AUR Learning Strategy Guide
Learning Principles

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KNOWLES' THEORY OF ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Malcolm Knowles' theory of adult learning, known as Andragogy, has been hugely influential. Knowles, an American educator, identified six principles of adult learning which are described below.

1. Adults are internally motivated and self-directed

   Adults are used to being responsible for their own decisions and for their own lives, and need to be treated as capable of self-direction. Adults resent and resist situations in which they feel imposed upon by others. Adults need to contribute to how and what they learn.

   Some strategies that address the implications of this include:

   - being approachable and encouraging the asking of questions and exploration of concepts
   - actively and carefully listening to any opinions and questions
   - providing regular, constructive and specific feedback
   - reviewing goals and acknowledging goal completion
   - encouraging learners to form action learning groups outside the formal learning environment
   - using a range of different learning activities
   - acknowledging that people learn in different ways.

2. Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences

   Adults have an existing foundation of knowledge and experience, gained from life and work experience. They like to be given an opportunity to apply it to their new learning experiences.

   Some delivery strategies that address the implications of this include:

   - finding out about learners' past experience assisting learners to draw on this experience when completing a new qualification
   - encouraging learners to identify and acknowledge any existing biases or habits they may have formed through their past experience

3. Adults are goal oriented

   Adult students become ready to learn when they feel they need to know or do something in order to cope effectively with their workplace issues or problems.

   Some delivery strategies that address the implications of this include:

   - clearly linking the learning to the needs of the learner's workplace
   - providing real case-studies that illustrate how to apply the learning
   - asking questions that motivate reflection, inquiry and further research.

4. Adults are relevancy oriented

   Adult learners want to know the purpose of what they are learning and the relevance to what they want to achieve.

   Some delivery strategies that address the implications of this include:

   - asking learners to do some reflection before and after a learning experience. E.g. their learning expectations prior to the experience, what they learnt after the experience and how they might apply what they learnt in the future or in their workplace
   - providing some choice in activities so that learning is more likely to reflect the participants' interests
   - making the purpose of the training and learning activities clear and providing links between what they are learning and the workplace.

5. Adults are practical

   Adults learn through problem-solving, where they can recognise first-hand how what they are learning applies to life and the work context.

   Some delivery strategies that address the implications of this include:

   - being explicit about how what the participant is learning is useful and applicable to their job
   - promoting active participation and providing hands-on experience by allowing learners to try things rather than just observe.

6. Adult learners like to be respected

   Respect can be demonstrated to learners by:

   - taking an interest in the learners and their work
   - acknowledging the wealth of experiences that learners bring to the learning experience
regarding learners as colleagues who are equal in life experience
+ encouraging expression of ideas, reasoning and feedback at every opportunity.

For further information on Knowles’ work, go to: www.infed.org/thinkers/et-knowl.htm

GARDNER’S MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences is another adult learning theory that may be useful to review when designing and delivering learning programs that cater for a range of learner needs. Gardner’s theory expands on the traditional understanding of intelligence, which tended to be limited to measures of verbal and logical-mathematical skill (this definition of intelligence is the basis of IQ style testing). Gardner defines intelligence as the ability to ‘solve a problem or create a product that is valued within one or more cultures’ and identifies eight different types of intelligence. These recognise a larger number of abilities, such as creative thinking, as valuable skills that require intelligence.

Gardner originally named seven types of intelligence:
+ visual/spatial
+ logical/mathematical
+ verbal/linguistic
+ interpersonal
+ intrapersonal
+ kinaesthetic.

Gardner later added an eighth intelligence:
+ naturalistic.

Recognising that learners may have different types of intelligence that influence the way they prefer to learn may help improve learning outcomes. The figure below provides an overview of the original seven intelligences identified in Gardner’s theory and some implications they may have on the way people learn. In some situations, learning programs may be able to be adapted to suit a particular learning style or a broader variety of learning styles.

Designing Training

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CONSULT WITH INDUSTRY
A lot of training in the printing industry is delivered to people who are employed, so engaging with employers and understanding their needs is a very important initial step in designing training to identify specific requirements and expectations. But it’s not just at the beginning that it’s important – keeping closely connected to industry needs is important throughout the training cycle.

Training in the printing industry should always involve close cooperation amongst employers, associations and industry representatives to ensure a productive workforce and that current needs are being met. To remain viable, RTOs must ensure that training aligns with current business strategies.

There are different ways that RTOs can engage with industry, for example by establishing partnerships with employers or establishing advisory groups.


A LEARNING OR TRAINING STRATEGY
Under the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2, all providers must have strategies in place to provide quality training. This includes training strategies that meet the requirements of the relevant Training Package. Training and assessment strategies must be developed in consultation with industry.

A learning/training strategy is an organising framework for the delivery and assessment of a group of units or a full Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification. It provides an outline of how a particular qualification will be delivered and assessed. A typical training strategy may include the following specifications:

- the focus of target groups and their characteristics
- the selection of particular units of competency available for the qualification, within the packaging rules set out by the Training Package
- options for structuring delivery including broad content structure
- pathways for learners
- delivery approaches (on-the-job, off-the-job, blended)
- assessment information
- staffing
- operational requirements.

