

To: Standing Committee: The Inquiry Into Adult Literacy and Its Importance
From: The Western Australian Adult Literacy Council (WAALC), April, 2021

This submission responds to the Inquiry term of reference:

“The availability, impact and effectiveness of adult literacy and numeracy educational programs in Australia and internationally.”

The information provided in this paper is drawn from survey, questionnaire responses from eight Western Australian Adult Literacy Council (WAALC) members (i.e., one literacy and numeracy [LN] program manager, five adult educators, one equity officer, and one adult literacy researcher). All responses have been de-identified. The data was thematically analysed and cross-checked with the participants.

This submission is organised in six sections:

1. Case studies: Meet Tanya and Sharee – two adult literacy clients;
2. Literacy and numeracy programs for young and older adults/clients;
3. Client motives to participate in literacy and numeracy programs;
4. Eligibility to participate in literacy and numeracy programs: Issues, challenges and gaps;
5. Literacy and numeracy program reviews and evaluations; and
6. Appendix 1: Adult clients’ written responses to an in-class Q and A activity.

1. Case studies: Meet Tanya and Sharee – two adult literacy clients (Author: Adult, LN educator)

Tanya is a young Aboriginal woman. She left school in Year 9 to have her child – a young girl. Tanya (now 22 years of age) lives with her aunt who provides a safe place for family especially “young ones to be.” Aside from her daughter, she is also guardian to her sister who is 16 and her cousin who is 15. Both the sister and cousin do not attend high school. Because of a disrupted education they feel “too far behind” and “shame” to go to school. Tanya has brought them both to my class.

Tanya doesn’t attend much as she is the only one in her extended family who has a car and a license. She is often taking older family to doctor appointments. She also has a mother who is often incarcerated so that means lots of driving and appearances at court. Tanya is still positive but realizes that she surrounds herself with people who are not a good influence on her. She wants a Cert 2 but needs to work at improving her writing. She would like an office job and maybe in the building industry. She wants to improve her computer skills.

Sharee is a 51 year-old who has to attend this LN class to maintain Centerlink benefits. She has very bad anxiety and was petrified to come to class because, as she said, “I can’t spell or write, I can do some maths but I don’t know computers.” After two weeks of being in class (which involved her getting to know the other students, doing some art activities, slowly becoming involved in group work) she is now trying new activities and is developing strategies for learning.

Unfortunately, Tanya has bad health, partially because of lifestyle choices in her 20’s and 30’s and, also, her lack of understanding of how to keep the human body physically and mentally well. She now asks her doctor to write down ailments, treatments and suggestions so she can discuss them with me in class or google them. I also help her to understand specialist referrals and make travel plans so that she can get there on time. As her reading improves, she will be able to comprehend the information and develop independent coping strategies.

2. Literacy and numeracy programs for young and older adults/clients

Adult literacy and numeracy (LN) programs are conducted for early-school leavers (aged 16 years+) and, also, older adults who have low-level literacy and numeracy skills.¹ LN programs are advertised:

- On Jobactive provider sites (e.g., Centrelink, Department of Employment Services);
- By program providers (e.g., Centacare Employment and Training, Ministry of Justice); or
- By civic organisations (e.g., community legal centres, libraries, schools, migrant education centres, and jobs and skills centres).

In some instances, potential clients find out about the LN programs via past participants, family or friends.

Note well (N.B.): Social media is often used to advertise LN programs; however, potential clients require proficiency in literacy to read and comprehend the information. Adult educators commented that potential clients who struggle to read Jobactive provider information can feel a sense of shame and, therefore, they may not enrol in a program.

An LN program manager commented:

“As a company, we try and get information out there, and it needs to happen constantly. Flyers and marketing material are designed to appeal to the target groups.

When clients are given enough information from their Jobactive providers and the course is explained there is motivation. They come to improve their LN skills, gain a qualification, explore pathways and build up resilience and confidence.”

N.B. Regional LN program providers, however, can experience difficulties in advertising and promoting their programs. One educator queried whether there is parity of advertising and awareness-raising opportunities across urban and regional LN sectors.

The LN educator recommended that:

“We [regional providers and educators] need to increase the awareness of the LN programs, strengthen regional availability and monitor their use and effectiveness...[through] advertising, support networks/agencies, local educational facilities/campuses, government agencies, employment agencies.”

