Literacy, numeracy and foundation skills in VET
Vodcast Discussion Notes #2

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 accompanying Discussion Notes 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 the vodcasts.

Discussion notes

Vodcast 2: LLN Acronyms ACSF, FSK and more
This vodcast looks at some of the terminology and acronyms we use when talking and writing about adult literacy and numeracy. Education in general—and maybe VET in particular—is great at deploying acronyms. Within literacy and numeracy circles, for example, we have LLN, ACSF, CSFW, FSK, ESL, EAL, CALD, NESB. Then there’s ALLS, PIAAC and more.

Reflection questions
1. Before watching the vodcast, have a small group discussion about these points:
   - What do you understand by the term Foundation Skills?
   - How does this compare with LLN? What does LLN mean and how do these skills relate to FS? Have you used other terms and their acronyms when describing LLN or FS before, for example ABE?
   - Are you familiar with the two national FS frameworks: the ACSF and the CSFW? How do they relate to each other? What are their differences?
   - Are you aware of the Foundation Skills Training Package (FSK)? Does your RTO use the FSK?
   - Do you know why the FSK was developed? (Note that vodcast 4 discusses the FSK in greater detail.)
   - Given Australia’s multicultural diversity, it is widely acknowledged that learners from non-English speaking backgrounds are a crucial part of the VET landscape. Which terms and related acronyms refer to such learners?
   - An important acronym in VET is AQF. What do you know about the AQF? How it is used in VET and elsewhere? What do you know about the relationship between AQF levels and ACSF levels?

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

- Did you learn anything new? Were you already familiar with the range of different terms used in relation to foundations skills in VET?
- Are there any specific comments or issues raised by the vodcast that you want to discuss and reflect on, or to investigate further?
Information from the podcast

FS ACRONYMS

ABE/ALBE
Previously used terms for LLN: Adult Basic Education and Adult Literacy and Basic Education

ACSF
The Australian Core Skills Framework, which features:
- Learning
- Reading
- Writing
- Oral communication (including speaking and listening)
- Numeracy

ALL or ALLS
The Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey, which was the earlier survey of adult literacy and numeracy before PIAAC (see below)

AQF
The Australian Quality Framework

CALD
Culturally and linguistically diverse

CSFW
Core Skills for Work (employability skills)
Ten skill areas organised around three key clusters, which are:
1. Navigate the world of work
2. Interact with others
3. Get the work done

CSPA
Core Skills Profile for Adults

EAL
English as an additional language

ESL
English as a second language

FS
Foundation Skills

FSK
Foundation Skills Training package

IALS
The International Adult Literacy Survey, which was the survey of adult literacy undertaken by Australia before ALLS (see above)

LLN
Language, literacy and numeracy

NESB
Non-English speaking background

NRS
National Reporting System (predecessor to the ACSF)

PIAAC
The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. PIAAC is a program of assessment and analysis of adult skills.

VET
Vocational Education and Training