The following learning/training strategy template may be used by RTOs to assist with planning appropriate training to meet industry needs. Here is an example of a training strategy:

Need to include an Automotive learning/training strategy sample template here

When working with trainees and apprentices there is a requirement to complete a ‘training plan’. This document details some similar information to a training strategy, but is for an individual.
Choosing electives

Learners often make their elective choices through negotiation at enrolment, based on needs and interests. If the learner is based in the workplace, the employer is usually included in planning the choices, depending on the needs of the workplace and the job role of the learner.

For trainees and apprentices, the elective choices are often included in a training plan, which forms part of the contract of training. This contract outlines the roles and responsibility of all the parties involved and is a legal agreement between an employer, an apprentice or trainee, and the training provider.

SAMPLE TRAINING PLAN

‘We have a training plan with standard list of units for each qualification that we take out when we enrol learners. That’s just a place to start – we sort out what works best for both the employer and the learner. If we don’t have particular equipment to train learners on, then we work out a way to access it.’

Standard training plan templates for traineeships and apprenticeships are available from State Training Authorities (STAs), who are responsible for the delivery of apprenticeships/traineeships in their jurisdiction. For further information and resources available, visit the STA website in your state or territory – links are available at: www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/Contacts.asp#7

Need to add an automotive sample training plan here

TRAINING PROGRAM

A training program supports the implementation of a training strategy. While a training strategy outlines the delivery of a qualification as a whole, a learning program breaks this down into individual units of competency and provides a detailed plan for learners to achieve the specified training outcomes.

Information specified in a learning program may include:

- its purpose
- the target group, their needs and characteristics
- the training specifications and the outcomes to be achieved, such as the units of competency or other specifications
- the content of materials and the learning activities involved
- training and assessment approaches, including context, mode and methods of delivery and assessment methods and tools
- the structure and sequence of learning, including timeframes
- any required resources and other implementation requirements, including methods of ensuring a safe learning progression.

Some issues to consider when designing a training program include:

- Learners and their needs – an understanding of learners and their needs is essential for a successful learning program. This includes an understanding of the learner’s current level of skill and knowledge and any past experience they may have, as well as any particular requirements the learner may have such as LLN needs and, if in the workplace, their job role.
- Resourcing implications – when designing training, consideration must be given to the resources that the industry will need to contribute. This may include equipment, personnel or other resources and is discussed in more detail in the following sections. The availability of these resources may impact on how and when to deliver training.
- Industry needs within a unit of competency – when a connection is identified between a training need and a unit of competency, it should be noted that training is not always required for the entire unit. The specific needs of an organisation, in relation to the unit of competency, should be considered and efforts focused in that area.
- Common areas of need across several units of competency – in completing a needs analysis, areas of need which repeat across several units of competency may be identified and addressed through a common learning activity.

Identifying activities and resources

For training programs to be effective, consideration must be given to the resources available and the types of activities selected. RTOs need to ensure that wherever possible the resources and activities included in the program reflect actual industry conditions and address the standards of performance required in the workplace. Every industry and individual organisation has its own unique processes, reporting lines, materials and equipment, and these should be taken into account in training program design.

Resources

The resources required to design and deliver a training program include both the materials and items that form the focus of the learning program as well as support materials. When designing a learning program, consideration should be given to industry documents such as position descriptions, manuals, policies and standard operating procedures. These resources should be included as part of the learning materials used by participants if possible.

It is also important to consider the resources and assets that are required for the learning program. Some factors and considerations include:

- Equipment – Is there equipment that can be made available for training purposes, or is all equipment in use as part of day to day operations?
- Personnel – Who is available to either provide or attend learning activities? Will work schedules need to be re-arranged to accommodate this?
- In some cases people will be able to learn while they are involved in day to day operations, particularly when the training is about equipment or machinery use.

Activities

Good training strategies and programs use a mix of methodologies. They allow learners to:

- understand the level of performance expected of them, according to industry performance standards and qualification requirements. It is essential that expected levels of performance are made clear. Documents including photographs and diagrams can help do this
- understand how the training will improve their own work practices and how this relates to their ability to meet industry requirements
- observe a demonstration of the skills or competencies required
- practise the skills or competencies required and receive feedback to improve performance
- review and understand the criteria for evaluation or assessment, prior to undergoing assessment or evaluation.
The observation and practice of skills can occur in a number of environments and often involves a combination of settings. This includes both:

- formal training settings, such as the classroom or a simulated environment, and
- on-the-job settings, in a live or off-line situation where learners are given the opportunity to use the equipment they would be expected to use as part of their everyday tasks.

A number of methods can also be used to provide learners with observation opportunities and feedback. Some common options include:

- learners taking on additional duties or responsibilities to provide opportunities for practice
- self study material, which could be paper-based or online
- shadowing and buddy systems which provide opportunities to observe tasks taking place in a live setting.

