

Transitioning Adult Literacy & Numeracy (L&N) Learners to the Next Level of Training & Work

Things to consider

Deciding to develop L&N skills can involve dealing with “ghosts”

- a well-established mantra of “I can’t”
- a history of “failing”
- a background of abuse or trauma
- shame, guilt, low confidence
- the risk of confirming there is no hope
- a habit of bluffing, defending and/or avoiding L&N tasks
- a sense that the move is incredibly public
 - even if no one is watching

Every step taken in L&N skills development has the potential to magnify stressors like these

- there is no way of knowing when, how or why this could occur
- the best of care can still trigger stress and the need to withdraw
 - not only from L&N skills development
- interpersonal &/or workplace dynamics can add even more pressure
 - derision, undermining, gossip, etc
- a proactively developed framework is essential to supporting each L&N learner's transition into further training or work roles
 - ethos, support people, strategies, guides/checklists

It is so important to proactively develop strategies which support L&N learners' moves into their next training or work experiences

- key to this is the continual challenge to assumptions
- what might this mean as a policy and approach?
- the suitability of any strategy needs to be confirmed with each L&N learner
 - standardised approaches can backfire
- this can involve:
 - repositioning L&N development from deficiency to achievement
 - supporting this with guidelines & resources
 - identifying & training key personnel to support L&N learners as required
 - developing organisation-wide education programs to reinforce initiatives
 - using learner & mentor feedback to optimise outcomes over time

Some of the things literacy & numeracy learning can involve

Literacy

- letter recognition
- handwriting
- sound patterns
- spelling
- pronunciation
- focusing & listening skills
- grammar & punctuation
- using/understanding texts
- comprehension/making meaning
- reading
- writing
- digital literacy

Numeracy

- number recognition
- estimating & calculating
- measuring
- calendars, dates, clocks, times
- directions
- the language (literacy) of “maths”
- interpreting symbols
- using formulae
- reading maps, technical drawings, charts
- using calculators, machines, equipment

Plus.... Learning to learn

- organising, note-taking, practising
- self-directed learning

Implications for organisations when learners seem ready for new work &/or training

- set everyone up to succeed
 - before, during **and** after
- position L&N skills development as a courageous achievement
- include the learner
 - seek their opinion
 - do they feel ready?
 - do they feel safe?
 - what do they know/think they need?
 - how can they defer or seek help if they need it?
- transition gradually
- help the learner prepare before going public
 - don't leave them high and dry
- don't assume!
 - test for this continually

Implications (cont'd)

- look at what supports are in place
 - before, during, after **and** ongoing
 - personnel
 - authorisers, supporters/buddies, mental health supports if required
 - guides/resources
 - technology (e.g. access to training & reference texts, Google search, etc)
 - enhancement & feedback schemes
- ensure the learning/work group and environment are supportive
 - develop counter-strategies in advance of issues arising
- check the resources & materials the learner is expected to work with
- proactively check-in with the learner while s/he's training and transitioning
- be there as “management” in spite of delegations

Implications for employers?

- audit current approaches in light of the above
- seek the input of L&N learners and mentors ahead of time
- develop policies, procedures, guidelines, materials as required
- develop checklists to assess new training programs, resources and work procedures
- establish & run training/education sessions re L&N at work
- gather feedback & review progress regularly

To discuss these concepts and/or how ALNS can help,
contact Fran Davidson on 0413 525 114 or via info@alns.com.au.