Recommendation from adult educators

- Network with other not-for-profit organisations, such as Migrant Resource centres, in order to advertise available LN services.

Some current adult LN programs which are conducted in Western Australian are:

- Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP);
- Foundation Skills Training;
- Skills for Education and Employment (SEE); and
- Gaining Access to Training and Employment (GATE).

Previous LN programs which were conducted in WA –but have been largely discontinued– are Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) programs and Adult Community Education (ACE) programs. The WELL and ACE programs both focus on meeting clients’ work and/or livelihood skills and with the aim that each program addresses “their LN point-of-need.”

N.B. Practice-engagement strategies (e.g., ACE & WELL programs) are one of the most universally successful means of improving adults’ proficiency in literacy, numeracy and/or problem-solving (Grotluschen, Mallows, Reder & Sabatini, 2016; Hanemann, 2015).

¹ Low-level proficiency in literacy, numeracy and/or problem-solving refers to people whose level of proficiency is below that required to meet the relevant demands of study, work and/or everyday life.

3. Client motives to participate in LN programs

“Motivation is tied up with giving people what they need in order to make a difference in their lives,” a LN program manager said.

Adults with low proficiency in literacy and numeracy are motivated to participate in LN programs for a range of social, family, employment and psychosocial reasons. Information taken from LN client surveys, and reported by an adult educator, reveal that the clients are motivated to:

- Reverse their experiences of long-term unemployment;
- Improve their job-ready skills or undertake further education;
- Engage more with community and to participate in everyday events;
- Be more independent (e.g., be able to fill out forms themselves);
- Obtain computer literacy skills;
- Obtain a driver’s licence;
- Improve their oral communication and social interaction skills;
- Improve their mental health, self-confidence and self-worth (i.e., psychosocial skills);
- Learn the skills they didn’t learn/pick up at school;
- Improve their confidence to participate in everyday life; and
- Assist their children, as they are motivated by wanting the best for their children.

N.B. In some instances, **adults enrol in LN programs** “in order to get onto Centrelink benefits.” An adult educator added that LN programs can:

“Act as a substitute to incomplete/failed basic schooling. Each program’s function is to facilitate the ‘emancipation’ of the individual (ideally); but, unfortunately, sometimes the programs are accessed simply in order to get social benefits.”

In general, **correctional services male and female inmates** enrol in LN programs to obtain job-related skills. When they are released from prison, the female clients are likely to seek employment in aged care or hospitality industries whereas the male clients are likely to apply for work in the construction industry.

The importance of embedding oral literacy –in addition to documented literacy and numeracy– in authentic/real-world activities is considered vital if released clients are to communicate ideas in a confident and clear manner. A correctional services educator said:

“The prisoners lack the capacity to express themselves and they believe that they don’t have a voice. The LN programs assist the inmates to develop the confidence, skills and knowledge to participate in the everyday events within a modern society, but the programs must be designed to include real-life experiences. They want programs that enable and encourage them to express themselves.”

Recommendation from a correctional services adult educator:

- Oral literacy and communication strategies need to be included in LN program curriculum and content and especially for first-nation people who come from a tradition of oral communication, culture and practice.

Educator insights and challenges:

i) Intergenerational lack of motivation can discourage some family members from breaking established norms and behaviours. An adult literacy educator observed that the “connection between poverty, disability and other social disadvantages [can lead to] school failure and cause young adults to leave school with limited literacy.”

ii) In some instances, **Kriol is the lingua-franca** and English is an additional language. It is difficult, therefore, to encourage adults to enrol in LN classes unless the programs match their local context and meet their everyday needs.

A regional adult educator commented:

“One issue in Fitzroy Crossing is that there isn’t really a need for English – everyone speaks Kriol and there is always someone around who can interpret or help. It was extremely difficult to get people to enrol in language, literacy and numeracy classes, but I was never short of people wanting help to get their Driver’s License or ID.

Literacy is NEED [participant emphasis]. If there isn’t a need, it isn’t a priority. Priorities differ amongst cultural groups, age groups and gender groups.”

