

Assessing and acknowledging learning through non-accredited community adult language, literacy and numeracy programs: Support document

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Introduction

This Support Document for *How's it going? Monitoring progress in non-accredited language, literacy and numeracy learning*, provides additional detail to supplement the Final Report.

There were five phases of this project: Phase 1 comprised further interrogation of Dymock's 2006 NCVER research data, a literature review, and identification of possible research partners; Phases 2 and 3, included reporting of interviews conducted at each of the partner sites and the collaborative development of a draft portfolio of monitoring tools. The testing and validation of those tools was the major activity of Phase 4, culminating in a workshop with the partners and researchers. Phase 5 entailed preparation of the Final Draft Report for feedback from the project partners and the NCVER internal and external reviewers, followed by submission of the Final Report.

The purpose of the Support Document is to provide:

- ✧ a full version of the literature review, and the possible bases for identifying the wider benefits of learning which emerged from that review;
- ✧ a set of tables to summarise illustrative comments from coordinators, tutors and students about wider outcomes of adult language, literacy and numeracy learning, categorised against those tentative bases;
- ✧ a table to capture the perceptions of coordinators, teachers & tutors about the extent to which it might be possible to develop indicators for those bases;
- ✧ a table showing the responses of practitioners and students to examples of possible instruments for monitoring progress in non-accredited language, literacy and numeracy learning;
- ✧ profiles of the five partner organisations for the project;
- ✧ partners' reports on the trial of the selected instruments; and
- ✧ copies of the original and revised interview schedules.

In addition, a pdf attachment includes as appendices the nine examples of instruments for monitoring progress identified during the literature review and to which practitioners and students responded., and from which the six trial instruments were derived.

Literature Review

Introduction

For the International Adult Literacy Survey, introduced in 1994 in 22 countries including Australia, and now conducted every few years, literacy is defined as ‘the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at home, at work and in the community – to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential’ (Tuijnman, 2001). ‘To achieve one’s goals and to develop one’s knowledge and potential’ have a personal dimension to them which is not quite so easily ‘measured’ as are language, literacy and numeracy skills *per se*. In fact, the definition implies that language, literacy and numeracy provision involves more than the acquisition of skills. Similarly, the renowned literacy educator Paulo Freire (1995: 65) suggested that education should affirm men and women as ‘beings in the process of becoming – as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality’. The intent of this research is to explore whether the process of what Freire called ‘becoming’, particularly in regard to the development of self-confidence, can be monitored in meaningful ways for adults in language, literacy and numeracy programs.

Client groups, learner needs and outcomes

From recent research in Australia, a picture is emerging of a diversity of client groups and of learner needs in Australian language, literacy and numeracy programs. For example, there are low skilled disadvantaged clients (Castleton and McDonald, 2002), diverse literacy and numeracy needs within communities (Beddie 2004), and the particular needs of indigenous communities (Kral and Falk 2004). Furthermore, Miralles and Golding (2007) advocated differentiating among refugees in order to better meet their individual needs and aspirations. In a recent study of non-accredited language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) provision in Australia, Dymock (2007) found a diversity of groups and agencies that offered LLN programs, which he classified into four categories: community providers, English as a second language assistance, disability service providers, and accredited training.

For the purposes of the current project, it was decided to focus on just one of these groups: community providers, in order to make the project manageable and because arguably community non-accredited language, literacy and numeracy provision is where some of the greatest needs for ‘soft’ outcomes are encountered. In the 2006 survey (Dymock, 2007) 64 of the 125 respondents were identified as community providers on the basis that they nominated their *primary* role as either ‘General Adult /Community Education’, ‘Specific adult literacy/numeracy improvement’, or ‘Community Information/Referral’. However some of these organisations may also offer, for example, accredited training and/or English as a second language support. In order to clarify further the nature of the client groups and their learning needs amongst the community providers in particular, the responses to selected items from the 2006 survey for those 64 providers were re-analysed for the current study.

From that analysis, in relation to the characteristics of the learners in community LLN programs, it seems that overall about two-thirds of them are women, and the biggest group is in the 30-49 years age bracket, prime family rearing and income-earning years, which may influence learning goals and life trajectories. The next largest is the 50-59 age group, also an active earning period for many adults. However, the perception of the providers is that the biggest motivation (about 30%) for learners in such programs is a general need to improve their language and literacy skills for daily use rather than any specific needs such as employment. But employment related needs are still strong, relevant to about a quarter of the learners in these community adult LLN programs. Nevertheless, the general and the person-oriented needs (such as social interaction and developing self-esteem) comprise about 60% of the perceived reasons for participation. For the purposes of the present study, the breadth of ages and diversity of needs suggest that any instruments used to assess and acknowledge outcomes will have to allow for a range of individual purposes and perceptions of ‘progress’, as well as for personal growth, self-confidence and social interaction outcomes.

The conclusion from the data in relation to motivations is that learners may be more concerned with meeting immediate needs than with ‘pathways’ to other education or training or to employment. About two-thirds of providers thought the numbers going on to either training or to employment were between under 10% and up to 50% of learners. Nevertheless, amongst the 64 community providers, only one thought that *none* of the learners went on to other training, and only two thought none went on to employment.

Providers were asked to indicate ‘realistically’ to what extent they thought learners developed LLN skills and self-confidence respectively as a result of the tuition they received. The ratings from the 64 organisations were based on a validated five-point Likert scale, and ranged from ‘Not at all’ to ‘Very much’.

Table 1: Perceptions of learner outcomes from non-accredited community adult LLN learning (n=64)

Extent of improvement	LLN Skills		Self-Confidence	
	No.	%	No.	%
Not at all	-	-	-	-
Very little	-	-	-	-
Somewhat	14	21.9	4	6.3
Quite a bit	34	53.1	18	28.1
Very much	14	21.9	42	65.6
Not known	2	3.1	-	-
Total	64	100.0	64	100.0

No. = Number of organisations

As shown in Table 1, all the community providers responding to the survey believed that there were positive outcomes for the learners in both LLN skills and self-confidence. None of them thought that learners had progressed ‘not at all’ or ‘very little’ in either category. In respect of perceived *skills development*, more than half the 64 respondents thought that their students improved ‘quite a bit’ as a result of the teaching or tutoring provided, with the rest fairly evenly divided between ‘somewhat’ and ‘very much’. On the *self-confidence* aspect, some two-thirds of providers thought their students improved ‘very much’ through participation in their courses, with almost 30 per cent perceived to have improved their confidence ‘quite a bit’. Noteworthy is the finding that providers perceived a greater level of development of self-confidence than of LLN skills. An important question, which is a major focus of this present study, is what criteria providers used to make their decisions about this growth in self-confidence. The concept of self-confidence and its relationship to learning are explored in the section that follows.

Learning and self-confidence

The link between learning and self-confidence is perhaps the most central one to understand what motivates and directs lifelong learning, such as further developing individuals' language and literacy skills and engaging in further education. Although governments and employers are interested in marshalling individuals' lifelong learning efforts towards particular goals, there is little evidence to suggest that unless there is coincidence between those goals and the individuals that these will become the focus of individuals' learning efforts (Billett, Smith & Barker 2005). Therefore, it is important to understand what directs these individuals' lifelong learning and view them in terms of: (i) individuals' interests and intentionalities; (ii) what governments and employers want learnt; and the relationships between the two.

In the 2004 study of adult literacy programs (Eldred et al 2004) conducted by the National Institute for Adult and Community Education (NIACE) much is made of participants' heightened self-esteem and confidence as being a consistent and unanticipated outcome of their participation in these programs. It was noted in this study that even when there were limited gains being literacy competence, the participants had a heightened sense of self. Moreover, it was noted that this legacy extended beyond the program and the individuals "seem to take their gains in confidence with them" (Eldred et al 2004: 3). However, not emphasised within the report is the rich association between the disposition of self-confidence and learning. Certainly, there are important and profound links between individuals' self confidence and their learning, which goes beyond their interest in learning and extends to how and what they learn. That is, how individuals construe and construct knowledge from what they experience is shaped by their dispositions (i.e. values and beliefs), which include those about themselves and how they view the world.

Dispositions, such as those comprising self-confidence or sense of self have been viewed as individuals' tendencies to put their capabilities into action (Perkins et al 1993a; b). From this perspective, the potency of self-confidence resides in the difference between what individuals may be capable of doing and what tasks they actually undertake, which includes how they engage in constructing knowledge or learning. The suggestion here for LLN programs is that success measured in terms of heightened sense of self leads to the likelihood of individuals being more ambitious and expansive in applying their capacities. Such a view looks to personal motivation (Hoffman 1986) as a means to engage learners in realising their full capabilities, which indeed is a recommendation from the NIACE (2004) report.

Yet, beyond improving the tendency to utilise capacities to their fullest, dispositions associated with self-confidence play a more fundamental role in learning. Swain (2006) claimed that the majority of those participating in a maths learning program, changed through their participation, with some identifying specific changes to their aspirations and self esteem as a result of achievements through this program. They also shape how individuals construe and construct what they experience and therefore think, act and learn. For example, some individuals hold implicit beliefs about knowledge, considering "levels of intelligence" to be fixed, while others consider their levels can be developed further (Dweck & Leggett 1988). Such beliefs shape approaches to, and attitudes about, directing and securing their learning (Piaget 1981). In this way, the findings of the NIACE project suggesting important and enduring positive outcomes of participation in LLN programs that go beyond those anticipated by sponsors who maybe primarily concerned with measurable gains in literacy competence.

The processes of and consequences for this shaping of learning by individuals' dispositions arising from participation in LLN programs is seen to be particularly important given that contemporary accounts emphasise human learning as being a product of individuals' construction and agency (i.e. constructivist perspectives). That is, we actively access and negotiate with and learn from what we experience and shape our construal and construction of that experience, rather learning being mainly a product of external sources. Within constructivist accounts there are conflicting claims about the

extent of role for both the individuals' and external contributions to the processes of construal and construction of knowledge (i.e. learning). However, most views grant a role for the learner in these processes. Moreover, evidence suggests that individuals' engage in this process as directed by their needs and capacities, and is mediated by their self-confidence sense of self. For instance, a study of small-business operators, found that they exercised their agency in particular and productive ways when engaged in learning about how to manage the Goods and Service Tax (Billett, Ehrich & Hernon-Tinning 2003). As with learning about literacy (Turner and Watters 2001), it seems that these learners were selective in how they engaged and in learning about the GST and what they learnt. That is, they deployed and exercised their personal epistemologies (i.e. personal and agentic ways of knowing and doing) as directed by their particular interests, imperatives and values. Yet, there were differences in the ways which these small business operators went about and engaged with learning, with the one key variable being their confidence in approaching this new learning.

Similarly, Posner (1982) acknowledged the salient role of dispositions such as self-confidence to learning. He stated that "the beliefs, knowledge and abilities that students bring with them into the learning setting are a product of accommodations to their environments and form frames of reference which students use to assimilate new experiences" (Posner 1982, p. 345). Here, he also refers to earlier or pre-mediate experiences, as Valsiner (2000) described them, shaping how we view, engage with and learn from what we encounter. More than providing capacities in the form of concepts and procedures, these earlier or premediate experiences also shape how individuals subjectively (i.e. from their own perspective) construe and construct what they subsequently experience (Billett 2003). Indeed, the unique set of experiences that comprises individuals' life histories or ontogenies, lead to particular ways of viewing and engaging with the world which overtime shapes their ontogenetic development, in ways that might be quite personal specific and subjective (Billett 2003, Valsiner 2000). Consider, for instance, the distinct life histories that migrants and refugees bring to their participation in the programs (Miralles and Golding, 2007). This ontogenetic development is a product of moment-by-moment learning or micro-genetic development (Rogoff 1990) that comprises the ongoing process of the negotiations between what individuals already knows and what they experience, mediated by both the agency and intentions of the individual and the power of what is being suggested to them by them experiences of the social world (Billett 2006).

In this way, the microgenetic development occurs throughout and is both shaped by and contributes to individuals ontogenies. Importantly, it is the legacy of these earlier experiences, including their disposition of subjective bases, which shapes how we engage in that ongoing development. In this way, individuals' sense of self or self-confidence, arising from earlier experiences, shapes how they engage with subsequent experiences. Hence, how individuals engage in thinking and acting, for what purposes and intentionality, with what degree of effort (i.e. intensity) is shaped by these subjective bases (Billett, Smith and Barker 2005), such as individuals' sense of self in that learning, and the knowledge they have of what they are learning about.

Moreover, beyond individual learning, these negotiated processes of ongoing development also shapes how individuals engage in activities and, subsequently, enacted those activities: the constant process of remaking what we do as humans (Billett 2003). Such is the significance of these disposition contribution that, Rohrkemper (1989) questioned their separation from other forms of knowledge (i.e. conceptual and procedural) as did Vygotsky (1987) who saw this separation as being a key weakness in psychological theory. Indeed, Torney-Purta (1992) integrated dispositions within schematic structures, and Hoffman (1986) proposed that dispositional attributes such as confidence or sense of self have a direct influence on cognitive structures and activities, holding that they are embedded in and underpin both knowledge 'that' (i.e. conceptual) and knowledge 'how'(i.e. procedural). Further, Grusec and Goodnow (1994) proposed that affect and cognition need to be seen as influencing each other in ways that are not likely to be unidirectional or simple. Rather, they are likely to be bidirectional (i.e. negotiated) and complex, in their contributions to the ongoing learning and development. Hence, through their exercise these dispositional attributes stand to

underpin conceptual and procedural development, making them as potentially important general learning outcomes from participation in LLN programs.

Another and related important consideration here is that dispositionally, self-confidence will be person-dependent and its capacity, means and potential to shape learning needs to be recognised on those bases. For instance, how adult learners come to engage with literacy and numeracy programs will be shaped on basis and enacted in ways that are person-dependent to some degree (Dymock 2007). Moreover, how they engage in those programs and the learning that arises from them may be based on motives and processes that are distinct from those intended by sponsors, those who tutor in them. Hence, finding ways to understand the outcomes of literacy programs that can encompass the kinds of outcomes individuals want, arising from their participation and their achievement of these warrant careful assessment. Importantly, outcomes to be used to gauge the effectiveness of LLN programs likely needs to accommodate this person-dependent quality (Dymock 2007).

