacynet/resources1.htm#Language)>.

### **Working with Diversity**

*Working with Diversity* is a set of three publications and a CD-ROM produced to assist Registered Training Organisations and auditors to provide quality services to all learners, and to meet access and equity obligations under the Australian Quality Training Framework. It outlines some of the key issues to consider when working with different client groups and explains such concepts as equity, diversity, cultural appropriateness and reasonable adjustment.

This resource can be downloaded from the DEST website at <[www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training\\_skills/policy\\_issues\\_reviews/key\\_issues/nts/pubs/default.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/pubs/default.htm)>.

### **One Way Street**

This video has been created from an Indigenous perspective and describes what it is like to face literacy difficulties on a day to day basis. It explores scenarios ranging from a small manufacturing company to a remote community, and features insights from a range of Indigenous people. Copies are available for purchase through the Indigenous Studies Product Development Unit at Tropical North Queensland TAFE, (07) 4042 2604.

# Appendices

Appendix 1:  
Assessment matrix for evidence

Appendix 2:  
Observation checklist

## Appendix 1 – Assessment matrix for evidence

TAALLN401A Address language, literacy and numeracy issues within learning and assessment practice								
Evidence requirements	Evidence gathering techniques							
	Workplace observation or practical demonstration	Oral questioning interview	Third party reports	Personal statement/ resume	Learning and/ or assessment tasks	Reflective journal	Projects/ case studies	Other
<b>TAALLN401A/01 Determine the LLN requirements of the workplace training specifications, learning program and assessment process</b>								
1.1 The level of key LLN skills is determined from the training specification								
1.2 The level of key LLN skills required in the workplace, and reflected in the learning program and planned assessment methods, is identified								
1.3 Learner's individual learning plan is developed taking into account LLN requirements								
1.4 The assistance of LLN professionals is sought where necessary								
<b>TAALLN401A/02 Drawing on the assistance of specialist advice when required, interpret and apply validated tools and other sources of information to determine the LLN</b>								
2.1 The existing literacy skills of learners are determined using validated tools and other sources of information								
2.2 The language proficiency of the learners is determined using validated tools and other sources of information								
2.3 The existing numeracy skills of the learners are determined using validated tools and other sources of information								
<b>TAALLN401A/03 Develop vocational learning program and assessment methodology to take account of learner's LLN skill levels and those required in the training specification</b>								
3.1 Vocational learning programs are customised to take account of individual learner's LLN skills and the level of skills required within the training specification								
3.2 Assessment methods and materials are selected and customised to take account of the learner's LLN skills and the level of skills required within the training specification								
3.3 Learning materials are selected, customised or developed that are appropriate for the LLN skills of learners								
<b>TAALLN401A/04 Deliver and monitor a vocational learning and assessment program which takes account of learner's LLN skill levels and those required in the training specification</b>								
4.1 Learning support strategies are applied to assist learners to develop the reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy skills required within the training specification to achieve competence								
4.2 Appropriate types of workplace communication are demonstrated in the learning and assessment context consistent with level of LLN skill required within the training specification								
4.3 Learning program and assessment methods are monitored and evaluated continuously to determine areas for improvement								
4.4 Learner progress towards the achievement of language, literacy and numeracy skill levels required in the workplace for competent performance as determined by the training specification are recorded in order to implement appropriate strategies								
<b>TAALLN401A/05 Access specialist learning support where required on the basis of evidence</b>								
5.1 The need for specialist LLN assistance for the learner is determined based on the scope of the training and assessment role and collected evidence about particular needs of the learner								
5.2 Appropriate strategies for collaboration with specialist LLN services are applied using organisational policies, protocols or guidelines								

## Appendix 2 – Observation checklist

	Did the candidate demonstrate the following skills?	Comments	Yes	No
Candidate's name:				
Assessor's name:				
Unit of competency:				
Name of workplace/organisation:				
Dates of assessment:				
Procedure/activity:				

**The candidate's performance was:** Not satisfactory  Satisfactory

**Feedback to candidate:**

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**Assessor's signature:**

**Date:**

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**Candidate's signature:**

**Date:**

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