The method, or combination of methods, used for training delivery is largely driven by the nature of the tasks involved in the training program and the resources required. However, there are some other important issues that should be taken into consideration, such as:

- the physical environment, which may be different from workplace to workplace
- the people involved, who may or may not actually work together
- the difference between a training or simulated environment and 'live' working environment
- the instructional styles of managers, supervisors and those providing training opportunities; these may often differ. This is particularly relevant in considering how feedback and instruction are to be provided.

Another important consideration in designing a training program is safety. Although learning on-the-job using real equipment and machinery may initially appear to be the best method for learning, in many cases individuals will need preparation in a different environment.

### CONTEXTUALISING UNITS

Contextualisation refers to tailoring units of competency to suit specific needs. The units of competency included in the Automotive Training Package describe, in a generic manner, how an experienced worker performs particular functions in the workplace. These generic descriptions are written in a way that makes them applicable to all work places within the industry and need to be contextualised to reflect the conditions of each individual enterprise or workplace where the unit is being delivered.

If units of competency are used as they originally appear in the Training Package, without contextualisation, industry may not get the learning outcomes that best meet their needs. Units need to be contextualised so that the performance standards, terminology, equipment, facilities and operating procedures unique to the industry or organisational activities are clearly articulated in relation to the generic information contained in units of competency.

In practice this means that RTOs or industry can ‘modify units of competency to reflect the local outcome required by an individual and/or enterprise’. This can be achieved by including, modifying or substituting text within the unit/s of competency, so that it is specific to a workplace context.

Examples of contextualisation could include:

- substituting enterprise specific requirements for generic terms in performance criteria, for example workplace specific policies and procedures
- adding to the range of conditions, and adding enterprise specific requirements, for example information about specific equipment or processes
- identifying any particular skills and knowledge required to perform the tasks in the workplace and add to required skills and knowledge or make it more enterprise specific
- identifying the kinds of evidence candidates may be able to provide in their job roles, and adding to the evidence guide

However, in all cases of contextualisation “the integrity of the outcome of the endorsed unit/s of competency must be maintained”, for example, elements and performance criteria must not be removed, distorted or narrowed.

### The contextualisation process

The following is the recommended process to contextualise units of competency.

1. Determine the units of competency relevant to the work of the enterprise.
2. Contextualisation is best undertaken by, or in coordination with, those who are most familiar with the tasks described by the relevant units of competency. It may be best to work closely with industry experts – someone like a supervisor, senior operator or safety officer who will have the most familiarity with the operations and functions described in the Training Package.
3. Review the entire unit, including:
   - Elements, performance criteria, foundation skills, range of conditions
   - Assessment evidence, performance evidence, knowledge evidence to become more familiar with the parameters for how the elements and performance criteria can be contextualised
4. Complete the contextualisation by answering the following question(s) against each element and the way in which it is described by each of the performance criteria. The most important questions to answer in contextualising elements and performance criteria is ‘how do we do it?’ and ‘how do we know when it has been done well?’

This question can be expanded in consideration of:

- other people who support or inform the task
- when and for how long the task(s) occur
- where does the task occur
- what specific materials, equipment and information are required to complete this task?

Delivering Training

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ON-THE-JOB

Learning on-the-job enables learners to learn at the same time as being employed. On-the-job learning usually involves workers being trained through mentoring, through shadowing skilled workers, or by receiving instruction from supervisors or trainers who come into the workplace.

An on-the-job learning pathway is identified by:

- identifying the specific goals for training
- describing the tasks and activities required for learning
- sequencing the activities to best meet the worker’s learning styles
- deciding on the model of guidance or mentoring
- deciding when and where practice will occur.

A useful model for delivering skill-based training, as covered by many units in the Printing and Graphic Arts Training Package, is the DEDICT model1.

The DEDICT model has two distinct phases: the instruction phase and the practise phases. In the first phase the facilitator is responsible for delivering the key requirements of the skill. Then, in the second phase, the learner leads the process providing the learner with the opportunity to practise and master the skill.

Workplace supervisors

Instructions for workplace supervisors involved in preparing candidates for on-the-job assessment are available on the IBSA website.
OFF-THE-JOB

Off the job learning is just that – learning that happens away from a work site, which may cover learning in a classroom or a training room, online learning or simulated learning. Lots of training is presented this way, using all sorts of different delivery strategies.

Wherever possible, make links to carrying out the job task or role in a work like situation.

Simulated learning environments can provide very effective learning environments for learning.

Units of competency in the Printing and Graphic Arts Training Package may be assessed in the workplace or in a simulated environment, so learning should also be connected to a workplace. Units suitable for delivery in a simulated environment include those where:

- the safety of the candidate and others is at high risk
- there is limited opportunity to present evidence of work-based practice and so waiting for such evidence would either be unreasonable, create unfair delay in the assessment process, or risk de-motivating the candidate
- learning could result in a breach of confidentiality or privacy.

Simulated environments should reflect a real workplace environment as closely as possible, including:

- work conditions that reflect those found in the workplace and include facilities, equipment and materials used in the workplace for the activities being learned; they should also reflect the relationships, constraints and pressures of the workplace
- consideration of would be typical ambient conditions encountered in the normal workplace as well as reflect the typical workflow involved
- information available to the learner on the nature of the activity must be consistent with workplace policies and practices
- the activity which the candidate must demonstrate in order to be assessed as competent must be realistic and reasonable in terms of scale
- information available to the candidate on the nature of the activity must be consistent with workplace policies and practices.