So subjective and personally-derived attributes, such as self-confidence, are held to be central to individuals' learning and their engaging in, remaking and, potentially, transforming their activities, and as such stand as important learning outcomes. Given the active role for learners in the construction of knowledge, the degree to which individuals engage in, or withdraw from, a particular task will influence what they construct and how they engage with that practice. For example, individuals are unlikely to engage enthusiastically in acquiring knowledge that they do not value, with quite the opposite likely to occur (e.g. Hodges 1998). That is, they may learn to disagree with, rebuff, or contest the very knowledge that they are being pressed to learn. In this way, given the importance of addressing and elaborating these disposition of attributes of sense of self or confidence, the fit between the goals of the LLN programs and those of the individual stand as another measure of these programs success.

Certainly, dispositions, such as self-confidence, influence whether individuals value a particular outcome enough to be willing to participate in the effortful activity required to secure the requisite knowledge. For example, Dweck and Elliot (1983) reported that school students, with a performance orientation, may determine if participation in a school room activity will result in their "looking smart", which is quite a different goal from determining what they will learn from an activity. Also, strategic procedural knowledge (e.g. Gott 1989) - knowing how and when to apply knowledge - is also shaped by dispositional qualities, that are personally dependent. Yet this notion of strategic or higher order procedures has often been associated with the efficacy of securing goals, rather than whether the learner thinks they are worth securing (i.e. Dweck & Elliot 1983; Goodnow 1990; Tobias 1994) or whether individuals possess the personal confidence, interest or motivation to engage with what they are experiencing (Belenky et al. 1986). Indeed, although a controversial text in so far as it has been held to disempower and misrepresent women as learners, the Belenky et al book argued that because of the subordinate roles that women had been assigned, this generated within women limited and narrow conceptions of what they were able to achieve and learn. While acknowledging that women should not be betrayed as being subjugated by social norms and practices, the point made in this book has implications for adult learners, and perhaps particularly those participating in literacy learning. That is, because of previous experiences with limited literacy skills, these learners may well perceive themselves to be limited in the scope of what learning is possible for them. Therefore, identifying outcomes which changed perceptions of the participants about the strategic potential of their learning stands as an important goal for LLN programs.

Therefore, in considering the role of dispositions such as self-confidence in adult literacy and numeracy learning, the current thinking is to go beyond accounts that see self-confidence as merely energising cognition and exercising tendencies. Instead, it is important to acknowledge the role that disposition of qualities such as self-confidence play in personally-derived subjectivities such as self-confidence, and how this shapes what they experience and come to know or learn. As these attributes seem to empower individual agency and develop and fortify individuals' personal epistemologies, they are central to general goals for learning.

Learner identity, personal agency, etc and their relevance to the concept of 'progress' in LLN

Learner subjectivity

From what has been proposed earlier, much of the basis for the learning associated with literacy, its processes and best need to be understood from the perspective of the individual. That is, their subject position. This is quite consistent with what is emerging as a set of alternative ways of assessing learner progress through LLN programs. For instance, Miralles and Golding (2007) emphasise that refugees might have particular needs and aspirations. They also will likely engage in LLN programs with particular kinds of subject positions. While some of these measures have a strong social flavour to them (e.g. social capital (Ballatti, Black & Falk 2006), measurable literacy competence (Perkins 2005), the majority have strongly personal dimensions. These include: Self-esteem and Personal Competence (NIACE 2004, ACFEB 2006, Dymock 2007); Engagement with others (ACFEB 2006); Agency and productivity (Watters and Turner 2001); Life trajectories (Ward & Edwards 2002); and Personal growth (ACFEB 2006, Dymock 2007, Swain 2006). Closely aligned with the earlier discussion about dispositions, and consistent with these alternatives of the potential for learning in LLN programs to be assessed against a range of outcomes, subjectivity stands as a common defining factor.

Personal subjectivity comprises the conscious and non-conscious conceptions, dispositions and procedures that constitute individuals' cognitive experience (Valsiner and Van de Veer 2000): our ways of engaging with and making sense of what we experience through our lived experience. This subjectivity is shaped by and also shapes encounters with both institutional and brute facts (Searle 1995): the contributions to experiences provided by both the social and natural world. As noted earlier, as a key component of our ontogenies, this experience continually develops microgenetically across our lifespan and informs how we construe and construct what we encounter through our active, agentic and intentional engagement with the social experience: the social world and also natural world (i.e. brute facts).

Individuals' cognitive experience is both deployed in and variously shapes and, at times, directs our conscious thinking and acting and is itself also renewed, reinforced, refined and transformed through that deployment (Billett, Smith and Barker 2005) as discussed in the section on learning above. Hence, individuals' subjectivities comprise a set of conceptions, procedures beliefs and values and dispositions that are, in part, non-conscious (yet quickly become conscious when something we experience doesn't fit) and, in part, conscious. Therefore, individual subjectivities and the allied concepts of sense of self and identity are essential to assessing the progress in and outcomes of individuals' participation in LLN programs.

These subjectivities find expression in two forms. There is the individual's *sense of self* which guides the degree and intentions of our conscious thinking and acting strategically in seeking ontological security -- making sense of the world (Newton 1998). Like Piaget's concept of equilibrium, individuals' sense of self is exercised to secure personal coherence in encounters with the social and brute world and to overcome disequilibrium it encounters. Giddens (1991) suggested the problem for the self is in maintaining its security in a culture that threatens its stability and the reference points for that stability. For instance, participation in LLN programs provide experiences that are likely to lead to challenges to individuals' equilibrium. Yet, as Fenwick (1998) proposed, while permitting a role for individuals, this view positions them as anxiety ridden and their agency restricted to reflexive relations with culture, rather than individuals who have selves that are agentic and capable of mediating their own ontological security. Certainly, from studies of workers' participation in working life over time and through processes of change (Billett, Barker and Herson-Tinning 2004, Billett and Pavlova 2005, Billett, Smith and Barker 2005) the evidence suggests that while constrained and shaped by situational

factors, social practices and cultural mores, individuals are able to exercise their agency in ways aligned with being and maintaining themselves, albeit negotiating their sense of self through these processes.

More specifically, the NIACE (Eldred et al 2004) report suggested that even when modest improvements to literacy competency are realised, participants enjoyed benefits personal growth beyond those indicated by measures of literacy competence. Yet, conversely Searle, Billett and Behrens (2005) found that adult learners' initial participation in higher education was often marked by reliance upon the judgements of their lecturers about the worth of their learning and development. In this environment which challenge their sense of self and presented challenges to maintain their personal equilibrium in the form of new content and relatively independent approaches to learning, many of the students looked to the judgements of their lecturers' marks and comments to make judgements about their worth. So their sense of ontological security is not found in either the personal or social but in negotiations between the two.

Associated also with subjectivities is the concept of *identity* that has both personal and societal connotations. Socially, there are forms of institutional, normative and discourse practices that are associated with individual's identity. Occupations, for instance, provide examples of these, and are ordered and valued in particular ways. So, there are societal expectations about and identifiable factors associated with those who wish to identify as a car mechanic, medical doctor, nurse, hairdresser and so on, as indeed there are about broader social categories (e.g. masculinity). The other account of identity is that aligned with how individuals present themselves to (i.e. to identify with) the social world and with which social practices they wish to be associated. This is a product of how individuals present and negotiate their self to the social world, in terms of what they do and how they go about it. Analogously, Cronick (2002) aligned individuals' agency with personal control, which recognises the salience of control in conceiving and securing a sense of ontological security. In this way, identity is seen as an outcome, a narrative construction that is a product of this process and changes representing clear statements of progress of one kind or another.

Agency

As proposed earlier, individuals' ontogenetic development ... arises through a personally agentic epistemological process that is shaped through ongoing interactions with the social world. In turn, this influences how individuals engage with new experiences. The construal of these experiences is likely to be in some ways unique to individuals, because of their distinct personal histories. Indeed, it is likely that the level of interest and agency individuals direct to their learning of literacy and numeracy will be shaped by personal imperatives to secure particular kinds of change:

the individual's ontogenetic development ... arises through a personally agentic epistemological process that is shaped through ongoing interactions with the social world. In turn, this influences how individuals engage with new experiences. The construal of these experiences is likely to be in some ways unique to individuals, because of their distinct personal histories.

This notion of personal agency directing and shaping individuals' learning holds promise for the present study. This is because it offers a basis to identify the extent to which it is perceived to change during participation in an LLN program, even if any changes cannot be directly attributed to the program itself. The challenge is to find ways of capturing the extent of such changes.

Approaches to assessment in non-accredited learning

Dymock's study (2007) and the additional analysis above provide some tentative bases for exploring how changes in the individual might be assessed beyond the measurement of language, literacy and numeracy skills. First, the perceived benefits of program participation were diverse for these learners, including personal growth and moving on to further education and training or to employment. Secondly, the needs of students were quite person-dependent, particularly in meeting the combination of needs that many learners experience. Thirdly, Dymock concluded (p.33) that in non-accredited ALLN provision in Australia, the 'development of reading, writing and numeracy skills goes hand-in-hand with development of self-esteem'. So beyond the development of literacy and numeracy skills, other important personal outcomes might be achieved.

This link has also been recognized in the wider field of adult and community education (ACE). For example, the Adult Community and Further Education Board (2006: 3) in Victoria said that that non-accredited learning is not only a pathway into accredited courses, but also a means to 'building confidence, resilience and self worth, enabling learners to make connections with family and the wider community'. Consistent with this, Clemens, Hartley and Macrae (2003: 47) characterised ACE outcomes as individual development outcomes, community development outcomes and economic development outcomes, but also observed:

ACE agencies know they make a difference. They 'see' evidence of change, even dramatic change, in individuals, in communities and, to a lesser extent, in local economies. But they will never measure this change because they can't isolate or quantify their contribution to change in one individual life, let alone succeed in the more complex task of isolating or quantifying their contribution to social capital and economic capital.

In language, literacy and numeracy, the concept of wider impact has been explored by Balatti, Black and Falk (2006), who concluded that individuals' involvement in literacy and numeracy courses produced social capital, but noted that the precise benefits varied according to age, English proficiency and background. However, this finding supports the person-dependent nature of appraising the benefits of LLN programs, particularly given the evidence of the kinds of personally significant changes likely to occur during individual's life histories. Balatti, Black and Falk (2006: 23) reported that 'self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy almost always accompanied changes in social capital or changes in improved technical literacy skills'.

This notion of 'dramatic change' in individuals, and that individuals' participation in LLN contributes to social capital, is consistent with Waterhouse and Virgona's (2005: 28-9) conclusion, from a study of people who had succeeded despite the apparent handicap of inadequate literacy, that 'literacy issues are about identity as much as [about] skills'.

The concept of 'identity' in relation to LLN is very relevant to the issue of what outcomes are achieved and how they might be 'measured', and has been taken up in the present project as a key factor. A study of adult numeracy students in England (Swain, 2006: 3) found that almost three-quarters felt they had changed as a person in some way through learning maths, and that some students altered their aspirations as their sense of achievement and level of self-esteem grew, and concluded that :

Although human agency may be fragile, particularly for those with little power, the students in this study were still able to make decisions that had the potential, at least, to be able to re-direct their lives.

Swain suggested that students themselves perceive and direct their efforts towards such changes.

There has been considerable recent interest in the UK in the assessment of non-accredited learning in post-16 years educational provision because of British government policy requirements (Greenwood, Hayes, Turner & Vorhaus, 2001). For example, following a government decision to fund non-accredited basic skills and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses as part of a plan to reduce the number of adults with basic skills needs, Grief and Windsor (2002) explored how such learning outcomes might be recognized and validated. They suggested there was a case for a nationally published format for individual learners' records, but that it would need to provide for a 'broad range of achievements including "soft" and "unintended outcomes"'. In another study comprising interviews with 70 students in non-accredited adult literacy and numeracy learning, Ward and Edwards (2002:39) found that many of them did not seek qualifications and/or feared assessment because of prior negative experiences at school. Torrance and Coultas (2004: 25) inferred from McGivney's study (1992) of 50 adult education organisations that for some learners, involvement in non-assessed activities might be a prerequisite for developing sufficient confidence to be able to engage in formally assessed courses. This finding is consistent with Dymock's (2007) conclusion that the strong continuing demand in Australia for non-accredited ALLN courses is because these adults do not need or are not yet able to cope with certificate level training.

Watters and Turner (2001: 4) found that 'assessment' was not a term used by learners in non-accredited learning, and that they preferred informal formative feedback from their tutors. The learners they interviewed were keen to talk about what they were learning, their feelings about that learning and the difference it was making in their lives:

The most important dimension of assessment for learners was the satisfaction of knowing their own progress; proving this to others was understandably secondary.

In the same vein, Wickert and McGuirk (2005:24) concluded from their review of literature that there was no consensus about the significance for disengaged learners of mapping their learning to specific literacy and learning outcomes. However, Janssen (2001:53) observed there is potential for conflict between students' desire for informal qualitative assessment and funding bodies' expectation of formal, summative assessment or at least 'some quantitative indication of the levels of student "achievement" in non-accredited learning'. This raises the questions of what is meant by 'progress' and can it be measured?

In a study of assessment in the UK learning and skills sector, Torrance et al (2005:28) observed that:

Progression is conceptualised as both a 'horizontal' aggregatory process and a 'vertical' development process. In turn, both of these categorisations can also be subdivided into what might be termed intrinsic 'progress' – with respect to learning (or towards a learning goal) – and more extrinsic 'progression', with respect to moving from one accomplished achievement or qualification to another.

They also noted (p. 33) that progression can also be conceptualised in terms of acquisition of social capital ('personal confidence, social engagement, new or increased personal networks, community development and vitality') and suggested that this was particularly apparent in the adult and community education sector. Attributes that build social capital, such as confidence, self-esteem, and trust, are what Falk (1999) referred to as 'identity resources', which he distinguished from 'knowledge resources'. The development of identity resources are among the outcomes that Torrance et al (2005:84) called the 'wider benefits of learning', although they suggested that recording increases in self-confidence or social capital would be 'challenging'.

Nevertheless, the concept of 'wider learning outcomes' is pervasive in the literature, particularly in language, literacy and numeracy learning. For example, a Tasmanian survey (Department of Education, 2005:12) identified eleven 'other outcomes', including pathways to further study and

employment, better skills in researching and finding information, lower crime rates, and a significant increase in self esteem and in opportunities to participate in the community. A UK study of adult learners' lives (Barton et al, 2004:101) identified the 'wider benefits of learning' as empowerment in the classroom and in life, new skills acquisition, and a change in attitudes to learning which added quality to life. Ward and Edwards (2002) concluded from their research with literacy and numeracy learners in north-west England, which used the 'learning journey' as a metaphor, that:

Perhaps the most profound change for most learners interviewed was a massive enhancement of their confidence and self-esteem. This increased confidence had a significant impact on their learning achievements, attitudes to learning, aims and aspirations, ability to do real life activities and their social activities with other people.

