

WORKING IN THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT WITH ACCREDITED LLN CURRICULUM: MEETING LEARNER NEEDS

**ACAL CONFERENCE
FREMANTLE 2009**

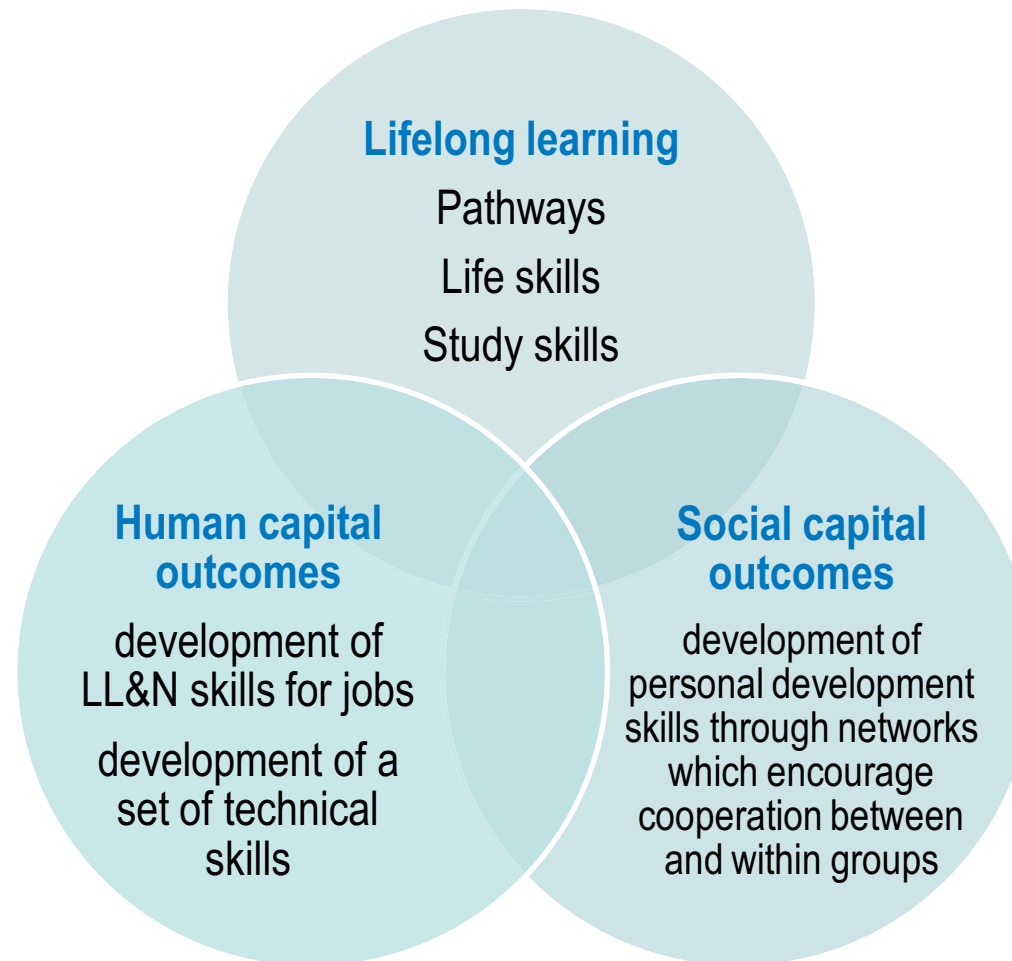
Liz Davidson & Nadia Casarotto
CMM General Studies and Further
Education



OUR PRESENTATION

1. Current policy context and provision for adult LLN
2. Developing Accredited Literacy and Numeracy curriculum in this context
3. Mediating policy – teachers' work with adult literacy and numeracy learners and the programs they offer
4. Meeting learner needs in the policy context?
Building on strengths
5. Discussion

AIMS OF LLN PROGRAMS



DIVERSITY ACROSS STATES & TERRITORIES

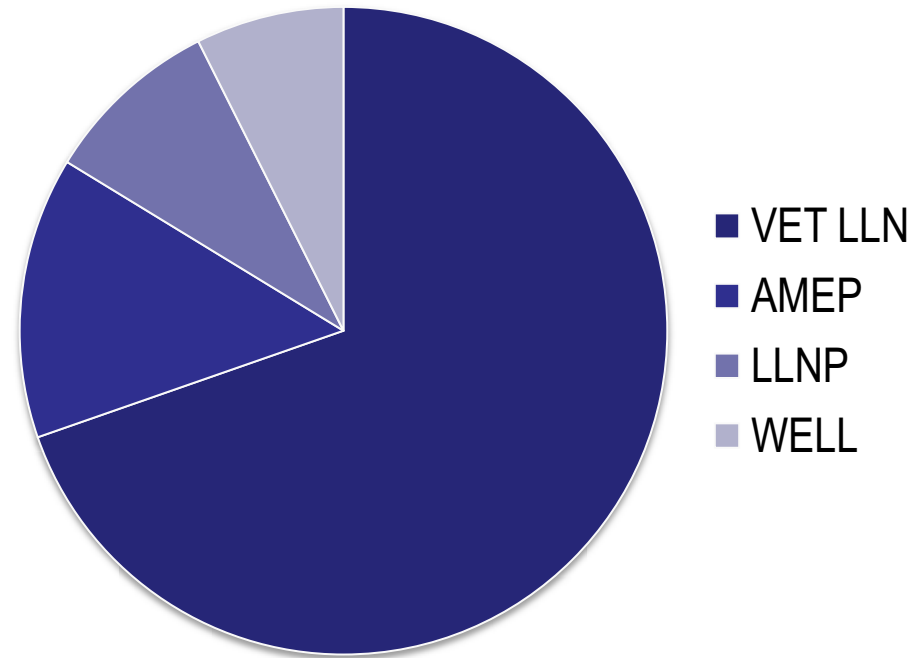
‘Despite calls for the development of a clear vision and supporting policy framework (McKenna & Fitzpatrick 2004), Australia, unlike other OECD countries, has had **no clearly articulated vision to focus and motivate national effort on adult literacy and numeracy since 1991.**’