BLENDED DELIVERY

In reality, most training delivered against units and qualifications from the Automotive Training Packages are a blend of on-the-job and off-the-job, in a mix that is appropriate for the learner and the workplace in which they are employed. More information to be added including online learning.

STRUCTURING THE DELIVERY

Clustering
The way that information is presented to learners will be influenced by whether delivery is on-the-job, off-the-job or blended. There is often an overlap between the required skills and knowledge, or the underpinning knowledge, required across units. When this occurs, units can be clustered together for delivery and real workplace activities often combine aspects of a number of units. This is sometimes called integrated or holistic delivery.

Clustered delivery can be an efficient use of time and training resources, and be a better match to what really occurs in the workplace.

It is important that training programs show which units, or parts of units, are clustered together for delivery so that employers and other stakeholders understand how the requirements included in each unit are being covered in the training.

**Chunking**

One way of making information easy to follow is called chunking. Chunking involves breaking information down into sections or parts and then dealing with the parts one piece at a time.

Ideally you should limit yourself to three to five chunks of information at a time. Why five? Learners can store between five and nine pieces of information in short term memory at one time. Learners have greater capacity when they are feeling alert and awake, or when the information is simple and well structured and they are familiar with the terms and concepts.

Retention of information decreases when learners are tired, the information is complex or unfamiliar or the language and terminology is unfamiliar.

**Sequencing**

Sequencing is ordering the timing of when material will be presented to the learner. The way material is sequenced will impact learners’ comprehension.

There will always be different ways to sequence the learning program for learners, and often the sequence will be logical. Following are some approaches to consider when deciding on the sequence of material 2.

**Making adjustments to suit**

All learners have different needs and often a training program needs to be adjusted to suit the needs of particular learners. The term ‘reasonable adjustment’ in legislation relates only to people with a disability. However, all learners will benefit from inclusive practice that tailors delivery to individual learner requirements.

Reasonable adjustments include, for example:

- using personal support services, such as providing a reader, Auslan interpreter or scribe, or an attendant carer
- using assistive technology or special equipment to access training materials
- changing the format of training materials, for example providing information recorded in a format that the learner can listen to, rather than read
- making adjustments to equipment or the physical environment
- allowing for breaks in time to allow for medication or fatigue.

For further information, go to [www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au)

**MAINTAINING A CONNECTION WITH INDUSTRY**

As mentioned earlier, the connection to industry needs and standards should be maintained throughout the training cycle. The following are a couple of ways to ensure that this happens.

**Trainer’s skills**

The skill of trainers also need to be taken into account. Trainers must maintain currency of industry skills under the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations. This occurs in different ways for different RTOs and trainers. Some RTOs provide and encourage opportunities for industry placements, and often trainers maintain currency through the regular site visits to industry locations to visit learners and their work supervisors, where there are lots of informal opportunities to learn. Sometimes though, specialists are required for particular processes or equipment.

**Validating learning materials**

It is important to keep in touch with industry around learning materials to ensure that they reflect industry standards and current, relevant practice. Again, it’s also a requirement under the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations. RTOs seek industry validation in various ways, including arranging formal meetings, online forums and asking for direct feedback when on site visits.

**EVALUATION**

Evaluation is an important part of the development cycle for any training program. It provides an opportunity to evaluate the strategies and tools...
developed, and can be used as a mechanism to provide feedback to improve learning outcomes.

The 4 step approach

According to Kirkpatrick3, the reason for undertaking evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of training. He suggests a four level approach which, although originally designed for the evaluation of formal training sessions, can be applied as a useful tool to evaluate learning programs and strategies. These levels are outlined below.

Reaction

The first level is really about how participants ‘react’ to the learning experience. It is a measure of customer satisfaction and is usually evaluated by ‘tick and flick’ sheets about whether the participants liked the trainer, enjoyed the program or found the material easy to understand.

Learning

The second level is about whether skill and knowledge has improved. A trainer may teach people how to use a printing press (skill) or about new fire safety requirements (knowledge). It is usually evaluated by ‘testing’ participants in some way. Because contextualised units of competency describe standards of performance for individuals, performance evaluation is thoroughly described and undertaken through the formal act of assessment.

Behaviour

Most training strategies and programs aim to change behaviour. In other words, rather than learn how to operate a printing press more effectively (skill), employers want to see that the individual operates the printing press safely and effectively to produce printed materials. Rather than just remember the fire safety requirements (knowledge), employers want to see that the individual actually implements those requirements at work. Some of this behaviour change depends on the learning program, some depends on the workplace itself. Kirkpatrick argues that in order for behaviour change to occur the person must:

- want to change
- know what to do and how to do it
- work in the right climate
- be rewarded for changing.

The first two requirements can be met by the learning program. The second two rely on a positive attitude in the workplace and supportive management.