However a similar study in the north east of England (Gregson et al, 2004:34) did not observe the same 'massive enhancement' but did note that learners gained substantially from being able to share their learning experiences 'in supportive dialogue'. These same researchers concluded that adult literacy and numeracy programs 'need ... to be extended to include the progressive development of learner confidence, the skills of critical inquiry, strategies for learning to learn and the integration of learning aims with personal, social and psychological realities and 'organising circumstances' (Hamilton 1998) of everyday life'.

Watters and Turner (2001:4-5) said that students in non-accredited learning believed they knew when they were making progress, but that the extent to which they were able to identify achievement of particular outcomes varied according to such factors as self-confidence, experience of adult learning and the factors themselves. In literacy and numeracy courses, Ward and Edwards (2002:4) found that most learners described learning gains 'in terms of what they could now do in their lives', while a smaller number referred to the acquisition of technical skills. Foster, Howard and Reisenberger (1997:13) attempted to meet the needs of different groups in non-accredited learning by classifying learning outcomes into 'Outcomes for providers/stakeholders/funders' (operational, and service outputs, service impact) and 'Outcomes experienced by the learner' (personal, social, economic). Realistically, the examples of learner outcomes provided are not all positive, e.g. 'wasted money', 'put off "education"' .

Watters and Turner (2001) obtained only positive responses, mainly by asking learners in non-accredited learning what they considered they had *gained* from the experience. The list of beneficial outcomes included enjoyment and satisfaction, gains in skills, knowledge and understanding, a basis for further learning, a sense of well-being, increased confidence, seeing oneself and being seen differently, and seeing the world differently. Although these related to non-accredited adult learning in general, and therefore spanned a wide range of learner characteristics and motivations, the last four in the list are particularly pertinent to the present study of ALLN outcomes.

According to Watters and Turner (2001), a sense of *well-being* came about through the emotional, psychological and physical benefits of learning: 'Learning makes you feel good'. *Increased confidence* was demonstrated by being able to speak up in class, feeling at ease with technology, learn that it's okay to take risks, and not being afraid of change. This study also found that a significant number of learners spoke positively about how learning had changed their *perceptions of themselves* as learners and as creative people and a realisation that 'you don't have to be intelligent to come to learning'. These attitudes were also part of *seeing the world differently* as the learners' views of other and beliefs changed. The researchers concluded (p.59) that the range of anticipated and unexpected benefits identified reflected the 'diversity and complexity of the learners' purposes and the range of ways in which non-accredited learning enhances adults' lives'. They also suggested that 'incidentally or sometimes deliberately', the learning also enriched the lives of their

families, friends and acquaintances, a finding that is congruent with the discussion above about acquisition of social capital (Torrance et al, 2005) and ‘identity resources’ (Falk, 1999).

Looking specifically at literature on non-academic outcomes in *adult literacy* programs, Westell (2005) identified five main outcomes: self-confidence, independence, attitude change, relationship and community building, and learning to learn. Westell said that every study mentioned self-confidence as crucial to learning but said it was not clear how this self-confidence was developed or what aspects of a literacy program promoted it. Under *self-confidence* Westell included ‘self-determination, self-direction, self-esteem, agency, choice, control, independence and standing up for oneself’. She referred to a study by Niks et al (2003) in which the authors listed five categories of *agency*: self-confidence, control, choice, awareness and reflection. Another study (Bingman, Ebert & Smith, 1999) used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale to map growth in self-esteem of adult literacy learners in Tennessee over a five year period.

In Westell’s review, *independence* was exemplified by learners going to the shops on their own, living on their own, acting on their own and making changes in their personal lives which reinforced their independence. Under *attitude change*, Westell (p.10) noted Fingeret’s (1994) conclusions that learners in two adult literacy programs not only improved their reading and writing abilities, but often described new literacy practices at work and shopping, along with ‘culture-related impacts, including changes in the culture of families and gender-related changes in behaviour’. Westell observed that it was not clear whether changes in attitude were a specific result of the educational intervention or also attributable to participation in a diverse group of learners.

Under *relationship and community building*, Westell (p.11) quoted Manning’s (2003) finding from a review of outcomes of US adult literacy programs that ‘participation in literacy programs leads to a significant increase in participation in other community organizations’. Her evidence for *learning how to learn* as an outcome is less persuasive, but she quotes Beder’s (1999) finding from a national US study that ‘in general, adult literacy education has a positive influence on participants’ continued education’.

In another discussion of ‘progression’ and the wider benefits of adult learning, Nashashibi (2004: ii-iii) distinguished between ‘progress’, ‘achievement’ and ‘progression’, as well as ‘impact’:

Progress in learning is an increase, improvement or deepening of knowledge, understanding or skills.

Achievement is what learners do with what they learn; it is the outward and visible sign of progress. It may take the form of passing an examination but it is observable in the actions, products and/or behaviour of learners wherever active learning takes place. ... In non-accredited learning, achievement of a learning goal is achievement of the aim as expressed in agreed individual or group learning objectives.

Progression is movement as a result of learning. It is purposeful and takes the learner into a new context or activity. It may, for example, be movement into further learning, employment, freelance work or new voluntary roles.

Impact is an inclusive term covering the overall effect of learning provision on those it is designed to benefit – the learners and potential learners and the communities in which they live.

There is some overlap in the meanings of these terms which may cause confusion in trying to use them for assessment purposes in non-accredited ALLN. More useful for those purposes may be Nashashibi’s (2004: 27) list of the wider benefits of learning: gaining confidence and enhancing self-esteem, maintaining or improving physical or mental health, ‘keeping fit for learning’ – able

to use it when life change requires it, developing local social involvements and more tolerant attitudes – contributing to the fabric of society, using new skills to benefit the family or community, and improving the environment. Nashashibi noted that such benefits can result from *participation* in a learning activity as much as from *completion*, and that ‘engagement in learning is not all future oriented’, a comment that is very relevant to ALLN learners in non-accredited community programs. She also deduced from Schuller et al’s findings (2004) that the impact of learning might be thought of as a continuum with ‘sustaining learning’ at one end and ‘transforming learning’ at the other. Schuller et al (2004 in Nashashibi, 2004, 29) said:

Education transforms people’s lives but also, less spectacularly, enables them to cope with the multifarious stresses of daily life as well as discontinuous and continuous social change and contributes to others’ well-being by maintaining community and collective life.

This is a conclusion from Schuller et al’s (2004) research into the benefits of learning generally, and may not apply quite so fully to those in ALLN programs. However, their matrix classifying the effects of learning into ‘Personal change’, ‘Self-maintenance’, ‘Community activism’, and ‘Social fabric’ may be helpful in devising a set of indicators of progress in ALLN learning.

Another way of trying to map the wider benefits of learning has been in identifying ‘soft outcomes’. Dewson et al (2000:2) described soft outcomes as:

...outcomes from training, support or guidance interventions, which unlike hard outcomes, such as qualifications and jobs, cannot be measured directly or tangibly. *Soft outcomes* may include achievements relating to:

Interpersonal skills, for example: social skills and coping with authority

Organisational skills, such as: personal organisation, and the ability to order and prioritise

Analytical skills, such as: the ability to exercise judgement, managing time or problem solving, and

Personal skills, for example: insight, motivation, confidence, reliability and health awareness.

According to Dewson et al (2000:2), the term *soft indicators* can be used to refer to those achievements that indicate progress towards an outcome, but they observed that this may be a subjective judgement. Dewson et al (2000:2) also used the term *distance travelled* to refer to the progress that a person makes ‘towards employability or harder outcomes’ and suggested for example that ‘indicators (or measurements) of soft outcomes can be used as tools for measuring distance travelled towards labour market participation’.

Butcher and Marsden (2004:6) criticised what they saw as the narrowness of this linking of soft outcomes with hard ones, because ‘such an approach narrows the interpretation of social inclusion to employability and educational achievement and ignores vast swathes of the community and voluntary sector working with clients who may never access jobs or educational qualifications’. They also noted (p. 6) a study (Gaffney and Humm, 2002) that reported concerns from community organisations that the development of ‘measurement systems’ would turn volunteers into ‘professionals’.

Assessment tools in non-accredited learning

In considering how soft outcomes and distance travelled might be ‘measured’, Lloyd and OSullivan (2003: 5) identified five common elements in the practices of nine different organisations: a set of target indicators (e.g exercising self-discipline or assuming responsibility for oneself at work), a scoring system (usually in the form of a scale from three points to ten

points), baseline and subsequent interviews to assess progress, a system for reporting results, and training staff for using the system. Anderson, Foster and McKibben (2006: 1) developed the Soft Outcomes Universal Learning (SOUL) Record in which soft outcomes are divided into three areas: 'attitude', 'personal/interpersonal', and 'practical'. By measuring changes in outcomes in these areas over time, 'organisations are able to show the distance learners have travelled'. The SOUL Record uses 21 statements (7 for each of the three areas), with a five point rating scale for each, where 1= strongly disagree, and 5=strongly agree. Included under 'Attitude' is 'I am a Confident person', under 'Personal/Interpersonal' is 'I enjoy working as part of a team', and under 'Practical' is 'I carry out any tasks that I am set or set myself'. Three different 'smiley' faces at the top of the form ask the learner to indicate 'how do you feel today?'

Adding the value of the rating for each of the 21 statements provides an overall score and users are recommended to use the tool at the beginning, midpoint and end of an intervention in order to be able to compare scores. Anderson et al (2006) claimed the SOUL Record had been used successfully in mental health, with sex workers and homeless young people, and 'can be used effectively with clients with low literacy levels'.

The SOUL Record is another version of a variety of approaches that have been developed to try to meet the UK Government's requirement for documenting non-accredited learning. Many of these have adopted 'individual profiling', and a range of real-life examples is presented in *A practical guide to measuring soft outcomes and distance travelled* (Department for Work and Pensions, 2004). There has also been some UK interest in the assessment in the related area of 'soft skills' (Simpson, 2006) but these appear to be more in relation to accredited learning and the attempts to date to be problematic.

There have been numerous instruments developed over the years to assess the development of literacy and numeracy skills (Brooks, Heath & Pollard, 2005; Soifer et al, 1990: 170-177), including in Australia the National Reporting System (Perkins 2005). However if, as the research so strongly suggests, the development of self-confidence is a key aspect of adult learning, new ways need to be found to monitor learner progress in areas beyond language, literacy and numeracy skills.

Eldred (2002: 6) attempted to capture the elements of progress and achievement in adult literacy learning through the concept of *success*: 'the challenge is whether success is indicated by measurements based on external standards or a less easily measurable, more personal issue of achievement of individual targets and increases in confidence'.

In Eldred's (2002: 9) study, adult literacy tutors at a UK further education college perceived success in terms of:

Increases in confidence, motivation, assertiveness, and feeling better about themselves;

Demonstrating learning through a review of goals or targets;

Using something which has been learned;

Receiving feedback from friends or family;

Doing something the student could not do before

Attending regularly

Indicating through assessment or tests

Aspiring to do something else

Taking responsibility for learning

Finding out by asking the student

Receiving computer feedback.

While the items in these lists are described by Eldred as ‘indicators’, the question remains as to what criteria the tutors used to assess such aspects as ‘increases in confidence’, ‘using something which has been learned’, and ‘taking responsibility for learning’.

The majority of students interviewed by Eldred for the same study strongly asserted they were successful in their learning, and provided examples of this success. She classified the students’ responses into *literacy indicators* and those which suggested *differences in life* (p.14). Literacy indicators included reading the newspaper, talking to people in shops and offices, reading and writing and spelling more or better, and reading road signs. Eldred said (p. 14) that the students ‘appeared to compare their previous and current literacy behaviour, in order to assess their success’. Indicators of differences in the learners’ lives were mainly described (p.14) in terms of changes in behaviour, including reading and purchasing newspapers and magazines, writing letters and cards at home, and using reading and writing at work. It is clear from the two lists that there is considerable overlap in what Eldred has termed ‘literacy indicators’ and ‘differences in life’ indicators. More distinct in the latter were student mentions (p. 14) of ‘increased confidence, doing new things, experiencing greater independence, and comments from family or work colleagues’.

Eldred (2002) found that that ‘success in literacy learning is not necessarily evidenced by achieving standards set by external bodies but by goals which tutors and students discuss and agree’ (p. 27) She said that a ‘significant number’ of students appeared unable to achieve the external standards set, even after several years study, but that almost all students reported increases in confidence. This is compatible with Dymock’s (2007) finding, discussed above, that providers in non-accredited community ALLN perceived greater gains in self-confidence than in language, literacy and numeracy skills. From her research, Eldred concluded:

Growth in confidence is a key outcome of successful literacy education and it should be recognised, assessed, recorded and celebrated in the process of teaching and learning.

There have been numerous attempts in the past 25 years or so to capture the wider benefits of ALLN learning. For example, Good and Holmes (1978, p.3) in their book, *How’s it going?* (from which the title of this study takes its name) advocated a three-level assessment of reading, writing and spelling: ‘Beginning’, ‘Not bad’ and ‘With ease’, an acknowledgement that assessing LLN progress is related to students’ perceptions of themselves as learners as well as to their skills development. At about the same time, Charnley and Jones (1978) proposed five overall criteria for measuring success in language, literacy and numeracy which extended the conception of skills development into how those skills were applied: affective personal achievements (e.g. ‘an increase in confidence associated with literacy skills’), cognitive achievements (e.g. improved reading and writing skills), enactive achievements (e.g. reading newspapers, using writing skills at work), socio-economic achievements (e.g. participation in civic duties), and affective social achievements (e.g. better relationships within and outside the tuition group). Using these criteria in a national study, Brennan, Clark and Dymock (1993) identified a diversity of learner oriented outcomes among Australian LLN students. They concluded (p. 67) that ‘the value of literacy skills for what they meant personally or socially or economically and what this could permit the person to do or to be, was incorporated into the learners’ expectations’.

However, the dominance of competency-based training and associated regulatory frameworks in Australian education and training in the past decade and a half, appears to have diminished the

significance of these personally-oriented outcomes because they cannot be easily measured. According to the Australian Council for Adult Literacy (2004, 7), in LLN 'Australia needs a reporting framework that reports on progress against a number of relevant social and personal indicators'. The principles underpinning the Victorian Adult Community Further Education Board's (2006) *A-Frame*, 'An ACE framework for non-accredited learning', reflect this need for a broader approach. Although not intended as an assessment document, one of the questions asked of tutors is: 'What significant personal development for learners was observed: in confidence, in leadership skills, in attitudes?' (p.15).