Another educator confirmed this view:

“The recognition of pre-existing knowledge of adult learners is paramount. Once residents in smaller communities develop academic literacies this has a significant bearing on the education goals and outcomes for other persons and potentially have a direct impact on the Closing the Gap Objectives. We would see more Indigenous staff working in Education and gaining qualifications in Education Support and Teaching.”

iii) Under a mutual obligation agreement, LN program clients who enrol via the Centrelink Jobactive site are obliged to attend classes. If the LN classes do not meet clients’ immediate social or work needs they, typically, disengage from study. An educator commented that:

“For many adults [they attend class] to comply with mutual obligation. There is no motivation when, for example, a man in his 50s– who has worked all his life and coped perfectly well with low literacy– is retrenched and then referred into a literacy program. He wants a job, not a course.”

Recommendation from adult educators

- Design and implement practice-engagement, authentic/real-world LN programs that meet clients’ immediate, everyday, work and livelihood needs; for example, Adult Community Education (ACE) and the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) programs.

4. Eligibility to participate in LN programs: Issues, challenges and gaps

The survey participants agreed that there is **equality of access to literacy and numeracy programs** for most clients and, typically, “the adults have equal access to educational resources; for example, courses and programs, teaching, facilities, technology and instructional materials.” One participant has observed, however, that adult LN providers and programs do not have parity of access to library services and digital technologies that are available to other educational sectors.

The current eligibility criteria can, however, discriminate against some clients. For example, the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) enrolment criteria omit Australian-born citizens who do not speak English at home or as a first language. For instance, an Australian forty-year-old woman who was born on Christmas Island and who did not speak English was ineligible to participate in the AMEP English classes conducted at Christmas Island education centres. This decision surprised LN educators as the program’s aim aligned to both her language background and to her English language needs.

Course fees and gaps in financial support can also discourage some adults from participating in a LN program. This is especially the case for workers as they are ineligible to receive Centerlink benefits such as payment of course fees and transport costs to and from class. Many adults in low-salaried work cannot, economically or workwise, afford to take time away from their jobs.

The gap in financial support is outlined by an adult educator:

“There is a big gap for low-income earners who work but do not have little/free access to language learning [that would] allow them to get better jobs. They may be working three or four low paid jobs and that leaves them no time or extra money to get tutoring. In WA it is only Read Write Now and small volunteer programs that may be of use.”

LN program funding and delivery are currently linked to a required and minimum number of students. If the required minimum of students is not met the class is cancelled. Adult educators explained that the cancellation of classes is likely to increase clients' sense of failure and, also, reduce their confidence to study. In addition, the cancellation of classes suggests to provisionally enrolled clients that "they are unworthy of this service." An adult educator commented:

"Too often I've had to knock students back as we haven't been able to fill a class with more than three people. We are managed by Student Contact Hours (SCH) as a funding mechanism, and it is a decider of which programs *will succeed* and *which won't*."

Another adult educator further explained that the cancellation of classes also creates job uncertainty and the likelihood of economic and professional disadvantage for LN practitioners.

Recommendation from adult educators

- LN funding should make one-on-one student delivery a priority [i.e., funding linked to each student not class numbers].

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted difficulties experienced by some potential and enrolled clients as they tried to use digital technologies and services. In the words of three adult LN educators:

"If literacy is an/the issue, how can they navigate the required systems [to find out about and enrol in LN classes]? Do they have the confidence/skills? Nowadays, digital literacy can also pose a barrier."

"It became very apparent through the COVID-19 pandemic that the vast majority of our clients had no internet at home or access to computers. This constantly puts them at a disadvantage."

"Lack of access to computers and affordable internet is also a big barrier to adult learning. With digital access and a printer, students would be able to source information to help learning."

Competition between adult education providers can also threaten clients' eligibility and opportunity to participate in LN programs. For instance, competitive practices have created a corporate rather than educational approach to adult education. One practitioner explained that:

"Many TAFEs don't want our students as we don't generate an income for the TAFE or assist it to meet [Vocational Education] program criteria."

Recommendations and insights from adult educators

- LN providers collaborate rather than compete for clients and resources as the students require consistent, caring, researched, effective teaching. **N.B.** In the words of one adult educator:

"What sometimes happens is they [the students] become the innocent victims of politics and business. A better use of our libraries would be a great point of contact for learners if we rejigged relationships. Some evidence of this is seen in the community hubs and libraries in Victoria."
- Increase the number of adult educators in decision making processes rather than a focus on business managers and management practices.