Note that ‘be rewarded for changing’ doesn’t necessarily refer to financial reward. It might for example be a positive comment or encouragement from a supervisor or colleague.

Results

The final level, results, is about successful outcomes for learners and meeting industry skill needs. This might include learners who have increased their productivity and decreased their wastage, and benefits to industry such as a decrease in days lost to injury, improvements in quality or time of production. These are really the measures for a return on investment in training. In essence the enterprise needs to undertake a cost benefit analysis of its overall training approach.

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INTRODUCTION

Under the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and the AQTF, RTOs need to have a strategy that details how it will establish the needs of learners. Often potential learners’ needs are established through interview, sometimes through the completion of a form, sometimes through both methods. An interview is an opportunity to ask about learner needs.

Sometimes learners are embarrassed or self-conscious of their special need, or about particular skills. Some people with low level language, literacy and
numeracy (LLN) skills are quite open about their skills, and others are embarrassed and will make no mention of them. Trainers need to always be on the lookout to identify when learners are having difficulties with training, for whatever reason.

**WELL TRAINING**

The Commonwealth government has funding available on a competitive grants basis to develop the LLN skills of workers – it’s called the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) program. WELL programs are developed to suit particular worker and workplace needs. For further information, contact IBSA or go to www.deewr.gov.au/well

**FOUNDATION SKILLS**

To assist with identifying what the key LLN tasks are within a unit of competency, new streamlined units have a field titled ‘Foundation Skills’ that highlights, or makes explicit, the LLN skills required. This information will assist trainers to know which LLN skills need to be developed for the job.

Foundation skills include the five core skills in the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF), which are: learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy.

The term ‘foundation skills’ also includes some employability skills, such as teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-management, and technology.

**TRAINING FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY**

Disability Standards for Education were formed under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and were introduced in August 2005. They clarify the obligations of education and training providers to ensure that students who have a disability are able to access and participate in education without experiencing discrimination.


Quality vocational training and assessment is often about making adjustments to meet the learning support needs of individuals. The information provided in this section is aimed at assisting trainers to meet the reasonable adjustment needs of people who have a disability.

**What is a disability?**

A disability presents some impairment to everyday activity. Some people with a disability do not have any impairments resulting from their disability. For example, a person who has a hearing impairment which is compensated for by a hearing aid may function without any adjustments. While some people with a disability may have an impairment because of the environment, not the disability itself. For example, hearing loss can be accentuated in a room with loud, competing noise and poor acoustics.

A disability may affect or relate to a range of human functions, including mobility, stamina, lifting ability, memory, vision, hearing, speech, comprehension and mood swings. This may be due to accidents, illnesses or birth disability.

Health conditions can also be acquired through sporting accidents, repetitive or over-use (through regular or sporting activities), or the daily activities of life.

There are many resources available that provide information on how to adjust training and assessment for someone who has a disability; some of these are listed in the contacts section below.

**Adjustments in training**

An open mind, common sense and tailoring to individual circumstances will help ensure individuals achieve the standards that employers and training providers expect. Reasonable adjustments need only be that – reasonable. It is about identifying what adjustments might reasonably be made and how they may be put into place.

Training and assessment can be made more appropriate and fairer for a person who has a disability through attitude, preparation and application.

**Attitude**

The attitude of others is often the greatest barrier for people who have a disability. While most people who have a disability will only ever require minor adjustments to ensure learning is positive, some will require additional support. There are many support agencies that can provide advice, however teachers/trainers may need to take additional time to ensure training meets the needs of the individual concerned.

Positive language creates an atmosphere of mutual respect, which is essential to learning. For example using language that identifies learners as people, rather than language that identifies them by one of his or her characteristics, conveys that the person is more important than the characteristic, such as the difference between a ‘person who has an intellectual disability’ and an ’intellectually disabled person’. A person who has an intellectual disability could also be identified by a range of equally important characteristics – height, age, sporting interests, etc. However, the term ‘intellectually disabled person’ refers to the disability as the major, and often only, defining characteristic.

**Preparation**

It is important to identify any functional issues arising from the nature and extent of a person’s disability. This can usually be done by discussing such issues with the individual. In most cases, this consultation will identify reasonable adjustment needs which can be put into place. There are many simple things that trainers can do to make reasonable adjustments to enable individuals who have a disability to succeed in training. In some cases, professional support may be required.

**Application**

Once reasonable adjustments have been implemented it is important to monitor and evaluate what has been done to ensure the best environment for continuous learning, because:

- adjustments may only need to be temporary – i.e. mechanisms may only need to be in place during an induction period or due to a temporary disability, in which case evaluation will ensure appropriateness without the need for ongoing monitoring
- adjustments may need reinforcing – when adjustments need to be ongoing, monitoring may reinforce patterns of behaviour in order for them to become ‘natural’
- adjustments may need improving – where adjustments are ongoing or substantial, a commitment to continuous improvement is recommended
In most cases an informal discussion with the person concerned may be all that is necessary. However, should adjustments be substantial, or a learner not be acquiring competence at a reasonable rate, a more formal process may be required. This may include:

- performance indicators – training providers, learners and employers should have agreed indicators of performance which can be measured and monitored
- independent support – a third party, independent of the training environment, may need to be involved
- experimentation – if existing adjustments are not proving satisfactory, creative solutions may be needed
- continuing review – formal monitoring is encouraged if adjustments are changed or if substantial adjustments are necessary.