In a recent British study (Eldred et al, 2004) that explored the link between learning and confidence, the authors made the point (p.4) that:

In non-accredited learning, the challenge is to clearly capture individual and group achievements, in order to demonstrate to learners, tutors and funders what has been gained. If gains in confidence are as significant as many learners and tutors appear to suggest, ways of evidencing them seem to be important.

Dymock (2007, p.31) found that 'ways of evidencing' in non-accredited LLN in Australia varied considerably. From a national survey of 125 providers and seven case studies in three states, he concluded:

Only around one-quarter of the providers used formal assessment tools Amongst the rest, a combination of small assessment tasks and perceptions of progress based on observations and student feedback, often verbal, seemed widespread. This informality means that there is not a very rigorous assessment of student learning in many programs, particularly those using volunteers one-to-one. On the other hand, the range of motivations identified in the survey and in the interviews suggests that a more rigorous approach to assessment may not be appropriate. And if, for example, the development of self-confidence is seen as a worthwhile outcome, how might that aspect be assessed? To what extent should student self-evaluation be considered a reliable means of assessment?

In considering the implications of the findings, Dymock (2007, 36) went on to say:

it is unfair to expect coordinators and volunteers to jump through too many accountability hoops, but there does seem a need for a review of assessment practices, particularly in those programs where assessment is a little loose or relatively unmonitored. In fact 'assessment' may be too strong a term – what is necessary in some programs is a more careful approach to *monitoring of progress*, and the range of tools available for such purposes should be reviewed by individual coordinators to ensure that the one/s selected for their particular program is/are the most appropriate.

In Australia, the 'measurement' of outcomes has for some time been a thorny issue in the LLN field because it often pits personal against institutional purposes. Initiatives such as the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Competency Scales (Griffin & Forwood 1991) gave way to more student centred-models, eventually resulting in the development of the National Reporting System (NRS). This widely used tool, mandatory in the government-funded WELL and LLNP programs, is an instrument for describing language, literacy and numeracy outcomes. It was not, however, designed for assessing the range and kinds of broader outcomes in non-accredited community programs of the kind identified in the literature (above). The application of the NRS also requires a level of background knowledge of language, literacy and numeracy sufficient to be able to appreciate its effective use (Perkins 2005). Therefore it may be impractical for the numerous volunteer tutors practising in the community learning sector. Even under a proposed new framework, the purpose of the NRS would continue to be about levels of language, literacy and numeracy development (Perkins 2005), thereby missing the important personal imperatives and

goals which appear to be so important for individuals engaged in and learning through these LLN programs.

A similar approach to the NRS seems to have been adopted in the United States by the Equipped for the Future (EFF) Assessment Consortium (2004: 1), led by SRI International and the Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee, in developing assessments for standards on 'what adults need to know and be able to do to be equipped for daily life in the 21st century'. Researchers identified 16 standards under four categories of skills: communication skills, decision-making skills, interpersonal skills, and lifelong learning skills. These assessments are intended to 'allow teachers to measure and report on how well adults can use the integrated skills processes that make up the EFF standards to reach goals and satisfy purposes in their lives' (p. 1), so appear to have broad intentions, but they are based on performance measures which in Australia, the UK and New Zealand would be seen as more closely aligned with competency standards, i.e. with accredited learning.

One attempt to assess growth in levels of confidence through non-accredited learning was through another NIACE project in the UK: *Catching confidence* (Eldred et al, 2004). The authors reported (p. 15) that the terms 'self-esteem' and 'confidence' were often used interchangeably in the literature. However they saw confidence as relating to 'ability to do things' and believed that this ability depends on possessing the knowledge or skills to do something, and that confidence can vary from situation to situation. 'Self-esteem' they saw as relating to how people view themselves and their feelings of self-worth as well as their ability to act. To them confidence is an aspect of self-esteem. In the study, tutors suggested that self-esteem is hidden within a person and 'difficult to evidence', whereas confidence is easier to identify through changes in behaviour and attitude (p. 55). Eldred et al (2004: 57) concluded:

Without increases in confidence, many adults will remain non-participants, not achieving their full potential in personal development as well as skills and qualifications. The importance of non-threatening first-step learning which gives learners time to gain confidence, [and] develop their identity as successful learners, and supports diverse aims and aspirations is vital.

The research showed (p. 31) that increased confidence resulted in changes in self-esteem, body language, ability to speak out, heightened life aspirations, ability to learn and aims for progression, relationships with family and friends, community activity and activism, work ambitions, performance and relationships.

The challenges of assessing the extent of changes in confidence was summed up by Turner and Watters (2001: 117):

We can identify the promotion of self-confidence as goal, and go some way towards forming judgments about learners' self-confidence at the end of a course. But there is nevertheless plenty of hard work to be done on specifying exactly what it is that we are assessing, and exactly how we are in a position to verify that a learner's self-confidence is as she or her tutor says it is.

Eldred et al (2004: 21-24) attacked the issue through the development of a 'confidence grid'. The 'Catching Confidence Grid' comprises a matrix with twelve statements down the left-hand column, intended to capture different aspects of confidence, including 'I am confident when meeting new people', 'I am confident when writing things down', and 'I am confident I can do the things I want'. Across the page are four columns, each with a venue/situation as a heading: 'At a learning centre', 'At home', 'Socially/with friends', and 'At work/out and about'. The learners were provided with cards, each marked with a different symbol for 'highly confident', 'confident', 'not confident', and 'very low confidence', and asked to think about where they would place these in response to each of the 12 questions., and to discuss these proposed responses with fellow students. When they were satisfied with their choices, stickers with symbols the same as on the cards were available so they could confirm their decisions on the grid. The

intention was that the exercise would take place close to the start of a course and at the end so that the extent of change could be seen visually from the placement of the stickers.

While the authors concluded the grid activity was a ‘powerful tool for supporting learners to recognise changes in confidence in and beyond learning situations’ (p. 24), it is clear from some of the feedback reported from tutors that there was some ambivalence about the value of the grid, and whether all learners were capable of recognising the extent of the changes in confidence that had occurred (pp. 23-4). Some learners found the level of language of the statements difficult, and some appeared to need more time to reflect on their responses.

Eldred et al (2004: 57) concluded that ‘work should be carried out to develop best practice in framing confidence growth as a learning outcome and methods of recognizing and recording in this area’. This current study is intended to contribute to that work. The researchers are conscious however of Grief and Windsor’s (2002: 63) warning:

We need to be cautious that the desire to make systems robust and ensure the credibility of data on learner’s achievements does not encourage the development of systems that resemble that of award schemes and qualifications. By doing this we lose the very features of non-accredited learning for which this option is currently valued.

Some bases for revised approaches for monitoring learner progress in LLN programs

Drawing on the approaches reported in the literature surveyed above, there appears to be a number of possible bases for monitoring progress in non-accredited community language, literacy and numeracy learning in terms of growth of confidence and related attributes, including:

Self-confidence and personal competence – degree by which self esteem and personal confidence have changed, and in what ways, as a result of participation in literacy program (ACFEB 2006, NIACE 2004, Dymock 2007, Ward & Edwards, 2002, Gregson et al, 2004, Butcher & Marsden 2004, Foster et al 1997, Watters & Turner 2001, Bingham et al 1999, Nashashibi 2004, Schuller et al 2004, Dewson et al 2000, Eldred 2002, Charnley & Jones 1978, Dutton et al).

Engagement with others - degree by which engagement with others has changed, and in what ways, as a result of participation in literacy program (ACFEB 2006, Ward & Edwards 2002, Butcher & Marsden 2004, Fingeret 1994, Schuller et al 2004, Dewson et al 2000, Charnley & Jones 1978) (e.g. family, community).

Attitudes to learning – extent of change of attitude towards learning and future learning and ability to learn how to learn (Ward & Edwards 2002, Watters & Turner 2001, Beder 1999, Nashashibi 2004).

Agency/pro-activity – degree by which individuals’ agency and pro-activity have changed, and in what ways, as a result of participation in literacy program (Swain 2006, Watters & Turner 2001, Falk 1999, Niks et al 2003, Schuller et al 2004, Brennan et al, Charnley & Jones 1978).

Life trajectories – degree by which individuals’ life trajectories have changed, and in what ways, as a result of participation in literacy program (Swain 2006, Miralles & Golding 2007, Waterhouse & Virgona 2007, Ward & Edwards 2002).

Personal growth/personal change – extent to which a learner perceives they have grown as a person as the result of engagement in a LLN program (Eldred 2002, Swain 2006, Turner & Watters 2001, Schuller et al 2004).

Social Capital – extent of changes in community participation, involvement in networks (Ballatti, Black & Falk 2006, Foster et al 1997, Torrance et al 2005, Manning 2003, Nashashibi 2004, Schuller et al 2004, Charnley & Jones 1978).

Possible bases for identifying wider benefits of learning

Seven factors were identified from the literature review in Phase 1 as possible bases for indicating the wider benefits of learning: (i) self-confidence; (ii) engagement with others; (iii) attitudes to learning; (iv) agency/pro-activity; (v) life trajectories; (vi) personal growth; and (vii) social capital. In the Phase 2 interviews, the coordinators, teachers, tutors and students were specifically asked about what they perceived as wider learning outcomes, i.e. beyond the development of language, literacy and numeracy competence. Examples of the responses, mostly by coordinators and tutors, but also by learners (L), are provided below under each of the seven categories.

1. Changes in self-confidence and personal competence

The participants were asked about the ways in which changes in self-confidence and personal competence were evident through the learners' participation in non-accredited LLN programs. In Table 2, the illustrative examples of outcomes are presented in the left hand column; in the right column, a statement or statements have been made to crisply capture those reported outcomes, a pattern that is repeated in tables 3 to 8.

Table 2: Changes in self-confidence and personal competence

Illustrative data	Learning outcome
I think coming here, my confidence actually has built up quite a bit. I've learnt things that I thought were actually impossible to do. I've actually achieved more in my maths than I actually thought I could ever actually do, and the same with my literacy class as well. (L)	Improving personal capacity and competence
My biggest problem before was worry about what other people would think and hiding when I was writing [at work]. Now, I know what it says and if I need help they'll explain it to you. I've got the confidence, that's all I wanted. (L)	More engaged; improved self-belief
Before I couldn't do anything, my husband do everything. So I was even scared to go to shopping; I was afraid when the lady in the shop ask me something because very often I couldn't understand, so now I don't have this problem, I don't feel shy and even if I don't understand something I don't feel, you know, shy and I don't have this feeling. So it's much, much better. Much, much better. (L)	More autonomous and self-directed
I'd ask him to do things and he would do that and more, ... so he pretty much took the reins on very, very early, within about three or four lessons. I could see amazing improvements in his self-confidence and just his communication as well.	More autonomous; better communication
He'd tell me that he always went to the same deli for lunch ... because of his anxiety. But then he started going to different delis and different shops and things like that, which was all new for him.	Opens up options and alternatives
One of my students ... mentioned being able to write birthday cards and write the gift tags on Christmas gifts. You know, she said that was ... the first Christmas she'd been able to do it and she was thrilled.	Enhanced participation in everyday tasks

You see that progression from the eye contact to the yes/no answers to the engaging in conversation to the feeling comfortable sitting in the reception area and interacting with the volunteer [receptionist].	Enhanced engagement with others and improved self-esteem
My student had the confidence to go for an interview for a job and then get the job, but also ... it's a big step for her to go up to the railway station and hop on the train and go all the way to [city] to get another train to go over to [suburb] to work	Enhanced participation in everyday activities and greater self-belief

From the responses shown in Table 2, a number of recurring themes emerge. Most commonly there is evidence of greater engagement with others and participation in activities by these learners than had previously been the case. This outcome is closely aligned with a capacity to be more autonomous and self-directed in activities. Hence, there are consistent indications that changes in self-confidence and personal competence were evident in both greater participation with others and in social circumstances and in greater independence in terms of being competent and confident to undertake more autonomous action on the part of these learners.

2. Engagement with others

The participants were also asked whether there had been any changes in terms of their engagement with others as a result of that participation in the non-accredited literacy and numeracy program (Table 3).

Table 3: Engagement with others

Illustrative data	Learning outcome
Now I would say since I was coming to school I don't have much worry if I have to go to ring the office of the doctor, anywhere; there is no more that hesitant to speak, to say something, but that's what, as I said, my confidence grew in that part there, I've got no worry to go anywhere, to the doctor, to anywhere.(L)	Empowering the individual to engage more fully in the community
They won't speak freely because, you know, they might fear having a conversation and they avoid morning tea, for example ... So you can tell, as their confidence grows they join in and, you know, that's another indicator.	Developing the capacity to engage comfortably in conversations with others
She's got her confidence to say what she feels but in a more sensitive way. She's more aware of other people now because ... she can afford to worry about other people's feelings because she's more relaxed and hasn't got to guard herself.	Developing the capacity to engage with others
[Student] has cerebral palsy and he's severely disabled but his mind still works quite well. ... I've seen a real improvement in his confidence when he comes here. When I first started with him he was quite shy. As you can imagine he's had some very difficult times over his life and ... he has been ridiculed and so he's a bit self-conscious and he's not sure of how people are going to take him, but he's really come out of himself, I think, coming here; he talks to people.	Improved sense of self through being more competent in communication
I've noticed in the surveys of students the effect on the family because so many times they say "I can read bedtime stories to my kids now that I couldn't do before. I can help kids with the homework." So that's ... got two effects – it's helping the kid and showing them that literacy in the family is a good thing ... but it's also such a big thing for the self-esteem of the parent who felt inadequate before.	Improved capacity to engage more fully in home life

The responses shown in Table 3 have a number of common themes. The first is a sense of empowerment which entitled engagement in a range of activities which the learners might not have otherwise participated. Aligned to this is the claim that, for some learners, they had become

more competent and had mastered more appropriate forms of communication there by improving their capacity to engage with others. Thirdly, is a recurring theme of an improved sense of self which was a product of the program and permitted broader engagement with others and in activities which the learners previously had not participated.

3. Attitudes to learning

The participants were asked about whether there had been changes in their attitudes towards learning as a result of that participation in the non-accredited literacy and numeracy program (Table 4).