An adult educator captured other's views and concerns about program availability and client eligibility:

"States have different funding [arrangements and requirements]. VIC is very much still linked to Adult Community Education (ACE) which has a greater impact than accredited training. Not all individuals want to sit assessments or need formal qualifications to complete the learning that they use [in everyday life]."

The educator added:

“In WA there is a distinct lack of ACE funding and delivery. Australian programs are all heavily linked to employment outcomes rather than learning outcomes. There is no recognition of the social benefit of adult language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) education if it does not lead to employment. Examples of community education are: accidental Panadol poisoning, and better child school outcomes (e.g., parents able to support learning and enhance the skill of children).”

Pre-program assessment practices can also create difficulties in placing adult clients into relevant programs. The initial assessment tasks can take, on average, over one-and-a-half hours and can unsettle some clients. In addition, the pre-assessment rarely assesses their immediate literacy and numeracy livelihood needs and/or documents their demographic characteristics. For instance, and as explained by an adult practitioner based in the Kimberley region:

“Adult indigenous literacy needs can be unique and specific and may include auditory processing difficulty. These needs are not currently addressed. Aboriginal Training Services support staff are not trained and there is no mandatory benchmark for this in this area.”

An individual profile assessment is conducted by WA Correctional Education program staff to assess each **inmate’s LN capabilities**, rather than the generic, hour-long plus assessment carried out by other LN providers. A profile assessment is obtained about each client’s:

- Prior educational qualifications and experiences;
- What they want to study while they are in prison;
- What activities or jobs they would like to do when released from prison; and
- Their literacy and numeracy capabilities.

A correctional services educator noted that:

“The profile assessment practices assist our educators to organise an educational study plan for individual learners. The face-to-face, individual assessment and the associated educational plans are positive features of the Correctional Services model.”

Recommended ways to improve program assessment practices:

- Pre-enrolment assessment: Conduct a learner profile of each person’s prior education background; their motives for participating in an LN program; and their livelihood activities and needs.
- During-program assessment: Conduct formative and moderated literacy and numeracy assessment tasks during dedicated stages of a program.
- Organise a more relevant and useful reporting system that supports student learning rather than requiring teachers to abandon best practice to meet mandatory outcomes.
- Design and implement relevant and reliable:
 - i) Pre-LN-training assessment models; and
 - ii) Monitoring and reporting processes that are stored in a national data base and used to benchmark and assess client and program progress.
- Use each LN graduate’s improved literacy and numeracy levels as an indicator/entry-point to their further learning opportunities.
- Analyse and publish *The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies* (PIAAC) Australia results at a national and a state/territory level, in order that providers and educators can address the immediate learning needs and context-specific literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills required by their respective students.

Recommended strategies to enable and improve adult participation in LN programs

Learning and teaching strategies:

- Organise small class sizes in order to meet one-on-one requirements;
- Organise volunteers and/or support staff to assist with program LN activities;
- Use real-world/authentic learning activities that meet individual client's needs. **N.B.** The clients need to see value of the tasks;
- Use a learner profile to plan content that matches each client's immediate and longer-term needs;
- Allow clients to have flexible timetable arrangements, especially as many of them have competing home and work duties or they may struggle with social and health issues;
- Give teachers and the provider the autonomy to choose materials that are respectful of and useful to adult learners;
- Allow for flexibility within program content (e.g., teach real-world skills rather than mandated outcomes that may not align to clients' immediate point-of-need);
- Organise a range of LN special interest classes that are livelihood and practice-based (e.g., cooking, sewing, parenting, car maintenance);
- Deliver digital literacy classes alongside or in addition to existing LN classes;
- Offer immediate feedback on clients' work, so that they can learn from their mistakes;
- Provide money for activities and resources that engage adults in real-world experiences (e.g., additional support staff, livelihood classes, & excursions);
- Conduct professional development sessions for practitioners to share classroom best practice; and
- Network with allied organisations to introduce adults to a variety of environments and further learning opportunities (e.g., libraries, galleries, TAFE, guest visitors & volunteers).

Social and psychosocial strategies:

- Offer a free counselling service to clients;
- Listen to clients and respect their individual circumstances and needs;
- Build relationships to find out about their prior education background, interests, and hopes; and
- Keep adult learners informed and, therefore, motivated.

“Good programs foster hope and encourage participation in society.”