For further information on training and assessment for people with specific needs, the DEEWR website has information about the National Disability Coordination Officer Program, which ‘provides information, coordination and referral services for people with a disability interested in or enrolled in post-school education and training’. Go to www.deewr.gov.au

WORKING WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LEARNERS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have expressed concern about the importance of developing appropriate training processes.

There are four main areas of concern:

- diversity
- cultural appropriateness
- community control
- accreditation.

Diversity

The term diversity is used to emphasise the wide range of opinions, aspirations, community circumstances, cultural practices, geographic locations, and social, economic and political conditions that exist throughout Australia and the need to guard against assumptions that all communities are the same.

One approach is to distinguish between remote, rural and urban settings. These settings suggest differences that may be relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, including:

- culture
- language
- history
- social make-up
- geography
- social and economic infrastructure
- economy
- political structure.

These factors suggest that training, in order to be relevant to the needs of a particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation, should address each situation as unique.

Cultural appropriateness

The term culture is used in a broad sense. It refers to:

- values, social beliefs and customs, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law, land, and family and kinship systems
- protocols of behaviour and interaction e.g. cultural authority, gender and kinship
- ways of thinking, including preferred learning styles
- language, both English and Aboriginal English
- lifestyles
- local history
- location, including region and place.

A particularly important aspect of cultural appropriateness is that of learning styles. There is evidence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, both traditional and contemporary, approach learning differently from the Western intellectual tradition, which is relevant to effective training and assessment.

There are no rules, but in many cases Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may:

- learn better in groups than individually
- learn better in the surroundings of their community than in an institutional environment
- prefer oral communications to written forms
- learn on the basis of trial and error in the presence of an experienced person in preference to concept building approaches
- have a highly-developed sense of spatial relations by which they learn, hence stories, maps and pictures would be preferable to oral explanations.

To be effective, it is necessary that training and assessment recognises, adopts and practises appropriate delivery and assessment approaches.

Trainers who are not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander need information on aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. They need to work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to adopt practices that reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander approaches. The community should be asked to identify experts to provide information and to assist with assessment of relevant protocols, for example, where required.

There are a number of ways an RTO can establish and maintain culturally appropriate training and assessment practices, including:

- ensuring a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in all aspects of planning, development, delivery and evaluation
- establishing and maintaining a collaborative relationship with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- as a mainstream (non-Indigenous) RTO, establishing auspice relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and individuals, including direct and indirect involvement of persons identified as appropriate by the local community
- ensuring ongoing training of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at all levels of the RTO, delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander personnel.
Community control
The term community control is synonymous with such terms such as self-determination and self management – these terms underpin most community aspirations and are a fundamental concern to people who see themselves as having been dispossessed by colonisation.

The essence of control is control of decision-making. In order to be able to do this, people need all relevant information, relevant competencies, and recognition of their own structures and processes.

Among other things, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seek control over their training. It is necessary, therefore, that they participate in meaningful ways in all stages of planning, development, delivery and evaluation. One way to achieve this is for communities to have control of the contract for training initiatives.

It is important that training providers and assessors respect and conform to the practice of community control which underpins this field within the Automotive Training Packages.

Accreditation
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have said for a long time that their involvement in training has not been formally recognised and that many of the skills they use in managing their organisations and delivering services to their communities have not been valued.

The first issue may have arisen because much of the training that has been delivered to communities has been customised to particular situations, and has not been assessed on an individual basis if at all, and has been delivered by unregistered personnel. Secondly, until this time, recognition of current competencies (RCC) has been under-utilised.

Individuals may demonstrate competence in complete units of competency through formal training, informal training or the recognition of current competencies and skills, resulting in qualifications or statements of attainment being awarded.

In the community group setting, an important feature of likely relevance for assessment is that participants may vary with respect to previous education and training experience, which may result in diverse literacy and numeracy issues. However, literacy and numeracy skills are not a barrier to sophisticated thought, and care must be taken not to use assessment strategies that rely on a person having numeracy and literacy skills that are not intrinsically required by the unit of competency being assessed.

Foundation Skills

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- What is the ACSF?
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INTRODUCTION

Foundation Skills comprise Core Skills that are incorporated within the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) and Employability Skills. It includes language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills, and skills used in the workplace which are summarised in the automotive units of competency as communication, planning and organising, problem solving, teamwork and digital literacy. Foundation Skills may range from very basic skills to specialised and highly developed skills.

To view or download a copy of the brochure 'Foundation Skills for Automotive Explained' click on the link below.

Foundation Skills for Automotive Explained

WHAT IS THE ACSF?

The Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) provides a rich, detailed picture of real-life performance in adult learning and English language, literacy and numeracy skills. The ACSF can be used for benchmarking an individual’s core skills performance, mapping core skills requirements in education and training, and tailoring approaches to teaching and learning.