Table 4: Attitudes to learning

Illustrative data	Learning outcome
When I took this program over, I found students stayed in this program. They weren't confident enough to branch out into further learning opportunities. ... Now I'd say that students are confident in their own ability to venture out to TAFE, to university as well.	Provided a basis to consider alternative and other training options
Their language and literacy has improved but it also empowers them to make that next step because they feel confident to face a larger [educational] organisation, to cope with all the forms, all the bureaucracy...	Empowering the individual to participate in a higher level of educational activity
I see that out of ten people one person goes on to some sort of further education; I think that's a brilliant outcome.	Improved educational pathways for some
[From Year 10] my plan is to ... get Year 12 and if I get good results from Year 12, good number, go to uni to do about politics and law. (L)	Developing belief in capacities and strategies for supporting progress
He actually said to me at the end of last year "I don't think I need you anymore. I hope you think that's a good thing." And I said "I definitely think it's a good thing." He was going to enrol in a TAFE course as well 'cause he was a welder by trade but I don't think he'd actually finished his official apprenticeship because the theory freaked him out a bit, so he was going back to do that.	Competence to re-engage with educational activities that were previously a cause of anxiety and failure
At first I wanted to be a paramedic ... but two friends are in it and now to be a paramedic you have to have a degree. So it's just made it like almost impossible; and then I talked to my friends even more and I'm not sure if it's the line I want to go ... It's alright coming to a road accident once in a while but not like full on. So I actually want to become a fitter now and take up an adult apprenticeship.(L)	Capacity to consider options and identify which are most likely to be achievable

A key theme emerging from the set of data in Table 4 is the broadening of the participants' scope of what was possible for them to learn. They seem to be empowered to widen their horizons and engage in options that previously they would not have considered pursuing. Here also is the issue of confidence again., that is, the confidence arising from participation in the program was a basis for engaging more widely, and in one case engaging in an environment where the individual previously had not enjoyed success.

4. Agency/pro-activity

The participants were asked about changes in their sense of self empowerment and ability to engage with and influence people (Table 5).

Table 5: Agency and pro-activity

Illustrative data	Learning outcome
<p>I've finally realised that I can be my own person and if I don't want to go with them I don't have to. ... I guess they know I've put my foot down and I've found a part of who I am and not afraid to say it. (L)</p>	<p>Improvement in sense of self and confidence to be assertive</p>
<p>She was too frightened to go to Sydney to see her daughter, because she was frightened she wouldn't be able to understand what it said on the board at the airport and she'd miss her plane, she wouldn't even get in a taxi on her own, and it was just self-confidence. And we worked on all of those things for about six months ... I just saw her grow just in doing that one little step, ... what that lady learnt in that six months was just outstanding and you couldn't mark it on a certificate.</p>	<p>Enhance sense of self and confidence to engage in options and alternatives</p>
<p>I remember one woman telling me how humiliated she was initially when she fronted up at the front desk in a TAFE college wanting a language and literacy course, and there wasn't anything sort of that fitted but she said that it was just faceless and nobody really understood her, so she'd retreated and wasn't going to be able to get past that and so was going to stay in this limited field of activity. But when she came upon the [LLN] program and the tutor was able to improve her literacy. That helped her ... be able to speak out for herself. She then went back to the TAFE college and said "This is what I want" and got into something in the end.</p>	<p>Confidence to consider alternatives and assess the scope of potential activities and be assertive</p>
<p>I think that agency and that proactivity is seen in those students who have children at school and that they can actually go up to the office and they can ask for what they want, they can write a note to school and say "Give that to your teacher". ... Some of the ones that are at the latter end are proactive in looking for what sorts of courses they might like to be involved in or what they would like to be able to learn about.</p>	<p>Confidence to negotiate with institutions and privileged individuals on behalf of family</p>

Consistently, across the responses reported in Table 5 are references to enhancement of the participants' sense of self and confidence to be more assertive in their personal and community lives. That is, through participation in these programs, these individuals have developed a greater sense of self and employment which was opened up the prospects for them to engage in activities with greater confidence and a feeling of them being more in control of that interaction.

5. Life trajectories

The participants were asked the degree by which the life trajectories including their goals and ambitions had changed as a result of their participation in the literacy and numeracy program (Table 6).

Table 6: Life trajectories

Illustrative data	Learning outcome
<p>There's a fair few things like that I wouldn't mind becoming. I have a lot of friends and either family sometimes come up to me about either problems or just --- problems in life in general and I mean I've thought about becoming either a counsellor or a social worker .(L)</p>	<p>Confidence to consider and pursue new career trajectories; recognition of strengths</p>
<p>I feel much more confident and much more independent and now I can plan my life. first of all I've got a full time job ... and currently I'm enrolled in Certificate III in Business at TAFE ... I'm doing my English classes through TAFE as well. (L)</p>	<p>Confidence to realise personal goals through participating in educational processes</p>
<p>She had goals at the beginning which were totally unattainable. They were personal goals, not changing the world goals. But I think she's taking off ... she's learned to take bite sizes rather than the whole plate at one time, she's learnt that the first step, there's a first step and a second step and you can do things in sequence in smaller bites to achieve the big thing, you don't have to do it all at once.</p>	<p>Capacities to be realistic about career goals and have plans to progressively achieve these goals</p>
<p>I found a lot of students change their goals as they go because they might be progressing faster than what they thought, so their confidence grows and they aim higher than what they started with, but because they come at the very beginning and it's all new territory and they're a bit intimidated by it all they start with, I think, very low, realistic goals and then after a couple of months they think 'oh hey, I might be able to do this'.</p>	<p>Competence to realise personal goals and develop new ones</p>
<p>A young woman with an intellectual disability ... was working at a [charity] shop and I think she was sorting clothes and hanging clothes on racks and helping people coming into the shop. But she wanted to use the cash register ... and so she worked with her tutor and ... her maths was great and she uses the cash register, she does the pricing now of the clothing, she reads to the other workers at lunchtime from the community newspaper and shares stories with them. And her goal is now to do the banking, ... and the next is she wants to take over the management of the shop. (C)</p>	<p>Competence to achieve personal and vocational goals, and develop new vision for self</p>
<p>Students ... have said that they now feel able to take on promotion, more responsible positions at work, 'cause before they just haven't. Or, when they've been offered promotions they've said "Oh, no, don't want to --- I don't know how to do that. No." But after increasing their literacy levels they've then said "Well I took that promotion at work" or "My boss says I'll be able to move up to this now that I can do that."</p>	<p>Competence to achieve workplace goals</p>

The consistent theme from these data is the increase in personal competence to pursue individual goals and trajectories. This included having the competence to actually understand what was realistic and achievable, and understand the need for attending to significant goals incrementally. All this suggests that the kinds of outcomes arising from participation in these programs were those informing the participants of ways which allow them to be more selective, strategic and focused in securing their personal goals.

6. Personal growth/personal change

The participants were asked about personal growth or personal change that had arisen through their participation in these literacy and numeracy programs (Table 7).

Table 7: Personal growth – personal change

Illustrative data	Learning outcome
You see a whole outlook – they’re different, very different. Even their physical appearance can often be different by the time they leave.	Personal growth
I’m not a shy person but when I came in Australia I was very shy because I couldn’t communicate and now ... because I can speak a little bit more I’m recovering my self confidence (S)	Enhance self-confidence to engage with others
[In her own country] she knew the language, the culture, everything, and suddenly she’s transplanted here and it’s all different; and the language she thought she knew at school wasn’t the same when people were talking it, and all the usual cultural things, so she was a bit shattered. But then eventually she started coming good again and I kept encouraging her, telling her she was very intelligent and it was just a question of time and a bit of application and you can do anything you like, you know, and she’s starting to believe me, I think.	Self-confidence to embrace a new country and new culture
She’s picking up and she’s now starting to go off and do little bits by herself which is more growth and more self-confidence.	Increased self-confidence and autonomy
Their level of confidence, you can actually see that grow ... As the barriers come down they see that ... it’s friendly, it’s a relaxed pace. Yeah, they grow - before long you really see them flapping their own wings.	Enhanced self-confidence and engaging with others
To start with she was in a sort of a sense emotionally ... numbed, because of the stress levels associated with all this stuff, and to have been released from that she’s beginning to feel she’s got time and energy to get in touch with her own feelings now.	Developing the capacity to be herself and less anxious
I’m ... thinking of students in this program ... who’ve said to me themselves, and their wives who’ve commented too, that they’re far less aggressive at home. ... So that would be a real sign of personal change there.	Confidence which leads to the need to be less dominant with others
Certainly the body language, the attitude, ... you could see the head up ... The self-motivation was huge.	Self-confidence and improved body language
A lot of the ... students do comment on that, in that they’re saying how much better they feel and that they can cope with things.	New sense of wellbeing and capacity to engage with others and the world they encounter
We’ve had a few students [who] get to a point where they start to know what they don’t know, you know, they were happy in their ignorance before and then they realise what they don’t know and then that becomes quite confronting and there’s lots of decisions that they have to make and there’s a big responsibility from the organisation, not just the tutor on their own, to manage that.	Confidence to question issues that concern and confound, and to take responsibility

The most consistent response here is that participation in these programs had led to enhancements of the participants’ self confidence. This was repeated and reiterated in the participants’ responses. Nuanced instances here included the confidence not to be boldly assertive, because this was unnecessary, coping better with demanding circumstances and an increasing questioning of things which previously might have been accepted or taken for granted. In these ways, the participants were suggesting that personally important strategic outcomes arose through their participation in these programs.

7. Social capital

The participants were also asked what changes had arisen for them in terms of how they participated in the community and their networks (Table 8).

Table 8: Social capital

Illustrative data	Learning outcome
<p>Well the environment here is actually fantastic. Like everyone socialises with everyone, the people here are great, like you can go on your breaks and you can sort of have tea and coffee with one another and have conversations with one another.</p>	<p>The capacity to engage with others socially in a positive way</p>
<p>When she first arrived she was staying at home a lot and feeling a bit miserable and what the hell am I doing here, what have I done? And yeah, just as soon as she started getting out and getting involved in helping people I think she felt a lot better; and just getting out in the community she met people who could put her in contact with different organisations.</p>	<p>Achievement of high levels of engagement in wider community</p>
<p>she's involved with the school and she goes and helps with the lunches and things at school; so she's getting involved, 'cause she has a six-year-old child. ... and she was showing me some handouts they had given her, she didn't quite understand them and would I tell her what they meant, you know, about participating in the tuck shop and things like that. So she was willing to do that and pitching in and that was good.</p>	<p>Greater engagement with social activities and expectations</p>
<p>So first I meet people and I have to start to speak to them in different language, so people from different cultures. I ... used to listen their different accents, sometimes very difficult. ... We started to meet even with some people ... after community centre, go together to park with kids. So we started to have a social life with the group of people because many of them in that time got children, so we've got, you know, the meeting for something. So we meet regularly, during holidays, for example, even if here wasn't any classes. (S)</p>	<p>Improved personal competence; engaging with other beyond immediate learning environment</p>
<p>One student, she's about 55 and has a slight mental health issue and while she was doing the [LLN} programs her demeanour changed, her confidence changed, her dress changed; she was actually quite proud of her achievements and quite proud that she was able to stand up in the community and be noticed as being a good person rather than as just a nuisance value that she had been before.</p>	<p>Greater engagement; improved body language and confidence</p>
<p>We certainly hear again of lots of things, groups that people have joined and taken part in fitness programs, bush-walking, women who then started to cook from recipes and things like that and share those things as a network, whereas before they wouldn't even share talking about a recipe because somebody might ask them for a copy of it, so they'd withdraw from that situation ... whereas now they don't feel they're going to be caught out so they're more happy to join into situations and become part of a network.</p>	<p>Greater engagement in community activities</p>

The overwhelmingly consistent response here is that participants reported experiencing greater engagement in activities involving others and the community. Some suggested this was a result of personal competence that arose through participating in the programs. However, overall the

consistent claim was that there was a higher level of engagement in the community for these individuals arising from their participation in the non-accredited literacy and numeracy program.

Summary

What the examples in Tables 2-8 particularly show are the extent of the inter-relatedness of the seven proposed bases for identifying the wider benefits of learning, and the recurrence of certain general outcomes: (i) improved personal capacity and competence; (ii) empowerment, responsibility and autonomy; (iii) greater engagement with others and in the community, and (iv) a new capacity in learners for perceiving the world and their place in it. Underpinning every base is growth in learner confidence.

It is evident from scanning the tables above that any attempt to monitor learner progress in non-accredited language, literacy and numeracy must take into account a wide range of possible indicators. This posed a challenge in developing an instrument that can meet local needs as well as be applicable across the diversity of programs. The final step in Phase 2 was therefore to obtain the views of the research partners about the extent to which it might be possible to develop indicators around each of the seven possible bases, with a view to ordering the perceived value of the bases.

Perceptions of indicators

Table 9 summarises the perceptions of 46 paid and volunteer coordinators, paid teachers, and volunteer tutors at five sites, of the extent to which it might be possible to develop indicators, i.e. evidence or examples of changed student behaviour, for each of those seven factors. The interviewer clarified the meaning of each term before the ratings were given.

There was strong support expressed in the interviews for the ‘confidence’ factor as being a valuable outcome of their participation in these programs. Respondents, generally, proposed there were numerous factors that would indicate growth in confidence and that these would be evident in their interactions with the learners. ‘Engagement with others’ and ‘social capital’ were generally regarded as strong factors, but there was doubt amongst some respondents that these could be ‘measured’ or observed because indicative activities tended to take place outside the learning situation. As one coordinator said: ‘We can only assess [social capital] as much as we know’. There appeared more opportunity to do that in neighbourhood centres, where there was opportunity for interaction between learners and with staff, than in one-to-one tutoring.

There was similar ambivalence about ‘life trajectories’, with one tutor suggesting it sounded ‘a bit Californian’. Some respondents struggled with understanding the term ‘agency’, and for the Read Write Now! coordinators’ session, the term was changed to ‘Changes in pro-activity, belief in own empowerment, recognition of ability to influence others (sometimes called personal agency)’. However, even with that understanding, the perception generally was that it would be difficult to identify concrete and easily validated indicators. This reaction was even stronger for ‘personal growth’ which was described by one coordinator as an internal change and therefore far less visible than growth in self-confidence for which it was suggested there were observable behavioural changes. On the other hand, one person with significant experience in community settings believed changes in all the factors could be identified by developing appropriate ‘scenarios’ to which the learners could respond.