This belief was expressed by many of the survey participants. The ultimate aim of LN programs is to enable adults to develop the confidence, skills and behaviours to participate in a modern society and, ultimately, to develop as self-reliant individuals. A correctional services educator echoed this view:

“The LN programs provide an opportunity for the learners to express themselves through art, music and writing. Prison is a safe learning environment for them to express themselves. This opportunity is not always available in the general public LN classes.”

The combined aim of the Correctional Services LN program is to ensure that a released man or woman has the knowledge, skills and behaviours to: i) Secure a job; ii) Find accommodation; and iii) Network with others.

These three outcomes, the educator believes, **reduce the likelihood of recidivism**. In his words:
“Crime is easy to do and it is a silent activity [participant emphasis]. The learners need to know how to express themselves and to engage in LN activities when they leave the prison.”

5. Literacy and Numeracy program reviews and evaluations

LN programs have been shown to **benefit adults’** social, psychosocial, health, family, employment, further learning, and community engagement and well-being. The level and type of benefit is dependent on, however, a range of client, teacher and environmental factors. In the words of one educator:

“The motivation of the students and the skill sets of the teacher and the class dynamic all affect program impact. There are so many factors when talking about program impact and effectiveness when working with a marginalised cohort.”

A program manager captured **the long-term, flow-on effect** of improved adult literacy skills and family prosperity:

“One student used to beg to be the cleaner on site and I kept telling her that I couldn’t do that – it was an agency etc. She kept coming to class throughout and apart from the LN component her teacher encouraged her to learn to drive. She did this and she passed. Her LN skills improved and she ended up working for Silver Chain. Her three daughters all made university.”

The significance of improved psychosocial skills and behaviour to the clients’ well-being and future livelihood was emphasised by the survey participants.

N.B. Many adult LN clients start a program with limited social confidence, trust in others and/or sense of self-worth. They are often reluctant to enter a public space (e.g.; an exhibition, library, service center); and they can doubt their ability to apply for a job or volunteer their skills. A commonly held belief is that *‘these places and services are for others – not us.’*

In the words of one practitioner:

“The course definitely builds up confidence. It affords opportunities and experiences that wouldn’t be taken up by our clients if they were not on the course. For example, the careers expo in Perth. The students in one class thought that somehow it wasn’t for them. Visiting the food court near the office buildings made them nervous. It took quite a lot of coaxing and encouragement to even get them to order food! The whole experience was a first for them, but they learnt to overcome their reticence.”

The practitioner added, “the students should speak for themselves”:

- J, who has high-functioning autism said: *“I liked the excursion that we went on. I felt worried that we would stand out a lot more. However we fitted in nicely, so we went around to the work placement stalls. I got the information that I wanted on Educational Assistance. Then we had lunch which was very nice, in a nice place.”*
- An LN student said: *“Today at the careers expo I spoke to the South Metropolitan TAFE about VET nursing. They were very helpful and informed me that I could gain entry into the course with CERT 1 in General Education, which I am doing, and my current experience in the industry. I feel very happy.”*

LN program clients' exit surveys also illustrate the impact of a program on their lives:

- I can now write and read better English;
- I've got a job now. It used to be hard to get a job;
- I can write a cover letter, update my CV;
- I can write a proper letter – it's been 50 years since my last lessons;
- I am more confident than before;
- I socialise with new friends at school;
- I can complete the application on the mobile phone now;
- I am much more confident in using a computer. I feel competent emailing; and
- I would like to learn more advanced skills. I have only completed the beginners' class and found it extremely helpful.

The success and effectiveness of the LN programs is, as one educator explained, dependent on:

“...how determined the client is and if they have set goals they want to reach. Teacher help and guidance is given to clients looking for employment. Volunteer organisations come into the classes to encourage people to try volunteering.”

The lack of reliable access to digital technologies is a significant gap in LN program design and delivery. Educational research shows that low-level access to these services and tools are experienced by, typically, adults from low socio-economic backgrounds or adults who have low proficiency in literacy and/or digital literacy.