It describes levels of performance in five core skills that are essential for individuals to participate effectively in society:
- Learning
The ACSF has been developed to facilitate a consistent national approach to the identification and development of the core skills in diverse personal, community, work, and education and training contexts. It offers:

- shared concepts and language for identifying, describing and discussing core skills
- a systematic approach to benchmarking, monitoring and reporting on core skills performance.

Adult core skills development is lifelong because we are likely to require new or enhanced core skills each time we take on new roles and responsibilities or move into a new situation, or as a result of changes in the environment, including new technologies.

Thus, any focus on improving core skills should not be confined to those with limited skills, but extend ‘to all people trying to understand new forms of communication and information as they take on different roles in life and work’ (Foster & Beddie 2005 p.1).

**KEY FEATURES OF THE ACSF**

The ACSF describes each of the five core skills across three interactive dimensions:

1. Five levels of performance ranging from 1 (low level performance) to 5 (high level performance)

2. Four performance variables that may influence a person’s performance at any time:
   - The nature and degree of support available
   - Familiarity with context
   - Text complexity
   - Task complexity.

3. Three Domains of Communication, broad contexts within which the core skill may be used:
   - Personal and community (related to expressing personal identity and achieving personal goals, and understanding and interacting within the wider community)
   - Workplace and employment (refers to activities that an individual may be involved in as a member of an organisation or that may be conducted by someone working alone)
   - Education and training (refers to any form of structured learning).

**DESCRIBING PERFORMANCE**

The levels of performance are described using:

- Indicators, which are statements that provide an overview of exit performance at each level
- Focus Areas, which are the strands within each Indicator against which Performance Features are organised
- Performance Features, which are detailed descriptors of what an individual is able to do at each level
- Sample Activities, which are specific examples of what a person may be able to do at a particular level of performance within each of the Domains of Communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIVE LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>TEXT COMPLEXITY</th>
<th>TASK COMPLEXITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Works alongside an expert/mentor where prompting and advice can be provided</td>
<td>Highly familiar contexts</td>
<td>Short and simple purpose</td>
<td>Concrete tasks of 1 or 2 steps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concrete and immediate</td>
<td>Highly explicit</td>
<td>Processes include locating, recognising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very restricted range of contexts</td>
<td>Limited, highly familiar vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 May work with an expert/mentor where support is available if requested</td>
<td>Familiar and predictable contexts</td>
<td>Simple familiar texts with clear purpose</td>
<td>Explicit tasks involving a limited number of familiar steps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited range of contexts</td>
<td>Familiar vocabulary</td>
<td>Processes include identifying, simple interpreting, simple sequencing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Works independently and uses own familiar support resources</td>
<td>Range of familiar contexts</td>
<td>Routine texts</td>
<td>Tasks involving a number of steps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some less familiar contexts</td>
<td>May include some unfamiliar elements, embedded information and</td>
<td>Processes include sequencing, integrating,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some specialisation in familiar/known contexts
abstraction
Includes some specialised vocabulary
interpreting, simple extrapolating, simple inferencing, simple abstracting

Range of contexts, including some that are unfamiliar and/or unpredictable

Some specialisation in less familiar/known contexts

Complex texts
Embedded information
Includes specialised vocabulary
Includes abstraction and symbolism
Complex task organisation and analysis involving application of a number of steps
Processes include extracting, extrapolating, inferencing, reflecting, abstracting

4 Works independently and initiates and uses support from a range of established resources

5 Autonomous learner who accesses and evaluates support from a broad range of sources

THE ACSF IN ACTION

Assessment
An individual’s level of performance in any core skill is determined by whether they can demonstrate performance in each of the Indicators at that level. Performance in an Indicator is determined using the Performance Features. In a single assessment task it is highly unlikely that all or most of the Performance Features can be covered or demonstrated. Consistent with good practice, performance of an Indicator should be determined over time and across a number of different assessment tasks.

When using the ACSF to determine performance levels, specialist LLN practitioners will need to use their professional judgement, taking context and purpose into account and recognising that certain Performance Features will be more important than others in specific contexts. Also, while Performance Features are represented as developing progressively, in reality an individual’s performance may fluctuate depending on a range of factors.

When using the ACSF for assessment, an assessor should also be confident that there is sufficient evidence to support the assessment decision. This is particularly important for summative assessment where performance should be demonstrated on a number of occasions in a range of text types and/or contexts.

In an initial assessment it is often not possible to generate this range, so decisions will be made on less evidence and may need to be confirmed in the early weeks of training.

Spiky profiles
The ACSF recognises that an individual may be operating across different levels within a core skill, demonstrating some Performance Features across two or more levels, or performing more strongly in one Domain of Communication than in another. It is also likely that an individual will not perform at the same ACSF level across all five core skills. This can be captured visually in what is called a ‘spiky profile’ (Bateson 2001).

Using the ACSF, an individual’s performance across the five core skills can be benchmarked and a spiky profile constructed. This provides valuable information about an individual’s areas of strength and specifically identifies any areas where further training could be beneficial.