On the basis of the ratings given by the 46 respondents, as shown in Table 9, and the comments made in the interviews, as illustrated in Tables 2-8, the researchers decided to focus on the first five bases listed in Table 9, as a foundation for developing draft tools for monitoring progress, i.e.:

- Self-confidence & personal competence
- Engagement with others
- Attitudes to learning
- Life trajectories
- Social capital

Five bases were selected in order to allow for the number of themes that emerged from the interview data, as discussed above, i.e. growth in learner confidence, leading to improved personal capacity and competence, empowerment, responsibility and autonomy, greater engagement with others and in the community, a new capacity in learners for perceiving the world and their place in it. It was also felt that identifying a number of possible bases would ensure that the partner organisations were not overly restricted in their choices of wider learning outcomes when attempting to monitor progress. At the end of Phase 2, the tentative portfolio of instruments was beginning to take shape.

Collaborative development of portfolio

In Phase 3 of the Action Research process, Dr Dymock and Associate Professor Billett worked with the Coordinators at the six sites to develop the ‘tentative portfolio’ into a ‘working portfolio’ that would become the basis for trialling in Phase 4. The first step in this phase was to survey the partners to canvass their views on a range of possible monitoring instruments.

Examples of assessment tools

Attached to Progress Report 1 were nine appendices which provided examples of tools used in assessing a range of ‘soft outcomes’, not all in the literacy and numeracy field. Dewson et al (2000:2) described soft outcomes as: ‘outcomes from training, support or guidance interventions, which unlike hard outcomes, such as qualifications and jobs, cannot be measured directly or tangibly’.

In the discussions with partners, these tools were characterised as simply examples that had been found during the literature review and had been selected in order to provide a range of *types* of instruments that could be used, rather than necessarily being under serious consideration for adoption. Table 10 shows the responses by coordinators to the nine examples of ‘assessment’ tools. They were asked to provide their views on the potential usefulness of each instrument as a tool for determining wider outcomes of learning in non-accredited language, literacy and numeracy, on a scale of 1 (not useful) to 5 (very useful).

On the basis of the respondents’ ratings and comments in the interviews, it was decided to focus on the first five of the monitoring tools listed in Table 10. As with the bases for identifying wider benefits of learning, discussed in the section above, it was decided that five tools would provide the partners with flexibility in determining which tools might be most appropriate for the learners in their particular programs.

Table 10: Responses of coordinators, teachers & tutors to examples of assessment tools (Scale 1-5)

Tool/ Model	A1	A2	H1	PR 1	PR 2	PR 3	PR 4	PR 5	PR 6	PR 7	N1	N2	N3	P1	P2	P3	P4	Mean (n=17)	RWN (n=31)	Overall Mean
App 1 Personal, social, economic	4	2	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4.29	3.95	4.12
App 6 Confidence grid	4	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	5	3	4	3	4.06	3.90	3.98
App 4 Learner success indicators	5	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	4	5	5	4	4	1	4	3.06	4.26	3.66
App 5 Achievement criteria	1	3	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	4.5	3	2.5	3	2	4	5	3.65	2.85	3.25
App 3 Soft outcomes profile	2	4	5	1	1	3	2	2	2	2	5	5	5	4	2.5	1.5	4	3.00	2.97	2.98
App 8 Personal development plan	4.5	4	2	3	3	4	4	4	3	2	4	3	3	3	1	3	2	3.09	2.03	2.56
App 2 Effects of learning matrix	4	4	4	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2.5	1	1	2	2	4.5	5	2.35	3.00	2.67
App 7 Assessment profile	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	4	2	2	4	1	1	1	1.59	1.61	1.60
A Aberfoyle	H Hackham West		PR Pine Rivers			N Northam/Toodyay			P Perth			RWN Read Write Now! coordinators conference								

Based on the responses summarised in Tables 2-8, along with 9 and 10, the researchers ultimately developed six trial instruments, A to F:

- A: Changes in confidence
- B: Learner outcomes: personal, social, economic
- C: Individual learner profile
- D: Learner indicators of success
- E: Criteria for achievement
- F: Skills and wider outcomes

Each of instruments A to E is an adaptation of the five instruments rated highest by participants during the Phase 2 consultations, and incorporate the ratings of the list of bases around which indicators might be developed ; Instrument F is a composite tool developed by the researchers from their review of research and the interview responses. The intention was to provide a variety of instruments that might be utilised to meet local requirements Also, a key criterion for selection and adaptation was that the instrument had to be capable of making some assessment of 'progress', however the latter was defined. Where appropriate, the wording has been modified in the draft instruments using suggestions about outcomes and indicators made during Phase 2.

In the original proposal, it was intended that Phase 3 would involve negotiations with the coordinators at the six sites, in order to develop a set of instruments that all partners would be willing to trial. However, the consultations in Phase 2 were much more extensive, and therefore more productive, than anticipated (with input from a total of 93 coordinators, teachers, tutors and learners instead of the 30 envisaged in the original proposal), that the decision was made to vary the approach.

Partner profiles

Aberfoyle Community Centre, South Australia

The Aberfoyle Community Centre's LLN program, funded by ACE and Community Benefit SA, provides individual, self-paced learning opportunities in all areas of literacy. Currently, the Centre caters for 20 students with 20 tutors, providing one to one tuition. The delivery style is realistic, informal, non-threatening and inexpensive with proven positive outcomes.

Attendance remains high because of new enrolments, with previous participants gaining the confidence to access the next step in educational or vocational pathways. Referrals are predominantly word of mouth from past students. This travels across significant distances, including three council areas to enable students to access one- to-one learning.

The program has provided both social and educational activities, encouraging community participation. A number of our students have begun volunteering at the centre, mentoring others through cultural groups and becoming more confident community leaders.

Participants are individually assessed at the first session, by the educator, to analyse language and literacy needs and after, matched with volunteer tutors. Informal assessment is continual throughout the sessions as tutor and the educator observe levels of participation and confidence in addition to language and literacy competency. Student and tutor feedback are regularly required to determine appropriate goals, which are readdressed when necessary. The Community Development Officer evaluates the Centre Project, records additional data, referral details, participation and internal and external pathways.

Program delivery is one to one, small conversation and grammar groups with a facilitator, and English through cooking; a student/tutor driven class with the educator's guidance. Computer access is available and encouraged during all literacy sessions.

The Aberfoyle LLN program has not only benefited students in concrete, measurable levels of competence but has impacted on their daily lives, creating opportunities for self development through education in practical, meaningful and diverse situations. Increased self- esteem, building relationships and extending social networks and friendship groups are all benefits of participating in the program in addition to increased employability and learning opportunities.

Through the partnerships of students/ tutors and educator as well as extended partnerships with English Language Services and TAFE SA, the Aberfoyle Community Centre strives to meet the needs of all participants making learning appropriate, enjoyable and sought after.

Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Victoria

Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre had its beginnings in 1978. In that year, staff at Broadmeadows Community Health Centre found that many of their clients needed literacy skills. So they requested that the Council of Adult Education provide someone to train volunteer literacy tutors for an adult literacy program in Glenroy.

The adult literacy program run by volunteers and set up in the Glenroy Library was one of the first in the country. The literacy program continued in the library on small grants as a voluntary learning group until a part time paid coordinator was appointed in 1980.

Name changes

In 27 years of operation, the organisation has grown and changed in many ways. It has undergone a number of name changes:

The Northern Districts Literacy Group: Glenroy Program [1978-1979]

The Glenroy Adult Literacy Group [1979-1990]

Glenroy Adult Literacy and Community Learning Centre [1990-1997]

Learning North West Inc [1997-2000]

Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre: [2000 to date]

We are proud to be a not for profit organisation committed to working with and for people in our communities.

Committee of management

As an incorporated body, our overall direction and planning is overseen by an elected Committee of Management . The Committee members are volunteers from the community and from the organisation. They meet monthly.

Change of homes

By 1989 the organisation was successfully receiving funding from state, federal and local governments. It became necessary to move from the Glenroy Library to 6 Hartington Street and then to our current premises, 5 Nelson Street, in 1989. We are now looking for a new home, nearby in Glenroy. We want a place that is more accessible, and where we can combine our education program with neighbourhood house work. Moreland City Council's has made a commitment to building a new 'neighbourhood facility' in Glenroy.

Our programs

Since the early 1980's, we have submitted for government funds each year and are considered to be a leading organisation in adult literacy and basic education, and in conducting programs for early school leavers. We also have a large and expanding English as a second language program. In 2003 as part of the NAMEP Consortium, we began offering DIMIA funded ESL classes for newly arrived migrants and refugees.

Our well equipped computer facility is networked and online. As well as computer training, we offer computer assisted language and literacy learning, and on-line learning.

In 1999, the organisation became a neighbourhood house. This extended our community development work and built on our commitment to harmony in diversity. Our neighbourhood house programs such as yoga, volunteer training, the African women's group, health and fitness programs, and mosaic are expanding.

We plan to continue offering a strong program of activities and good adult education and training opportunities for adults and young people. In these ways and for many years to come we will be part of Glenroy, serving the local community and contributing to its future.

Non-accredited literacy programs

Literacy and Road Rules Women's Circus

Story Group

Women's ESL at Fawkner Community House

Our CGEA classes have a small number of non-accredited students in them

Hackham West Community Centre, South Australia

The Hackham West Community Centre, South Australia, and the various groups and facilities that operate from the premises offer the community assistance, training and support. Services and facilities include:

- ✧ Hall and Room Hire
- ✧ Everyday Lunch Café
- ✧ Food Co-Op
- ✧ Children's & Youth Programs
- ✧ Play Groups & Free Crèche
- ✧ Men's and Women's Groups
- ✧ Adult Community Education
- ✧ Parenting and Self Development Courses
- ✧ Seniors Groups
- ✧ Adult Learning Support
- ✧ Tax Help, Counselling and JP available

In Adult Community Education (ACE), short courses include:

- ✧ Computing Classes
- ✧ Basic Computer
- ✧ Internet/Email
- ✧ Publisher
- ✧ Word Processing
- ✧ Arts & crafts
- ✧ Gardening Course
- ✧ Holistic health
- ✧ Women's Self Defence

The Adult Learning Support Program provides 1:1 tuition in the following areas:

- ✧ Literacy
- ✧ Numeracy
- ✧ Help with study
- ✧ English conversation
- ✧ Basic computing/internet
- ✧ Drivers' permit instruction

Adult literacy tutors, who are all volunteers, meet with their students every Wednesday from 9.30am to 11.30am in the hall at the Centre. There is a short break for morning tea.

Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre, Queensland

The Neighbourhood Centre has been a part of the Pine Rivers Shire area for almost 20 years and has been successfully providing assistance with adult literacy for over 6 years. Through our program we have assisted students into work and further study. We also now have a student who had now successfully completed tutor training and has begun working with her own student. Through our experience we have identified the need to offer literacy support to all groups within the community. Our current students come from all the targeted areas and reflect the diversity of needs in the shire.

Customised learning plans will be developed with each student participant, tailored to suit the needs of the individual. Such response is formulated after individual assessments are conducted, to determine current literacy numeracy skills level, and with due consideration of current skills, personal, social and career goals and learning style/s and by listening to what the student desires most assistance with eg. Gaining a drivers licence, opening a bank account, filling out forms etc. or by what the student enjoys eg karaoke, cars, cooking.

By responding to individuals needs in meaningful and relevant ways keeps 'students' motivated and benefits are felt immediately. After results are achieved, higher goals of training for gainful employment that were previously far out of reach for many people, become more attainable.

We currently have 20 matched tutors and students, our relationships with both extend over the 12 month funding period and some have been maintained for 3 years. The Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre has established its Adult Literacy program within the local community. We have established referral networks and work closely with job referral agencies with the shire. Our ability to attract and maintain volunteers is a stand out feature of the program. This is done through professional coordination of the project, with support and training opportunities for tutors. We intend for this successful program to continue.

The Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre has established long term volunteers who assist in community capacity building, share resources, knowledge, and wisdom and mentor other tutors.

We are currently seeking funding under the Skilling Queenslanders for Work , DEIR program. Previously, our programs have been funded under Community literacy, Training In Communities through the Department of employment and Training.

Read Write Now! Adult Literacy Service, Western Australia

Read Write Now! provides a literacy service to adults in the community with the support of almost 800 volunteer tutors spread throughout Western Australia. Central TAFE College based in the Northbridge business district hosts the 3.2 FTE staff and generously gives in-kind support to the work of the unit far beyond the local boundaries and into 26 regions, both metropolitan and regional

Each region is coordinated by a small team of volunteer Coordinators who support the tutors and students to achieve their goals. The volunteer tutors complete an accredited training course (Course in Tutoring an Individual Adult in Literacy and Numeracy) before working on a one-to-one basis to assist the adult student with his/her immediate literacy needs. ESL students are welcome provided they have the basics of spoken English and can communicate their needs. There is no set curriculum for the students. The tutor and student work together to develop a learning plan to meet the needs of the individual student. Tutoring takes place for 1-2 hours per week in informal venues such as community centres and libraries.

Statistics for 2006 at a glance

(these are typical outcomes for the Program)

- ✧ Number of active volunteer tutors – average 800 over the year
- ✧ Metropolitan tutor training – 6 courses were run over 24 Saturdays
- ✧ Regional tutor training – 10 weekend courses were run over Saturday and Sunday
- ✧ Tutor Conferences – 2 were held on Saturdays – total 320 tutors attended
- ✧ Coordinator Training – undertaken at bi-monthly meetings or in situ.
- ✧ Number new tutors trained – 144
- ✧ Number of students assisted – 807
- ✧ *Note: tutor and student numbers approx 20% lower than in previous years. Informal feedback indicates this is a result of high employment rates in WA.*
- ✧ Approx one-third students either gained or maintained employment as a result of tutoring
- ✧ Approx one-third of students were enrolled in further studies and required the assistance of the tutor to cope with the literacy demands of their course materials
- ✧ Approx one-third of students were seeking help with personal goals such as helping children with reading/homework, or to participate in their local community or to gain more personal independence.
- ✧ Approx one-sixth of the students self identified as having a disability
- ✧ Almost half of the students were from non-English speaking backgrounds

Funding

- ✧ The service is funded by the Department of Education and Training and has been in operation for 30 years.
- ✧ The 26 regional groups share \$40,000 to cover teaching resources, phone, internet, postage and other local operating expenses.
- ✧ The central office has an operating budget of \$55,000 for training, travel, printing, communications etc.

Partners' reports on trial of instruments

The participants in the workshop were: Tamara Angus, Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre, Lawnton, Queensland; Jacinta Agostinelli, Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Victoria; John Pryer, Hackham West Community Centre, and Debbie Jeanes, Aberfoyle Community Centre, South Australia; Marcia Barclay and Pamela Thurbon, Read Write Now!, Western Australia, and Darryl Dymock, Griffith University, Brisbane. There was an apology from Stephen Billett, Griffith University, who was overseas at the time. A summary of each partner's report on trialling the instruments is presented below.

