Assessing prisoner basic skills gaps - Corrections Victoria’s Language Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Toolkit.

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Yvonne Russell, Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE
Overview of presentation

• Organisational background
• Project background
  – Context
  – Rationale

• Toolkit details and description
• Progress, findings and next steps.
Organisational Background

Department of Justice

Corrections Victoria

14 Adult prisons

State Training Authority

Vocational Education and Training (VET) system

3 Youth Facilities

6 TAFES

2 TAFES

Department of Human Services
Policy position…

Corrections Victoria recognises the contribution that education and training makes towards reintegration into society and reduced recidivism by improving employment related outcomes.

Victorian prisoners have a legislated right to access education and training.  

Corrections Act 1986, s 47, 1, 0
Project Rationale: Why assess prisoners?

• Improve planning, monitoring and evaluation of training efforts

• Improve case management of prisoners.
Project Rationale:

- **Report recommendations:**
  - Develop assessment tool
  - Integrate education goals into prisoner Management Plan

- **Scan findings:**
  - Range of assessment practices
  - No common assessment language
  - Limited data on prisoner skills levels.
How Australia performs - the Adult Literacy and Life Skills survey (ALLS)

Graph showing performance levels in Prose, Document, Numeracy, and Problem Solving.
Tier 1 assessment: Reception prison

Identify and refer prisoners most at need for detailed assessment

Tier 2 assessments: Sentenced location

Common assessment practices across the system

Moderated assessment of prisoner LLN skills

Undertake detailed assessment and validate screening questions

Customised/improved training delivery.

Prisoner entry and exit skill levels reported against national LLN benchmarks.
The Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) 

• A national reporting system for assessment of performance of core skills:
  – Learning Writing
  – Oral communication Numeracy Reading

• The ACSF describes 5 levels of performance for each core skill. 1 (LOWEST) to 5 (HIGHEST)

• Language performance in any of the core skills derives from the interplay between the chosen activity, the features of the text/task and the context and level of support under which the activity is performed.

• Language performance has implications for prisoner engagement in rehabilitation programs
Project details

- Funded by DEEWR under Adult National Literacy Project
- Incorporates Correctional Services - Language, Literacy and Numeracy Indicator tool for Prisoner intake screening, 2005
- Managed by Corrections Victoria
- Undertaken by nationally recognised experts in LLN (Council of Adult Education and Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE).
Toolkit Development

- Scan of existing tools
- Draft assessment tasks developed
- Draft tool trialed by LLN practitioners with prisoners
- Alterations to tool to incorporate feedback
- Final tool presented to practitioners
- Ongoing moderation and professional development
- Initial findings.
The CV LLN Assessment Toolkit

• A moderated set of tasks.
  – Tasks are as realistic as possible and designed to reflect everyday experiences that the participant is likely to have encountered.

• Based on good practice in assessment.
  – Are flexible and cover a range of contexts, levels, skills and methods of assessing skills (rather than a series of tests to be undertaken in isolation).
The LLN assessment tool includes:

- guidelines on use
- an LLN assessment interview form to guide the assessment interview
- an LLN self-assessment
- 24 LLN assessment tasks covering core skills
- LLN stimulus material (following slides)
- an assessment record form.
The assessment process:

- Conducted by qualified assessors (teachers)
- An interview with the candidate to ascertain oral communication skill level, interests, and background
- A self-assessment
- Completion of 2-3 of the assessment tasks selected by the interviewer

Then:

- The assessor completes the assessment record form, noting ACSF performance levels for each core skill.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>ACSF level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>Some awareness of self as a learner. Eg explained why he was “no good at maths. Worked from the negative in identifying vocational interests and training. Commenting on things he wouldn’t want to do eg. Labouring, trades or factory work. Not able to identify a particular area of interest but did volunteer for this program as he “needs skills to do something”. I.T. studies might provide an interest. Learns by watching and listening.</td>
<td>2.01/2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>mid</td>
<td>Nick was quick and brief in responses but he appeared competent at this level. Eg. his response to the “water restriction” task was to identify himself as someone who didn’t “dob” and suggested that the purpose of the text was to encourage people to do so - he extended this to name people who he thought were dobbers. Stated that he read at some length but wasn’t prepared to identify what he read – appeared to lack trust in the assessment process.</td>
<td>3.03/3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>Wrote quickly and in note form. Appeared to want to finish all undertaken tasks as quickly as possible but stated that he wasn’t in a hurry to be somewhere else. All upper-case but evidence of an understanding of grammatical features, sentence structures and conjunctive links (often in symbols). Some spelling problems and sporadic use of punctuation. Appeared to have strong opinions on many issues and this may be a focal point for future writing tasks.</td>
<td>3.05/3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Comm</td>
<td>mid</td>
<td>Conservative in his responses. Speaks quickly, briefly and laterally, mainly using phrases and clauses, across a broad range of ideas. No questions apart from “when will this finish? Not able to offer personal information but responded to questions asked. Able to give a confident (brief) personal response to a number of issues – eg. Politics, technology, humanity etc. May have trouble focusing on a subject. Closed body language. No paralinguistic features.</td>
<td>3.07/3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>Nick manages his own finances, shopping, can use timetables and brochures etc. but doesn’t see numeracy as a personal skill or something of import in his life. Basic estimation and calculation skills. Uses informal and formal math language. “dollars, bucks, kilometres, kilos” and could tell state the volume of his drink bottle. He may be operating at higher level but unable gain sufficient evidence here. Broke off the assessment during a numeracy task and stated he had “done enough”. Assessment discontinued.</td>
<td>2.09/2.10/3.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The LLN assessment tasks

