

LANGUAGE, LITERACY, NUMERACY POLICY

Related Standard: AQTF 2007 St 2

Purpose

This procedure describes the process by which all Southern School of Natural Therapies (SSNT) students may have language, literacy and numeracy (LL&N) issues effectively addressed.

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all persons enrolled with the SSNT for the delivery of education, training and assessment services.

Responsible parties

The Principal is responsible for the control and issue of this procedure, together with Heads of Departments or Co-ordinators.

Availability

All students and prospective students will be provided access to the strategy via the school website, www.southernschool.com and the SSNT's Alf Jacka library. It is also referenced in the Lecturers' Procedures Manual.

Policy

All courses at the Southern School of Natural Therapies are delivered in English. It is essential that the student has language, literacy and numeracy skills sufficient to approach training and assessment at the level of competency as reflected in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and as detailed in the Health Training Package from which their course of study is drawn.

Language, literacy and numeracy skills cannot be taken as "demonstrated" just because the student participates in work or completes an application form. Language, literacy and numeracy skills may underpin many tasks but will not necessarily reflect a student's ability. Trainers can check this by referring to the Performance Criteria, Range of Variables and Evidence Guide in the training package and relevant documentation.

Standard 2.2 and 2.4 in the AQTF 2007 makes clear that RTOs must disseminate clear information to each prospective student, prior to enrolment, about provision for language, literacy and numeracy assessment. This does not mean that all students must be tested or pre-assessed for language, literacy or numeracy. It does not specify that any one or specific form of assessment be applied to determine skills. It depends on the target groups, the scale and scope of the SSNT Operations.

Some students, especially those for whom English is not their first language, need to learn specific vocational (industry) vocabulary and grammatical structures. This can be provided through a number of different support options, which may include one or more of the following:

- a study mentor or buddy who shares the same language skills
- additional self study review
- team teaching with another trainer who shares the same language skills

- the possible provision of additional time for tuition, and
- one to one tutoring.

If SSNT cannot locate someone with the necessary expertise or resources to provide assistance then it may be necessary to refer the student to an RTO with appropriate language support services, equipment etc. In special circumstances it may be appropriate, to use the services of an external specialist to develop a specific language skills program (ie AMES).

SSNT acknowledges its responsibility to support learners in various ways and language, literacy and numeracy support is one area where clients should be met within the scale and scope of operations. Consequently, trainers are urged to use direct or indirect strategies, or a combination of both to assist students experiencing difficulties.

The LL&N Strategy (ANTA 2002) recommends Individual or group support strategies as a means of providing direct language, literacy and numeracy support that enhance learning, including:

- team planning/teaching
- providing concurrent assistance
- providing links with a mentor or coach
- considering cross cultural issues
- modifying learning materials and activities for individuals or groups
- providing access to part time or tailored language, literacy and numeracy courses
- providing flexibility in learning and assessment pathways, delivery mode, scheduling and access to support services, and
- conducting one-off workshops covering topics such as specific themes, skills areas or knowledge.

SSNT attempts to ensure its training programs support students/learners, by allowing flexibility within delivery and assessment (under guidance of the training package), employing strategies such as:

- use of demonstration
- verbal explanations
- class or group presentations
- use of diagrams/charts
- decreasing reliance solely on written forms and text
- incorporating actual workplace materials, or modelling tasks on familiar workplace activities.

Complex Documents

Where it is a requirement of the learning outcomes or competencies, students/learners may need to be taught how to read specific language and terminology and understand working materials. Again, SSNT lecturers/trainers are required to implement appropriate strategies to assist this process. Where lack of expertise risks the outcome for a student, the matter should be referred to the appropriate Head of Department or Co-ordinator who may also confer with the Principal.

Assessment

Language, literacy and numeracy assessments take various forms and can be used for various purposes. They can be conducted prior to enrolment, during or after training. Although useful to find out about the language, literacy and numeracy skills of learners, testing of all students is not mandatory under the AQTF, only that provision be made for assessment where it is requested or warranted. The SSNT has the freedom to determine how, and to whom, this assessment is provided.

Prior to enrolment:

Heads of Departments (HODs), Co-ordinators and Administrative staff may conduct a language, literacy and numeracy assessment through an interview process. In this way SSNT can provide prospective learners with information about the training and learning environment and gain an understanding of their interests, learning styles and indicative language, literacy and numeracy skills. Lecturers/Trainers can use the information to make informed decisions about the student/learner's capacity to meet the course requirements and to ascertain whether any additional support is required.

It is also practical to consider the following points:

- Experienced trainers generally know from previous experience which parts of the course students may find challenging, and what specific skills are needed.
- Some students may indicate their need before or during the enrolment process.
- Some students will ask for support during training or assessment.

Those courses which make heavy demands on reading, comprehension or math skills, will clearly require some opportunity for pre-testing and ongoing support. Assessment of language, literacy and numeracy competencies can also be conducted as part of a formal assessment against Training Package units of competency. Where this option becomes necessary, the trainer must observe the assessment requirements of the Training Package.

Where to get more advice

The National Reporting System (NRS) provides a national benchmark for generic language, literacy and numeracy indicators of competency. This can be a useful tool for analysing language, literacy and numeracy levels as built into Training Package units of competency.

Procedure

Students who have concerns regarding language, literacy and numeracy are encouraged to discuss these as soon as possible, prior to enrolment and also with their lecturer/trainer, Co-ordinator or Head of Department or Manager-Student Services, Ms Cheryl Richter, in administration.

Other Policies

See also SSNT Learning and Program Delivery Policy and Procedure. Issue 21 January 2009 Version 2