Aberfoyle Community Centre

The Adult Literacy Coordinator at Aberfoyle Community Centre in South Australia, Debbie Jeanes, wanted the tutors to have ownership of the process, so she left it up to them as to which instruments they chose and how they delivered them. She copied all of the instruments, A to F and gave them to all of the tutors and met with them for an introductory talk, and gave them more background as well on what the aims were. Ten of the twenty tutors responded, and usually it was the ones who had been involved in the interviews in the data collection phase in the first place because they felt comfortable with the instruments.

Three tutors worked with their student in filling out all or most of the instruments over the period available and gave feedback. Seven tutors more or less critically looked at the instruments, mainly themselves but in conjunction with the student

For the volunteer tutors at Aberfoyle Community Centre, Trial instrument D was an outright winner. Debbie Jeanes put this down to the fact many of the clients are focused on English as a second language. So the language used in the instruments was very important and the tutors did not want it to be seen as patronising to the students, or too taxing or confusing. A lot of the language they found confusing in other areas. Debbie thought that with instrument D 'ticking the boxes' probably made the students feel more comfortable, because they did not have to actually physically write anything. For this group, instrument F had much more negative feedback - they found it too jargonistic, too verbose and very difficult.

The tutors thought instruments B and C were quite similar in content. Debbie observed that although instrument D would be the instrument most readily acceptable by tutors and students at the Centre in their current situation, that might change if the nature of the clients changed. She said:

We do seem to have a period of change with clients. Originally when I started at the Centre it was more literacy but we have a partnership – unofficial partnership – between the medical centre, a lot of the Japanese doctors work there, so their wives come to us. So a lot of our students are from Japan, etc. So if the need for doctors changed then ... that instrument might change too.

The suggestion with this instrument was that they would use it initially, perhaps at the initial assessment and then maybe annually because that'd be enough time in between for the students to monitor their progress and probably forget that they've done it in the first place.

Debbie Jeanes' overall assessment of the process was: 'It was great. Ellen [Jeziarski, the Community Development Officer] and I were really pleased to be involved in the project because we've always been looking for something to measure confidence, to measure the success our students have.'

Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre

The Adult Literacy Coordinator at Glenroy Neighbourhood Centre in Victoria, Jacinta Agostinelli, gave a copy of each instrument to the teachers with a covering note and asked them to select the tool they thought would best suit their class. The short period of the trial made it too difficult for most tutors to apply the instrument twice. However one of the teachers taught a specific skill in the four-week period and then got the students to apply the tool to the learning of that skill, which apparently worked quite well.

The teacher from Literacy and Road Rules selected instrument B because he thought it reflected the multi purposes of his class and because it looked simple for him and the students to try to fill out together. He said the students could not manage the literacy required by the instrument so they did it by discussion, and then the students selected what they would write in the comments. The teacher was surprised that some students responded so well, and thought it was a good tool because it got the students talking about their goals.

The tutor for the Women's English as a Second Language (ESL) class selected instruments C and D, and also created her own student self-assessment instrument, because she found that the other instruments too complex for the students' language level. With instruments C and D, she said she still needed to do a fair bit of explaining of the concepts and goals. But once the students did grasp the concepts they could answer the questions easily; they knew exactly what the questions were asking. The tutor was quite excited by the student responses to the tutor-developed instrument, because she could see that outcomes did improve over the time of the trial.

The Story Group selected instrument C because it had a greater focus on reading, writing and discussion skills, which is really what the group is about, rather than on employability. Most of them are around retirement age, so they are not interested in employment, at least not paid employment. Given the profile, some of the questions were still irrelevant, such as personal growth, which was not seen as appropriate for people who are quite established in their life.

The African Women's Sewing Class selected instrument F because it tended to have a focus on skills development which they saw as appropriate for what they were doing, although the class also serves a big social need for the African community.

There was also one non-accredited student in the General Certificate of Education for Adults (GCEA) class, and she selected instrument E. She liked the achievement focus because according to Jacinta Agostinelli that is how the student describes her learning - she likes to see what she is achieving and that she is achieving. The student ticked the things she came into class for and left the other ones out. One question raised for instrument E was where to go next, since there is no provision for showing progress.

On some of the instruments, there were too many words or words difficult for a second language speaker to understand. On the other hand, according to Jacinta Agostinelli: 'Teachers were enthusiastic about having a measure for achievement not couched in the language of training packages and competency based training - it was just a bit of fresh air for them.'

Several of the workshop participants mentioned that one outcome of the trials had been positive experiences for the students in using the instruments, regardless of the content. For example, the 'Road Rules' course tutor had said the activity of actually completing the instrument raised much discussion in areas that might not have been covered, such as respecting others' rights, life goals,

and the rules we live by. He said it had broadened the class and he had found it a very interesting and worthwhile activity. In the Women's ESL class, the tutor thought the instrument enabled the students 'to begin to see the connection between what they do in class and how it relates to life outside and how they transfer that to everyday living'.

Hackham West Community Centre

The Coordinator of Hackham West Community Centre, John Pryer, left it up to the tutors to choose the instruments they preferred, and the choices were: instrument C: four, instrument E: two, instrument F: two, and there was one student who tried all six.

The general consensus about Tools A, B and D was that they were a little complicated for some tutors, and hence for the learners. Overall the preferred instrument for both tutor and student was instrument C. The overall tutor feedback to the use of the instruments was good - they welcomed the chance to record progress over and above the sheets that they already fill in.

Some of the tutors said that there were occasional inconsistencies insofar as measuring across a period of time. For example, one tutor noted that on one instrument a student had said that he or she felt more confident and yet later on they said they felt about the same. Other issues were irregular attendance by both tutors and students, and some instruments were filled in on one session only, others across a series of sessions. Some tutors 'forgot' to use the instruments, whilst others used the different instruments at different times.

One question raised by tutors was whether students were filling in the instruments with incorrect or untrue responses that they feel look good on paper - as if, as John Pryer said: 'they're on their best behaviour, being assessed or examined'. On the other hand, one tutor who initially thought the instruments were a waste of time reversed her opinion after trying one out and getting good feedback from the student. The coordinator thought that the need for finding ways of measuring social capital was a major outcome from the trial.

Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre

The Team Leader - Community Learning at Pine Rivers Community Centre, Tamara Angus, sent the instruments to six volunteer tutors who had been with the adult literacy program for some time. As per the suggestion in the covering letter from Griffith University, she suggested they choose two to use with students, but all six chose to use all the instruments with their students. Only one tutor was able to apply the instruments at the beginning and end of the trial period, and reported that the student was much more comfortable doing it a second time.

Some of the negative feedback from the tutors in the trial was that it was a 'tough exercise', that it was 'a bit of a challenge'. Some said that some questions were obscure and a bit convoluted, and some of the tutors struggled with the terms, 'confidence' and 'self-esteem' and how to explain those concepts to a student. Another issue in relation to not understanding the terminology was the diversity of backgrounds and educational levels of the tutors themselves - quite a few of them are teachers but quite a few of them are not and come from different backgrounds. Some saw the concepts as 'university-fied', and 'academic'. Some of the students were scared of filling in the instruments, even in consultation with the tutors, and found it very daunting.

On the other hand, one tutor reported that 'the student found it was really worthwhile completing it and that they felt really at ease and good with doing it'. Another said the instrument provided the student with specific learning outcomes that he could recognise and that he was able to recognise his own improvements - 'that's where I've gone and that's where I'm at on some of those scales', as summed up by the team leader.

It was suggested that for the different target groups the questions could be worded differently. Tamara Angus also felt that the tutors needed more support and more initial information about the instruments, and attributed this lack to a changeover of literacy staff at the Centre at the time of the trial. A challenge was to cater for the big variance between students, and to draw into one response how the questions are asked and how the answers are written.

The majority of the tutors picked the tools A and C as being most relevant because, they said, the items could be applied in the real world. Tool C was seen as a good self-awareness tool. Most of the tutors understand the need for confidence building and self-esteem, and that tools A and C were seen as being able to measure improvement in confidence and the main feedback was that those two instruments covered the relevant areas 'really, really simply'.

One suggestion arising from the trial was that the Centre might adapt its initial assessment of students by including provision for rating students' improvement in e.g. self-esteem, over the period of the tutoring. One tutor suggested complementing the initial assessment tasks with asking the students to rate themselves on a scale in relation to their confidence with those tasks. The coordinator suggested that this would have to be in relation to the student's literacy levels too because of the range of students, from 'university students from Chile doing their PhD who just need the English practice, as opposed to someone who's come and who doesn't know their ABC'.

As in the Glenroy program, Tamara Angus said there was evidence that the students gained confidence from the process of completing the instruments: "Wow, I filled out a instrument". She said it helped the students think about the progress they had made and that the tutors could reinforce that. At the same time, she thought it helped the tutors 're-examine the what, why and how of their own tutoring'.

Read Write Now!

The Manager of the Read Write Now! program, Marcia Barclay, the Coordinator of Operations, Pamela Thurbon and one of the regional volunteer coordinators in Western Australia examined the six the instruments and chose C and E as the two most appropriate for the tutors and students in the program. Instrument C was chosen because of its simplicity – it was short and simple and appeared easy to fill out. Instrument E was seen as more thorough, and more specific with all the outcomes. However changes were made to both instruments before they were sent to tutors, including wording where it was felt that it was too hard for students to understand. In instrument C, the wording was modified to make sure that the tutor and the student completed it together, so that the tutor did not complete it independently and guess at where their student was at – the intention was for the student to take part and say where they felt confident: 'We felt they needed to be empowered to give the answers on this and [that] the tutor might ... explain what the questions were but it needed to be the student's answers, not the tutors'.

Also added to both instruments was provision for the student to sign at the bottom, with the student's name and signature first to give them a sense of empowerment, that 'this is my instrument that I've ... taken part in', as Pam Thurbon said. The column headings on instrument C were also changed slightly to ones that were seen as easier to understand, and the provision for a total score for the assessment was deleted.

Trial instrument E was also revised, including the addition of a column on the left hand side which allowed students to indicate at the initial session what they wanted to achieve. Columns were also added on the right hand side to allow for progression: 'same', 'progressing' and 'achieved', rather than the single 'achieved' – so students and tutors could see some sort of progression. In the trial, because most tutors and students were already advanced in their tutoring, the left hand 'goal-setting' column seemed irrelevant and there was some confusion

evident in the responses. However it was felt the instrument would work if it used initially if the tutors were given training in using it.

Both versions were emailed out state-wide to some 300 tutors. Despite the instructions in a cover letter, around half the instruments were completed and returned without any comment on their use or the reaction of students. Pam Thurbon followed up a number of those in order to obtain more feedback. Another limitation was that because the instruments were sent out on email as attachments, the tutors were responsible for printing them off and putting them together and some of them thought that all the instruments were combined in one. This misunderstanding led to some comments that the questions were very repetitive.

34 responses were returned without comments, and 49 responses were returned with comments, including some from those recontacted in the follow-up. There were a number of positives and a number of negatives with both instruments, but language was a big issue. About half the students in the Read Write Now! program are English as a second Language (ESL) students, and there was a very strong response that the language was too difficult for those students unless they were quite advanced. It took a long time for the tutors to explain the words that the ESL students couldn't understand. Also, one tutor suggested that in some cultures people often find it hard to give a negative comment and so she was not too sure whether those responses were entirely accurate.

In considering the responses, the RWN team initially considered either making the language much simpler or having separate instruments for ESL students and native English speakers.. It was clear to them that needed a simpler instrument with simpler language. Finally they decided to re-develop instrument E for their purposes. The aim of the new instrument, a draft of which is attached as Appendix 3, is to use it to set up the learning goals, and for the tutor and the student to use it as a reporting mechanism, so that combined with the instrument presently used to provide feedback to coordinators and to provide data for regular reports to the Western Australian government, it would help students to see the progress they had made. The intention is to help the students see the progress but also to keep the tutor focused on basing the lesson around the student's goals. Marcia Barclay summed up the thinking behind the revised instrument:

We based it largely on the feedback that ... the other instruments were long and tedious, and given that our tutors and students only meet once a week for an hour and a half, some of them were finding that their whole sessions were taken up on a instrument. So what we've tried to do is to reduce it down to what we think the essentials within it, just within our program, but also too, as a way of giving the tutor recognition. I think currently our tutors are really hard on themselves, that they think unless their students turned out to be a Rhodes scholar then they haven't done that good a job at tutoring, and I don't think they acknowledge the soft outcomes. And so that's why I was really keen about the project and ... this new instrument of evaluation, which will be combined with our [current reporting instrument].

The two Read Write Now! representatives at the Adelaide workshop emphasised that the new instrument was still a draft and needed more thought before it was finalised, including how often it would be used in the tutoring process.

Letter to partners May 2007

Dear [Partner]

As promised, attached is a 'portfolio' of six possible instruments for measuring progress in non-accredited language literacy and numeracy, for you to trial with your tutors and students. These have been developed following interviews and discussions in four states arranged through the six partners with coordinators, teachers, tutors and students.

Originally our plan was to send these instruments for your responses, and then for us to fine tune them before sending them to you again. However, given the extensive consultations that have taken place over the last two months, and the time constraints of the project, it seems more expeditious to send them to you as drafts for trialling, but with the proviso that you can amend these individually for 'local' use if you wish, as well as create your own instrument to add to the portfolio, if you prefer.

Here is what we would like you to do:

Consider which of these draft instruments, if any, might be appropriate for monitoring the progress of learners in your language, literacy and numeracy program.

If necessary, feel free to modify the wording slightly to suit your own circumstances. You may also want to create a completely new instrument to test in your program, now that you have seen what these are like.*

Try these instruments with as many tutors and students as possible between now and mid July.

Document the feedback from tutors and students on the instruments you select for use, along with any changes you have made, and report on these at the workshop in Adelaide on 20 July.

Among the questions you might address are:

- ✧ How can these instruments best be used in your practice?
- ✧ What are their relative strengths and weaknesses?
- ✧ Are there any particular preferences for instruments, and if so, why?
- ✧ If you had to select just two of these, which would they be and why?
- ✧ Are there issues of monitoring progress in non-accredited language, literacy and numeracy which are not met by any of the instruments in the portfolio?
- ✧ To what extent might it be possible to adopt one or more of these instruments for national use? If this is a feasible idea, how might that be done?