The daily taste

Pasta sauce

Ingredients:
- 12 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons chopped herbs (oregano, basil, parsley or marjoram)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Method:
Heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Fry onions and garlic for five minutes, until soft. Add the tomatoes, water and salt and pepper to taste. Bring to the boil, then turn down to simmer. Cook until volume has reduced to one third. Stir through fresh herbs.

Chocolate cupcakes

Ingredients:
- 150g butter
- 1 cup caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup self-raising flour

Method:
Preheat oven to 180°C. Line 24 patty tins with baking paper. Place butter and sugar in mixing bowl and beat until light and fluffy. Add eggs and cocoa and beat. Add sifted flour and mix until combined. Spoon mixture into patty tins. Bake for 10-12 minutes.

Weather

Today’s forecast for Australia

Yesterday’s maximum temperatures:
- Adelaide: 26°C
- Canberra: 28°C
- Hobart: 21°C
- Perth: 24°C
- Brisbane: 29°C
- Darwin: 31°C
- Melbourne: 24°C
- Sydney: 27°C

Star Signs

Jan 21 - Feb 19
This week you’ll be less likely to be worried about your looks and your career, and more in the mood to party! Remember to be sensitive to the mood of those around you.

Feb 20 - Mar 20
You will have more energy today than you have had for a long time. Use it to move your life in different directions and leave the past behind. Start fresh.

Mar 21 - Apr 20
The position of the planets this week puts you in an ideal space for making some changes. Cleaning and painting may be on the agenda as you notice how drab your home has become.

Apr 21 - May 20
This week isn’t the time to start a new relationship. Your energy is low, and you may be tempted to start new friendships for the wrong reasons. Stand back and observe, and take your time to make the right choices.

May 21 - Jun 20
This week you will find it difficult to avoid the harsh realities of life. You need to stay strong and face up to what comes your way – it will be a relief to get it over with.

Jun 21 - Jul 22
You must be careful not to judge yourself too harshly this week. You don’t have to live the life of a Hollywood star, but you have a lot of things to be thankful for. Try to stay positive.

Jul 23 - Aug 22
A person close to you will turn out to be ‘all talk’ this week. It’s disappointing, but don’t worry, remember that you have other friends who mean what they say and who are there when you need them.

Aug 23 - Sep 22
The planets are at their best for a good week. Make all the most of it! Write those letters, make those phone calls, and have those conversations that you’ve been putting off for too long.

Sep 23 - Oct 22
A full moon will bring a few difficult days, but you’ll get through them and move onto having better energy. Hang in there – it’ll be worth it.

Oct 23 - Nov 22
You’ve put in some long hours, taking care of someone close to you. Now it’s your turn for some care. Be sure to make the most of it.

Nov 23 - Dec 22
Strong emotions can be dangerous. Now is the time to think through and deal with them. It’s not easy, but it’s important.

Dec 23 - Jan 20
Love is in the air! This week you’ll find that person you’ve been waiting for. You may not recognise this person immediately, but they will be there, so keep your eyes open.
Motoring

With Phil

Our Car writer, Phil has put together this summary of her recommendations and costs for some all wheel drive luxury cars by BMW, Mercedes and Audi. They may have little off-road ability but can be big on luxuries.