The importance of digital literacy to LN clients' prosperity and livelihood within a modern society was also discussed by this survey's participants. They noted that their clients' lack of access to computers and affordable internet services is a significant barrier to adult learning and, in addition, family livelihood opportunities and outcomes. For instance, some practitioners have commented that:

- During the COVID lockdowns, parents/guardians were required, and in some instances challenged, to use digital literacy skills to deal with home schooling;
- There are general and incorrect assumptions that family members will have home access to mobile and internet technology and services and, also, that parents/guardians will have the skills to support home learning;
- Many LN clients cannot afford to buy digital equipment and, consequently, they have little exposure to the use of mobile and/or digital technologies and services (e.g., cell phones, computers, internet, online shopping, My.gov, email);
- Motivation is tied up with giving people what they need and to make a difference in their lives. A specific need just now is for digital literacy classes. There are serious disadvantages to not being computer literate, such as using the My.gov facility or applying for jobs online; and
- Networking is required between and across organisation to raise awareness of and to advertise LN programs (e.g., community, government, employment, educational services).

Recommendations by LN practitioners:

- Skills, Employment and Education (SEE) programs and Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) should include the new Digital Literacy Skills Framework –which is documented in the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF)– as digital literacy is a required and relevant livelihood and workplace skill.

- Literacy and numeracy program providers, TAFE and the Council library staff all cooperate to enable the LN students to visit (during non-semester or low-client times) each organisation's library and learning spaces. This approach is used across the WA university sector.

Adult LN programs are effective in adding value to the clients' everyday lives and well-being. The impact of these programs adds value at both a lifelong learning (employability) and a lifewide learning (everyday livelihood) level. Some authorities question the effectiveness of these programs as they do not meet economic-productivity outcomes; for example, increased labour force numbers; and/or increased household income.

Adult educators believe that the LN programs (especially SEE, ACE & AMEP) are effective as these programs assist the students to:

- Build confidence and engage more in the community [and therefore] their quality of life is improved drastically; and
- Develop work readiness skills (e.g., speech, writing & reading) and, sometimes, complete a vocational qualification.

The President of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy (December, 2019) commented on the continued dismantling of language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) classes by state/territory governments:

“...the [Territory's] decision [to cease LLN classes] is puzzling. Literacy classes are rarely profitable in terms of dollars – and nor should they be – but the value to our society and [also] for developing potential higher education students outweighs immediate profit and requires long-term informed planning.”

N.B. Do we expect Year 12 graduates to progress from school to their chosen vocation (i.e., to take on the roles of plumber, nurse, accountant, scientist, teacher)? Why then, do some authorities expect adults with beginning proficiency in literacy to transfer their new LN skills directly to the workplace or to secure a promotion? LN graduates often require bridging programs that assist them to transfer their new LN skills and behaviours to certified areas of workplace and/or further learning.

Personal and psychosocial attributes: Survey participants highlighted the significance of developing adult clients' sense of self-worth, providing opportunities for them to succeed, and facilitating their sense of pride and dignity of self. These personal and psychosocial skills and behaviour, survey participants believe, are pivotal to LN clients' learning and their successful transfer of new knowledge, skills and capabilities to other environments.

Figure 1 illustrates the suggested seven steps to lifewide and lifelong learning for LN clients. The first three steps (Stage 1 of client LN development) are often met by LN program providers and educators, yet these elements are rarely a part of the mandated/formal LN curriculum. The participants commented that these steps are essential elements of an LN program that they should be included in program rationale, curricula, assessment and evaluation processes and infrastructure.

N.B. Without Stage 1 elements, it is unlikely that adults with low proficiency in literacy, numeracy and problem-solving will develop the psychosocial, learning, academic, problem-solving and everyday life skills that they require to develop as self-directed, independent citizens (i.e., Stage 2, Steps 4 to 7, of client LN development).

