



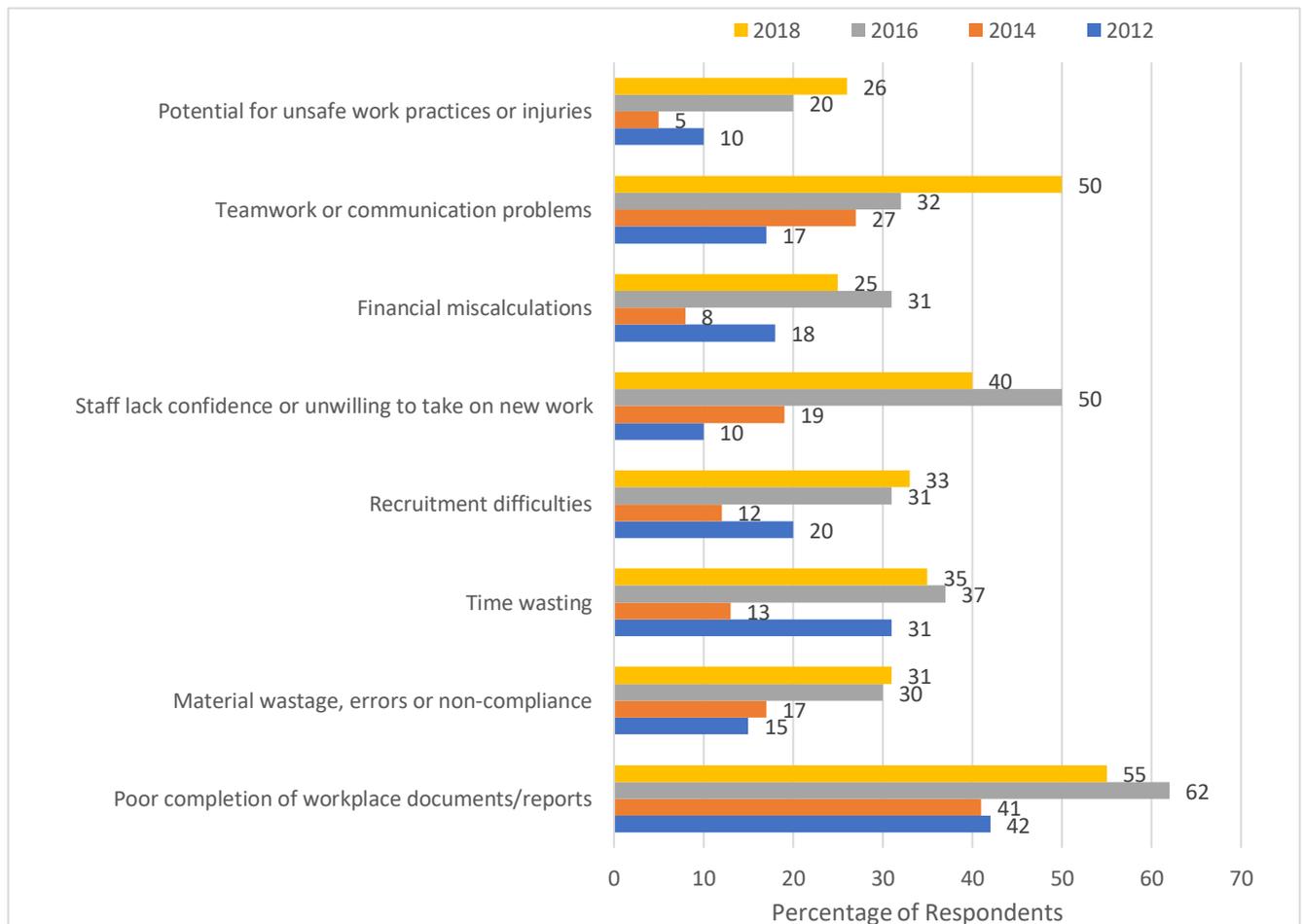
Building your employees’ literacy and numeracy skills can help your business

“With the workforce increasingly requiring foundation skills that include not only literacy and numeracy but digital literacy and advanced soft skills, it is disturbing that 99 per cent of employers are affected in some way by low levels of literacy and numeracy in their workforce.”

