

Literacy, numeracy and foundation skills in VET

Vodcast Discussion Notes #1

Background

ACER and Aspire—both not-for-profit educational companies—are collaborating on the issue of Foundation Skills, particularly language, literacy and numeracy (LLN), in VET. As part of this, we are developing and making available to our clients a series of short vodcasts that promote LLN in VET and discuss the use and role of the Foundation Skills Training Package (FSK).

This set of Discussion Notes accompanying the vodcasts is designed for RTOs to use as starting points for discussing LLN in their delivery and training in VET. We recommend you use them before staff and trainers view them vodcasts.

Discussion Notes

Vodcast 1: Why addressing literacy and numeracy in VET is a priority

<https://aspirelr.com.au/pages/digital/vodcast-library/literacy-numeracy-priority-in-vet>

This vodcast provides background on the need to address LLN issues and sets the scene for the remaining vodcasts.

Reflection questions

1. Before watching the vodcast, have a small group discussion about these points:

- How important do you think literacy and numeracy skills are in VET and workplaces?
- do Foundation Skills impact on your training and delivery? In what ways?
- Has this changed in the 21st century, and, if it has, why do you think this is so?
- Do you know about and use the Foundation Skills Training package (called FSK for short)?
- Do you feel that your RTO addresses LLN issues well and supports learners with LLN needs?

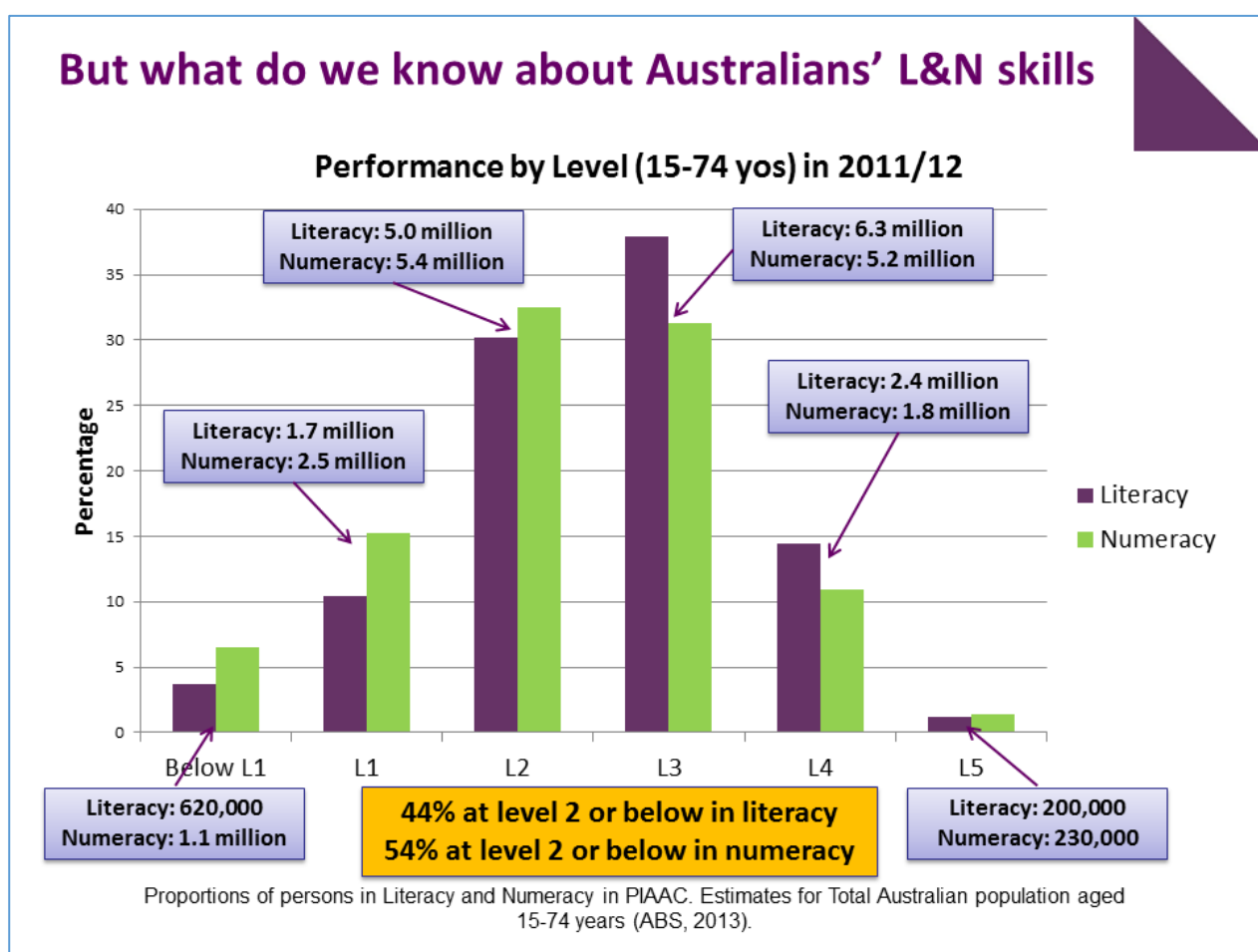


2. After watching the vodcast, reflect on the key messages and information presented, and have a small group discussion about the following:

- Now you have viewed the vodcast, has any of the information or data it presented changed your mind about how important literacy and numeracy skills are in VET and workplaces?
- In what ways and why?
- Are there any specific comments or issues raised by Juliette Mendelovits or Megan Lily that resonate with you and your experiences?
- Do you now feel there are more reasons for improving how your RTO addresses LLN issues and supports learners with LLN needs? How could you best do this?
- Are there any specific comments or issues raised by the podcast that you want to discuss and reflect on, or investigate further?

Information and statistics

Here are copies of key information and statistics from the vodcast.



Please contact ACER at cspa@acer.org for a PDF copy of these materials.

Further reading and references

In September 2017, the OECD released a targeted country report on Australia's performance in PIAAC, [Building Skills for All in Australia: Policy Insights from the Survey of Adult Skills](#). This close examination revealed certain key challenges facing Australia:

- Numeracy represents a specific challenge
- Signs of poor numeracy performance can be traced back to initial schooling
- Women have weaker numeracy skills than men
- There is a large gap between the most proficient and least proficient adults in literacy and in numeracy
- Many well-educated adults have low literacy and/or numeracy skills
- Young women in Australia are much more likely to be not in employment, education or training (NEET) than young men (OECD, 2017, p. 9)

The report concluded:

Taken together, although Australia's average results are not poor, the challenges presented by adults with low basic skills may lead to Australia being left behind in terms of innovation and economic growth by countries that have been more successfully investing in the skills of all their people (OECD, 2017, p. 9).

Other recommended readings

- The former Industry Reference Committee's [No More Excuses](#) report is a good read about the importance of LLN for VET.
- The Australian Industry Group research reports feature LLN in the workforce and are available [here](#). They include: 'Tackling Foundation Skills in the Workforce'; 'When Words Fail'; 'Investing in Workforce Literacy Pays'.