Get a favorite car you think we should know about? Or a new one we can review? Email Phil at phil@communitytimes.com

*Includes GST but not on-road and delivery charges

Table One: Phil's ratings

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phil's Star Ratings</th>
<th>BMW X5</th>
<th>Mercedes ML350</th>
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<td>*****</td>
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<tr>
<td>Braking &amp; Handling</td>
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<td>Price (ex GST)</td>
<td>306,000</td>
<td>333,000</td>
<td>363,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Price (on-road)</td>
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<td>Overall</td>
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Table Two: Costs

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<td>$306,000</td>
<td>$334,000</td>
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<td>$361,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$363,000</td>
<td>$396,000</td>
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</table>

ROUND 9 AFL FOOTY IS INDIGENOUS ROUND

The AFL Indigenous round celebrates the contribution of current as well as past Indigenous players to Australian Rules football over the history of the game. Indigenous players are respected for the extra excitement that they bring to the game.

The heart of Indigenous Round is Dreamtime at the G – the annual match between Essendon and Richmond at the MCG. Both these clubs have a history of successful indigenous players and are committed to acknowledging their role in improving AFL footy.

A major part of Dreamtime at the G has been to encourage the building of bridges between Indigenous cultures and communities and the rest of Australia. Football clearly provides a way to further encourage the building of these links and an increased understanding of the importance of Indigenous culture to Australia’s past and present.

Another key event of Indigenous Round is The Long Walk which starts in Federation Square at 4pm and continues through Birrarung Marr, across William Barak Bridge and into the MCG to be a part of the pre-match entertainment for the Richmond v Essendon clash beginning at 7.40pm.

Indigenous Australians have played a major role in the evolution of football. Here are some figures about the contribution of Indigenous players past and present:

- There are 27,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved in Australian football programs. This represents 12.4% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.
- There are 71 Indigenous players listed as active players in the AFL, representing nearly 10% of players across the league.
- In 2006 Gavin Wanganeen became the first Indigenous player to reach 300 career games.
- 10 Indigenous players have played more than 200 games.
- Between 2002 and 2006 Indigenous children participating in AFL Kickstart clinics grew 330 per season to 600.
- More than 500 Indigenous coaches were accredited in 2006.
The LLN assessment tasks

Task 8: Write, write, write!
Choose one of the pictures below and write as much as you can. Use capital letters, full stops, and any appropriate punctuation.
WIN! WIN!
Win a free meal for 4 people.
In the space below explain why pizzas are your favourite food.
Pizzas are my favourite food because...

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
Your name: ____________________________
Your phone: ___________________________

Entries close: 30th June
Conditions: Best winning entry to be decided by Dan’s Pizza Restaurant.

Dan’s Pizza Restaurant
THE BEST PIZZAS IN TOWN
Open 7 days a Week
Sunday to Thursday: 11.00 am to 9.30 pm
Friday and Saturday: 11.00 am to 11.00 pm
FREE HOME DELIVERY
21 Smith Street, Diamond Hill
Phone: 9123 4567
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<th>Site Location</th>
<th>Assessment Date</th>
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<th>Reading score (ACSF)</th>
<th>Writing score (ACSF)</th>
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</table>

This table provides a summary of assessment data for various individuals, including their site location, assessment date, assessor name, and scores in different categories such as learning, reading, writing, oral, numerical, and CGEA literacy level. It also indicates whether the client was returned or not.
# Youth Justice Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1 ASCF</th>
<th>26</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emerging literacy and numeracy skills.</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Initial General education for Adults)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Level 2 ASCF</th>
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<td>Can comprehend and or produce simple short and explicit texts, Can recognise, use, check on and communicate in straight forward mathematical procedures. Requires extensive and structured support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can comprehend and produce structurally simple and cohesive texts which are typically short and explicit in familiar and predictable contexts.</td>
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<td>Can comprehend and/or produce cohesive texts which may be short yet have some structural complexity.</td>
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**Toolkit Objectives**

**Tier 1 assessment: Reception prison**
- Identify and refer prisoners most at need for detailed assessment

**Tier 2 assessments: Sentenced location**
- Undertake detailed assessment and validate screening questions
- Common assessment practices across the system
- Customised/improved training delivery
- Moderated assessment of prisoner LLN skills
- Prisoner entry and exit skill levels reported against national LLN benchmarks

**Activities**
- Identify prisoners most at need for detailed assessment
- Undertake detailed assessment and validate screening questions
- Implement common assessment practices across the system
- Provide customised/improved training delivery
- Conduct moderated assessment of prisoner LLN skills
- Report prisoner entry and exit skill levels against national LLN benchmarks
Findings - scores

Prisoner Language scores

ACSF 1
ACSF 2
ACSF 3
ACSF 4+

Prose Document Numeracy Problem Solving

Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4/5
Findings and next steps

Identify and refer prisoners most at need for detailed assessment

Next stage of development (over 2010)

Undertake detailed assessment and validate screening questions

» Common assessment processes across the system ✔
» Prisoner entry and exit skill levels reported against national LLN benchmarks ✔
» Customised and improved training delivery ✔