The Australian Industry Group (AIG), 2016

A Snapshot of Australia’s L&N Skill Levels at Work

In their *Workforce Development Needs Survey Report* (December 2018), the Australian Industry Group provides the latest employment snapshot of literacy and numeracy (L&N) skills. It makes for disturbing reading given the importance of communicating well at work! The completion of documents and reports, and teamwork can suffer when L&N skills are under-developed. The following chart summarises this.



Source: The Australian Industry Group, 2018, *Workforce Development Needs: Survey Report 2018*, page 14.

What can Literacy & Numeracy Involve?

The term, “literacy and numeracy”, involves much more than reading and writing. An employee can need to learn to spell, pronounce words, “do maths” and use technology. Data checking, comprehension and entry involve a range of L&N and digital skillsets. Even here, traditional topics like reading and writing count. A person can need to build these skills first before they independently engage with work technologies.

The table below summarises some of the areas literacy and numeracy learners can need help with.

Literacy	Numeracy	Digital Skills
letter recognition	number recognition	completing online forms & reports
handwriting	estimating & calculating	understanding instructions & field names
sound patterns	measuring & dosing	getting ready to use digital technology (turning it on; logging in; setting up an account; saving data; rebooting; problem-solving)
spelling	calendars, dates, clocks, times	using digital technology – computers, phones, clocks, meters, calculators, hand-held devices, plant & machinery
pronunciation	taking & giving directions	
focusing & listening skills	interpreting signs & symbols	
grammar & punctuation	reading maps, technical drawings, charts	
using/understanding templates	the language (literacy) of “maths”	
comprehension/making meaning		
reading		
writing		

Adults also need to know **how** to learn – how to study, take notes, memorise and build skills.

Note: the above lists are not exhaustive and every employee can have different learning needs.

How can low L&N skills levels affect work?

Adults who struggle with literacy and/or numeracy often do so because of the focus upon teaching large groups in schools. That’s hard to avoid but pupils who absorb information too fast or slowly can be overlooked. Personalised programs increasingly feature but those challenged in earlier decades were often given little choice but to be left behind.

At work, adults with literacy and numeracy skills gaps tend to draw upon a number of coping strategies. They feel confident enough to let management know they need support although they tend to keep such things to themselves. This can create additional challenges in the workplace. Common coping strategies include:

- asking friends, family or workmates to help them complete a task or do it for them
- avoiding certain duties
- avoiding or refusing to attend training sessions
- becoming defensive when asked to do more than they can
- staying silent in work groups and meetings

All of these factors hint at how team dynamics can be affected when L&N skills gaps are overlooked. Workplace gossip and group dynamics can trigger withdrawal and “anti-social” behaviour. Tailored L&N mentoring helps people discover how much they **can** do. It’s often best done on a one-on-one basis or in small learning groups. As awareness and confidence levels increase, workplace experiences also start to improve.

How can ALNS help?

Adult Literacy & Numeracy Services (ALNS) helps people develop their English literacy, numeracy and/or digital (LND) skills. This can require different help for different students - literacy and numeracy involves many things. Every industry and job description has its own processes, technology and language.



ALNS' founder, Fran Davidson, has solid experience in teaching, studying and supporting people. Over 30 years' experience in strategic marketing and business helps her help others build their skills; check their work; explore new concepts; and prepare for/complete assessments. She offers relaxed, professional, personalised mentoring that's based upon learner **and** employer needs. Depending upon her other commitments, session times and location can be flexible.

ALNS focuses upon what matters – **your** objectives and what they entail. Before sessions start, Fran meets with you and your employee(s) to explore and agree the areas to target. Her approach is all-age, -culture, -religion and -gender friendly. Literacy & numeracy skills development works best when it's focused upon real-world tasks. Working in this way, ALNS aims to make learning is effective, efficient, supportive **and** enjoyable.

Call Fran on 0413 525 114 or email info@alsn.com.au to explore LND skills development in your workplace.

To learn more about Adult Literacy & Numeracy Services, visit <https://www.alsn.com.au>.