*One suggestion made to us was the possibility of developing a number of scenarios against each of the possible bases for monitoring progress, e.g. for 'Confidence', the scenario might be: 'You have been dropped in the middle of [city]. Would you be able to get home from there, and if so how?' We think this notion is worth considering, but that the scenarios would best be developed locally rather than generically by us, in order to meet individual needs.

The original intention of this project was to see if it is possible to identify wider outcomes, i.e. those beyond the development of language, literacy and numeracy skills. Some of the attached

instruments maintain that focus, and might be used in conjunction with skills assessments you already use; some of them incorporate both skills and broader outcomes.

Ideally, 'progress' is measured between two points, so it would be best if you could trial these over at least two sessions, say a month apart. However, if that is not possible within the time available, even a single session should help determine if an instrument is appropriate or not.

Please contact us if you have any concerns or queries. We will share these where appropriate with the other partners in order to keep you all involved.

We would appreciate it if you could acknowledge receipt of the portfolio, and perhaps give us some indication of how you are likely to trial the instruments over the next eight weeks.

Darryl will give you a call within the next couple of weeks to see how you are going with implementing the trial.

Sincerely

Darryl Dymock and Stephen Billett

Griffith University

18 May 2007

Interview schedules - Pilot

Monitoring progress in non-accredited adult language literacy and numeracy learning

Questions for learners/students

1. How long have you been learning in this particular course/program?
2. How many hours a week do you have with your tutor/teacher/in the class?
3. Why did you decide you needed to do this? Why did you seek help? [motivations, goals]
4. In what ways are you making progress?
5. Can you identify outcomes you are achieving beyond those directly associated with literacy and numeracy?
6. How much is this literacy and numeracy course/program a part of your life?

For example, is it really important to you, or is it just another thing you do, or is somewhere between. Do you think about literacy and numeracy much when your not here? Do you do any work on it at home? Do you miss many sessions? [Explore for reasons.]

7. Tell me a bit about how the teacher/tutor tells you how you are going in the course/program? What sort of feedback do you get? [If formal/structured assessment]: what do you think of that?
8. Do you get a chance to tell the teacher how you think you're going? In what ways? What other sorts of things do you think a student could tell the teacher to let them know how the student is going?
9. Since you started this course, do you think there have been any other changes in what you can do and how you feel about yourself? (general question)
10. After discussion re responses to Q9, follow up specific areas as necessary:

Do you think you're more personally confident now than you were when you started the course? How can you tell? Why is that?

Y/N	Progress with personal confidence

Has engaging in the course affected your relationships with other people – family, in the local community (shopping etc), workplace (if applicable). In what ways? How can you tell? Why is that?

Y/N	Progress with relationships with others

Do you think participating in the course has changed the way you think about yourself, for example, do you think you are more independent, able to do things by yourself that you couldn't do before? How can you tell? Why is that?

Y/N	Progress with sense of self

Has all this changed your view about what you would like to do with your life? More training? Work or better work? Attitude to life? In what ways have these changed?

Y/N	Progress with personal goals and attitudes

Do you think you understand any better about how you learn? How you like to learn? How did this come about?

Y/N	Changes in conceptions of learning

Are there any negative outcomes for you in doing this course/program? (E.g. The way you see yourself, attitude to further education etc, financial cost) how did this come about?

Y/N	Unwelcome forms of progress

11. One of the ideas we're looking at with this project is whether we can show that a student is making progress in lots of ways, for example, that they're growing in confidence, so that they're able to do things they couldn't do before, as well as reading and writing tasks. For example, how would you respond to each of the following: [would you prefer to read them or would you rather I read these out to you?]

Benefit (progress) from LLN course/program	1 Not at all	2 - Very little	3 Somewhat - definitely helping a bit	4 - Quite a bit	5 Very much
Improved Personal confidence					
Improved Relationships with others					
Improved sense of self					

Benefit (progress) from LLN course/program	1 Not at all	2 - Very little	3 Somewhat - definitely helping a bit	4 - Quite a bit	5 Very much
Improved personal goals and aspirations					
Improved contribution to the community or groups you're a part of					
Improved understanding of how you learn					
Other `(please name)					
Other `(please name)					
Other `(please name)					

12. Do you have any other comments or questions?

Thank you very much for your time.

Questions for tutors/teachers/coordinators

1. How long have you been involved in teaching adult language and literacy?
2. Tell me a little bit about your current teaching? (e.g. who, what, where, how?)
3. What sorts of assessment do you use?
4. To what extent do you think personal confidence is a factor in successful learning for learners in non-accredited learning?
5. In the research summary we sent you prior to this interview, we identified seven possible bases for identifying if progress had been made, beyond the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Sometimes these are called the 'wider benefits of learning' or 'soft outcomes'.

We'd like to get your opinion on how useful you think each one of those is and whether you think there are indicators you could use to say that a student is making progress in that particular area:

- degree by which self esteem and personal confidence have changed, and in what ways, as a result of participation in literacy program (i.e. Self-confidence and personal competence)
- degree by which engagement with others has changed, and in what ways, as a result of participation in literacy program (e.g. family, workplace, teacher). (I.e. Engagement with others)
- extent of change of attitude towards learning and future learning and ability to learn how to learn (i.e. Attitudes to learning)
- degree by which individuals' agency and pro-activity have changed, and in what ways, as a result of participation in literacy program (i.e. Agency/pro-activity)
- degree by which individuals' life trajectories have changed, and in what ways, as a result of participation in literacy program (i.e. Life trajectories)
- extent to which a learner perceives they have grown as a person as the result of engagement in a LLN program (i.e. Personal growth/personal change)
- extent of changes in community participation, involvement in networks. (I.e. Social Capital)

What other benefits you have identified, if any?

6. We also sent you as Appendices some examples of assessment tools that have been used with non-accredited learning, and we'd appreciate your thoughts on the potential value of each of those in monitoring progress in literacy and numeracy learning.

(These aren't intended to be necessarily what we want to end up with this in this project. They're just a range of instruments we found in our research and your opinion will help decide whether any of them are worth considering.)

To begin with, is there any one of these that appeals to you more than the others? If so, why?

Please tell me what you think of each of the others:

Benefit (progress)	1 Not useful	2 – Very little use	3 - Somewhat useful	4 -Quite useful	5 Very useful
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Appendix 1: Outcomes for providers/stakeholders/funders & Outcomes experienced by the learner (Foster et al 1997)

Utility (i.e. 1 -- 5)	Outcomes for providers & learners(why this ranking?)

Appendix 2: Matrix classifying the effects of learning (Schuller et al 2004)

Utility (i.e. 1 -- 5)	Classifying the effects of learning (why this ranking?)

Appendix 3: Getting to know you (SOUL) (Anderson et al 2006)

Utility (i.e. 1 -- 5)	Getting to know you (why this ranking?)

Appendix 4: Indicators of success identified by students (Eldred 2002)

Utility (i.e. 1 -- 5)	Student identified successes (why this ranking?)

Appendix 5: Emergent criteria of achievement (Charnley and Jones 1978)

Utility (i.e. 1 -- 5)	Emergent criteria (why this ranking?)

Appendix 6: Catching confidence (Eldred et al 2004)

Utility (i.e. 1 -- 5)	Catching confidence (why this ranking?)

Appendix 7: Assessment profile (note: this is an example of the wheel idea, based on rankings against indicators – the indicators would be different for L & N learning) (Department for Work and Pensions 2004)

Utility (i.e. 1 -- 5)	Assessment profile (why this ranking?)

Appendix 8 – Personal development plan (Department for Work and Pensions 2004)

Utility (i.e. 1 -- 5)	Personal development plans (why this ranking?)

Appendix 9: Soft indicators: Individual profiling (Department for Work and Pensions 2004)

Utility (i.e. 1 -- 5)	Soft indicators (why this ranking?)

Others 1

Utility (i.e. 1 -- 5)	(why this ranking?)

Other 2

Utility (i.e. 1 -- 5)(why this ranking?)

7. Overall, What do you consider as the pros and cons of using indicators to monitor the progress of L & N learners beyond the growth of literacy and numeracy skills?

Strengths

Limitations or problems

8. In what ways do you think it should be possible or desirable to develop a range of monitoring tools which would be acceptable nationally, or will these work best at a local level?

9. What might these tools look like?

10. Any other suggestions or comments?

Thank you very much for your time.

Interview schedules - Revised

Monitoring progress in non-accredited adult language literacy and numeracy learning

Name of partner organization: _____

STUDENTS - MOTIVATION & PROGRESS

I want to ask you some questions about your motivation for doing this course and your progress within it.

1. First name	2. Current course or program at this Centre?	3. No. mths or yrs at this Centre?	4. Why did you decide to enrol in this course? (What made you decide you needed to get help or support in this way?)	5. What do you expect to get out of this course?	6. Do you think you are making progress in achieving those purposes? <i>No (1)</i> <i>Not sure (2)</i> <i>Yes (3)</i>	7. Why do you think that? (Follow-up: are there things you can do now that you couldn't do before you started the course?)	8. Tell me about the assessment tasks you do. How do you know how you are going in the course?

STUDENTS - CONFIDENCE

In this section, I'm going to ask you some questions about whether your personal confidence has changed as a result of your participation in the course

First name	14. Were you scared or anxious when you first came to this Centre? How do you feel about it now? (Explore for learning climate & teacher attitudes & support)	15. Since you started this course, do you think your confidence has increased: <i>None (1)</i> <i>Very little(2)</i> <i>Some (3)</i> <i>Quite a bit (4)</i> <i>Very much (5)</i>	16. Why is this? (If positive: Can you give me some examples of how this confidence shows, eg with family, shopping, doctor/chemist, workplace, community)	17. How important is this course to you? Is it: <i>Not very important (1), Reasonably / moderately important (2), or Very important (3)</i>	18. Why do you think of it in that way?	19. Will you get a certificate at the end of this course? Is that important to you? Why or why not?	20. What's the next step for you after this? How confident are you that you will achieve your goal? <i>Not confident (1), a little confident (2), quite or reasonably confident (3), very confident (4).</i> Discuss reasons + anything else student wants to talk about

STUDENTS - CONFIDENCE STATEMENTS

21. Confidence statements

I am going to show you and read out 10 statements about being confident, and I'd like you to tell me how you feel about each one of them. There are four possibilities: *not confident (1)*, *a little confident (2)*, *quite confident or reasonably confident (3)*, *very confident (4)*. I'll ask you to pick one of those four for each of the statements. Please ask me if you don't understand any of them.

Student

names

Situation	name								
1. I am confident when meeting new people									
2. I am confident I can learn from the course I am doing at this Centre									
3. I am confident that I can apply what I learn here to my daily life									
4. I am confident to speak in a group									
5. I am confident to speak to a person I don't know									
6. I am confident when writing things down in English									
7. I am confident that I am good at some things and have valuable skills									
8. I am confident of taking charge of my own affairs									
9. I am confident in strange situations or strange places									
10. I feel I am generally a confident person.									

<p>22. How much do you think the situations where you think you have developed some confidence (a little, quite, very) are a result of doing this course? <i>None (1), Very little (2), Some (3), Quite a bit (4), Very much (5)</i></p> <p>Discuss responses</p>									
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23. Do you want to say anything else about your own learning or what you have got from this course?

COORDINATORS/TEACHERS/TUTORS – BASES FOR INDICATORS

19. POSSIBLE BASES FOR IDENTIFYING WIDER BENEFITS OF LEARNING/SOFT OUTCOMES

We are looking at whether it might be possible to develop some indicators for monitoring the wider benefits of learning, based on the summary of research literature sent to the Centre in advance of this interview. At the end of that paper we listed seven possible bases for such indicators.

The question is: To what extent do you agree that each of these seven factors might provide a useful basis on which to develop some indicators, i.e. evidence of changed student behaviour? There are five possible responses: *Don't know (0), Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral(3), Agree (4), Strongly agree (5)*.

Please give reasons for your responses, including where possible examples of possible indicators.

Teachers' ratings (0-5)

Factor	name						
Self-confidence and personal competence (degree by which self esteem and personal confidence have changed, and in what ways, as a result of participation in LLN program)							
Engagement with others (degree by which engagement with others has changed, and in what ways, as a result of participation in LLN program, e.g. family, workplace, teachers).							
Attitudes to learning (extent of change of attitude towards learning and future learning and ability to learn how to learn as a result of participation in LLN program)							
Agency/pro-activity (degree by which individuals' agency and pro-activity have changed, and in what ways, as a result of participation in LLN program)							
Life trajectories (degree by which individuals' life trajectories, i.e. goals, ambitions, purposes, have changed, and in what ways, as a result of participation in LLN program)							

Personal growth/personal change (extent to which a learner perceives they have grown as a person as the result of engagement in a LLN program)							
Social Capital (extent of changes in community participation, involvement in networks, etc, as a result of participation in LLN program)							
Other suggestion:							
20. To what degree do you think the areas which you have nominated as Strongly Agree and Agree result from the students' participation in this course? <i>None (1), Very little (2), Some (3), Quite a bit (4), Very much (5)</i> Discuss responses							

COORDINATORS/TEACHERS/TUTORS – EXAMPLES OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS

We would appreciate your views on the examples of the assessment tools which were attached to the Summary of Research we sent to the Centre. These aren't intended to be necessarily what we want to end up with in this project. They're just a range of instruments we found in our research and your opinions will help decide whether any of them are worth considering. Please give reasons for your responses.

21. There are five possible responses to the usefulness of each example: *Not useful (1), Limited usefulness (2), Uncertain (3), Useful (4) and Very useful (5)*.

Teachers' ratings (1-5)

Tool/ Example	name								
Appendix 1: Outcomes for providers/stakeholders/funders & Outcomes experienced by the learner (Foster et al 1997)									
Appendix 2: Matrix classifying the effects of learning (Schuller et al 2004)									
Appendix 3: Getting to know you (SOUL) (Anderson et al 2006)									
Appendix 4: Indicators of success identified by students (Eldred 2002)									
Appendix 5: Emergent criteria of achievement (Charnley and Jones 1978)									
Appendix 6: Catching confidence (Eldred et al 2004)									
Appendix 7: Assessment profile* (Department for Work and Pensions 2004)									
Appendix 8 – Personal development plan (Department for Work and Pensions 2004)									
Appendix 9: Soft indicators: Individual profiling (Department for Work and Pensions 2004)									

*This is an example of the wheel idea, based on rankings against indicators – the indicators would be different for L&N learning.

22. In thinking of the course/s for which you are responsible, do you think it might be possible to develop some indicators of progress of wider learning outcomes that are applicable across all courses or do you think you would need to adapt them to particular courses.

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