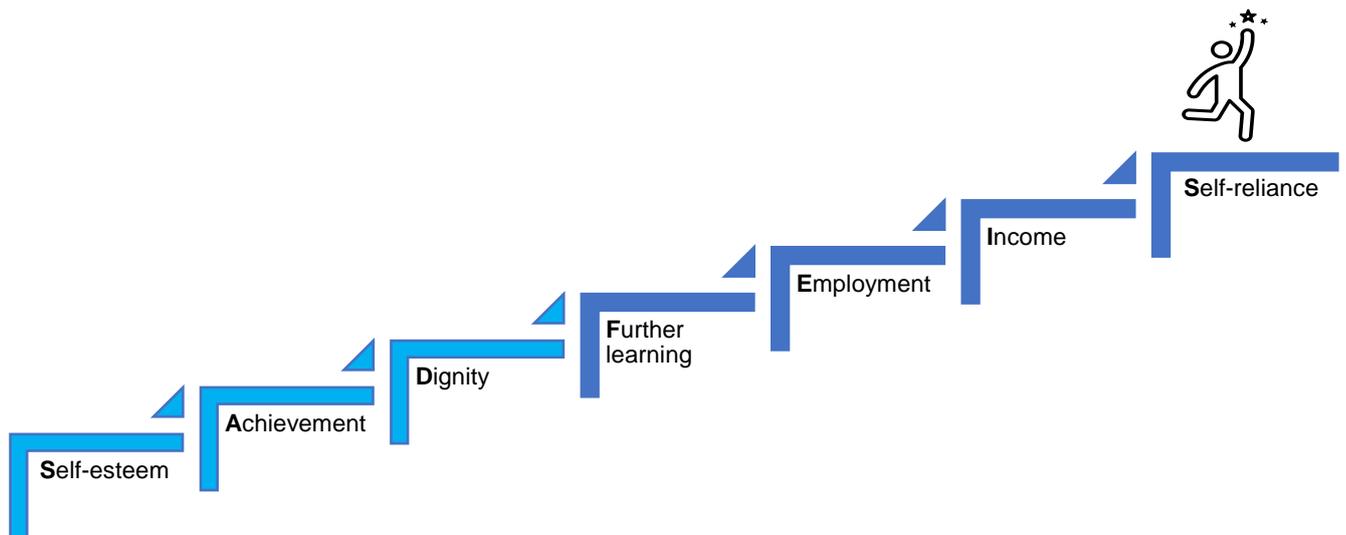


Figure 1: The seven steps to lifewide and lifelong knowledge, skills and behaviour

Recommendation by adult LN educators

- Fund and design adult language, literacy and numeracy programs that improve clients' lifewide and lifelong knowledge, skills and behaviour (i.e., attributes).
- Use a sociological-economic framework to assess and report adult client attributes and, also, learning and teaching outcomes.

Acknowledgements: This submission discusses the insights, challenges, impacts and recommendations about the availability, impact and effectiveness of adult literacy and numeracy education in Australia.

The research team wishes to thank the eight WAALC members who completed the questionnaire (at such short notice) and for providing first-hand, contextualised and informative comments, insights and recommendations. The research team also wishes to thank the adult LN clients for providing us with examples of their Q and A oral and written communication work and for allowing it to be included in this submission; a high level of trust granted to us.

It is hoped that this rich account will assist the Committee (to the Inquiry Into Adult Literacy and Its Importance) to improve and sustain the quality of adult literacy and numeracy education in Australia.

(Dr. Marguerite Cullity with assistance from Mrs. Yvette Terpstra, Chair of WAALC, April, 2021)

6. Appendix 1: Adult clients' written responses to an in-class Q and A activity

N.B. The Question (Q) and Answer (A) statements are an example of guided, semi-structured, non-assessed, oral and written communication. The in-class activity involved one adult educator and three male clients (19 to 30 years of age). All the students are enrolled in a LN class in an outer suburb of Perth. The teacher is the narrator.

Narrator Q: What is this course?

Adult students:

- Centacare offers not only a second chance at learning but offers more than just the basics.
- This course helps you improve areas in English and math's skills but also offers a safe and welcoming to environment learning.
- It a 3 days a week course that is flexible for people such as family commitments or having children.

Narrator: Q: What do we offer in the course?

Adult students:

- One of the main thing we forces [focus] on is Grasping better English and math skills, such as doing a reading log to both expand out horizon and getting better at reading while with math learning different techniques to help in your everyday life such as budgeting.
- We also do art actives to help us express ourselves as well as doing a class project such as a book or are own art project.
- Group work is a main point in class not only to help people break out of their shells but also to help improve their communication skills as well.

Are [Our] own experience

My experience with this course has been a positive experience. The students and teacher have both been helpful and welcoming to me feel like I can improve my self [sic]. My personal favorite [sic] thing we done in class was a reading log, we got to take a look at various different types of reading like short stories, manga and song lyrics that the class was interested in and feel comfortable sharing with everyone

Ending statement

This is what Centacare has to offer second chance at learning as well as continuing your life learning journey and much more.

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