Scenario 1: Helping meet the core skill requirements of a new job
Dean has been offered the opportunity to undertake training to prepare for a lead technician position in an automotive manufacturing plant. He has enrolled in Certificate IV in Automotive Manufacturing. An LLN specialist used the ACSF to compare the core skills required for this Certificate with Dean’s current skills.

In the assessment, the teacher/trainer chose texts and tasks from Dean’s workplace context. However, when he introduced some unfamiliar texts and tasks relevant to the training, which involved using technical language for report writing, it was clear that Dean was not confident and requested additional support. This was particularly marked in the Writing assessment.

The spiky profile shows that Dean would benefit from developing his Reading, Writing and Oral Communication skills, and the LLN specialist will work with the workplace trainer to integrate targeted core skill development with the Certificate IV training.

Scenario 2: Pinpointing strengths and learning needs
Greg has enrolled in AUM30213 Certificate III in Automotive Manufacturing Technical Operations - Bus, Truck and Trailer, from the Automotive Manufacturing Training Package. He attends a pre-assessment interview at the local TAFE institute and an LLN specialist assesses his skills as shown in Figures 2 and 3. Greg’s overall spiky profile shows that his ACSF levels of performance vary across the five core skills.

The assessor knows that the numeracy requirements of the Certificate III are moderate, with a number of units at level 3 and 4 of the ACSF. Although his
overall Numeracy level is assessed at ACSF level 3, further analysis of Greg’s Numeracy skills against the three Numeracy Indicators identifies that he would benefit from some pre training and support in Numeracy and mathematics, particularly in relation to Indicators 4.09 and 4.11. This would help him to better identify the mathematics required within a task, and improve his skills in representing mathematical outcomes and communicating them to others.

Put specific spiky profile example here!

Scenario 3: Helping a person meet the core skills requirements of a training program
Change the following example to reflect an automotive specific VCAL (Victorian Certificate in Applied Learning) or VETiS (VET in Schools) example!!!
Robert is 17 and is currently doing year 12 VCAL. As part of his year 12 he is doing the two core units from Certificate II Printing and Graphic Arts (General). These are ICPSU206C Maintain a safe work environment and BSBSUS201A Participate in environmentally sustainable work practices.

Robert’s teacher assessed Robert’s LLN skills against the ACSF. In the assessment she used some material that Robert was familiar with (e.g. correctly sequenced instructions for uploading photos on a social networking site). She also included some reading texts from the vocational education and training (VET) units that Robert will study. Some of these (e.g. some standard operating procedures) provided challenges to Robert, as he had not worked with them before. The context of the assessment material included both familiar and unfamiliar texts at ACSF level 2. Robert was also asked to sequence a set of dot points from some environment/sustainability legislation.

He struggled with the complexity of this task. Overall Robert coped well with reading texts and tasks with which he was familiar in his personal life. However when the Domain of Communication changed to the workplace and employment arena, he struggled due to his lack of prior knowledge and experience.

The assessment also included a discussion about a letter to the editor, focusing on graffiti. Robert clearly disagreed with the writer and found it difficult to acknowledge the writer’s point of view.

The teacher also mapped the LLN requirements of the two units to the ACSF (see Table 4). In Oral Communication, there was a mixture of level 1 and level 2 requirements which alerted the teacher to the fact that Robert would be unlikely to be able to work independently. Based on the assessment and the ACSF mapping, Robert’s teacher identified that he will require additional support in the core skills of Oral Communication and Numeracy as well as in some areas of Writing if he is to successfully meet the requirements for both units.

Further Information

PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND RTOs

A guide called Working in Partnerships, is available from the National Skills Standards Council at www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au/nqc_publications/publications/partnerships. The guide and accompanying tools have been developed to encourage RTOs, enterprises and industry associations to establish and maintain effective partnerships in training and assessment. The guide is available in Microsoft Word format to enable contextualisation by users.

LEARNING STYLES AND THEORIES

Getting to grips with learning styles, a paper produced by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

The following websites provide information about learning styles:

- Study and Learning Centre, RMIT - Learning Styles https://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/fsu/content/1_StudySkills/study_tuts/lear...
- James Cook University - Study Skills Online http://www.jcu.edu.au/ltldinfo/learningskills/learningst/

The University of Leicester provides useful, succinct summaries of some well-known learning theories, including those of Bloom, Gagne, Kolb and Honey and Mumford. http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/careers/pgrd/resources/teaching/theories

The Infed site http://www.infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm provides a description of multiple intelligence theory, its use in education and a list of further references on the topic.

TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT RESOURCES
The Australian Flexible Learning Framework funds the development of interactive e-learning resources for use by training providers. Toolbox materials come in two formats:

- an integrated learning program incorporating a number of units of competency - these programs are available on a CD-ROM for installation on a server or for use on a stand-alone computer
- a learning object format allowing users to download smaller self-contained components of content for free – these learning objects generally support an element or unit of competency.

ASA LEARNING HUB

The ASA Learning Hub provides a single point of access to online learning and assessment resources for the automotive training packages. To access the ASA Learning Hub click on the link below:


Source URL: http://www.asacompanionvolumes.com.au/content/aur-learning-strategy-guide