Perkins 2009



VET LLN – mostly state specific e.g. CGEA

LLN provision 2004

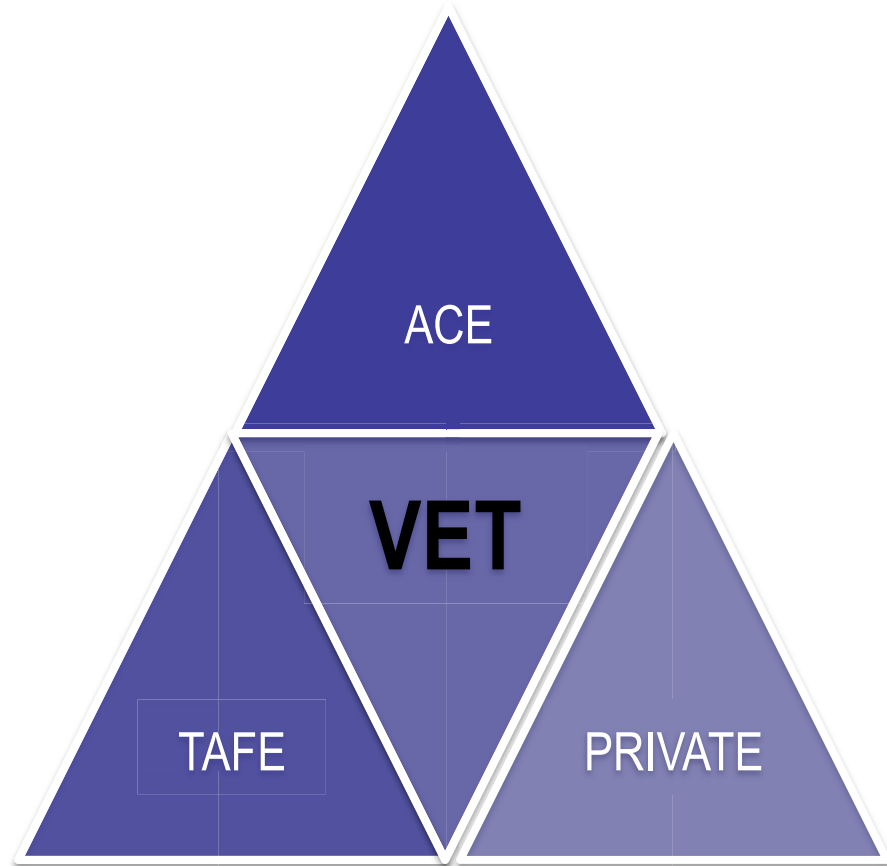


NCVER 2006 in Perkins 2009



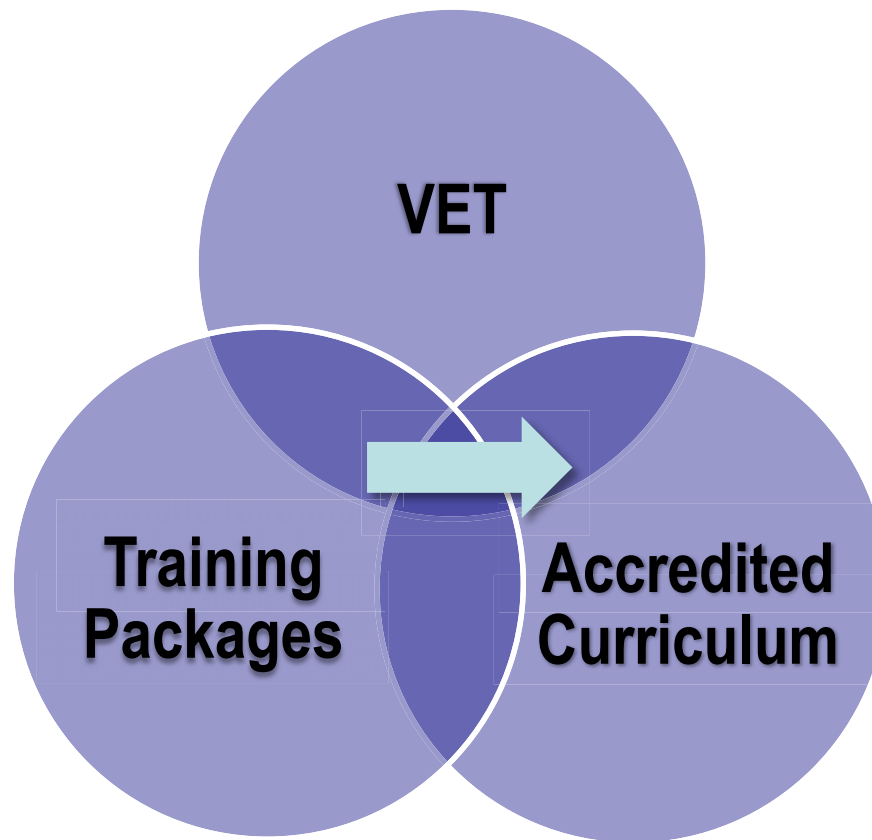
'UNITY' ACROSS STATES & TERRITORIES

Adult literacy and numeracy policy has become embedded in the broader VET National Framework

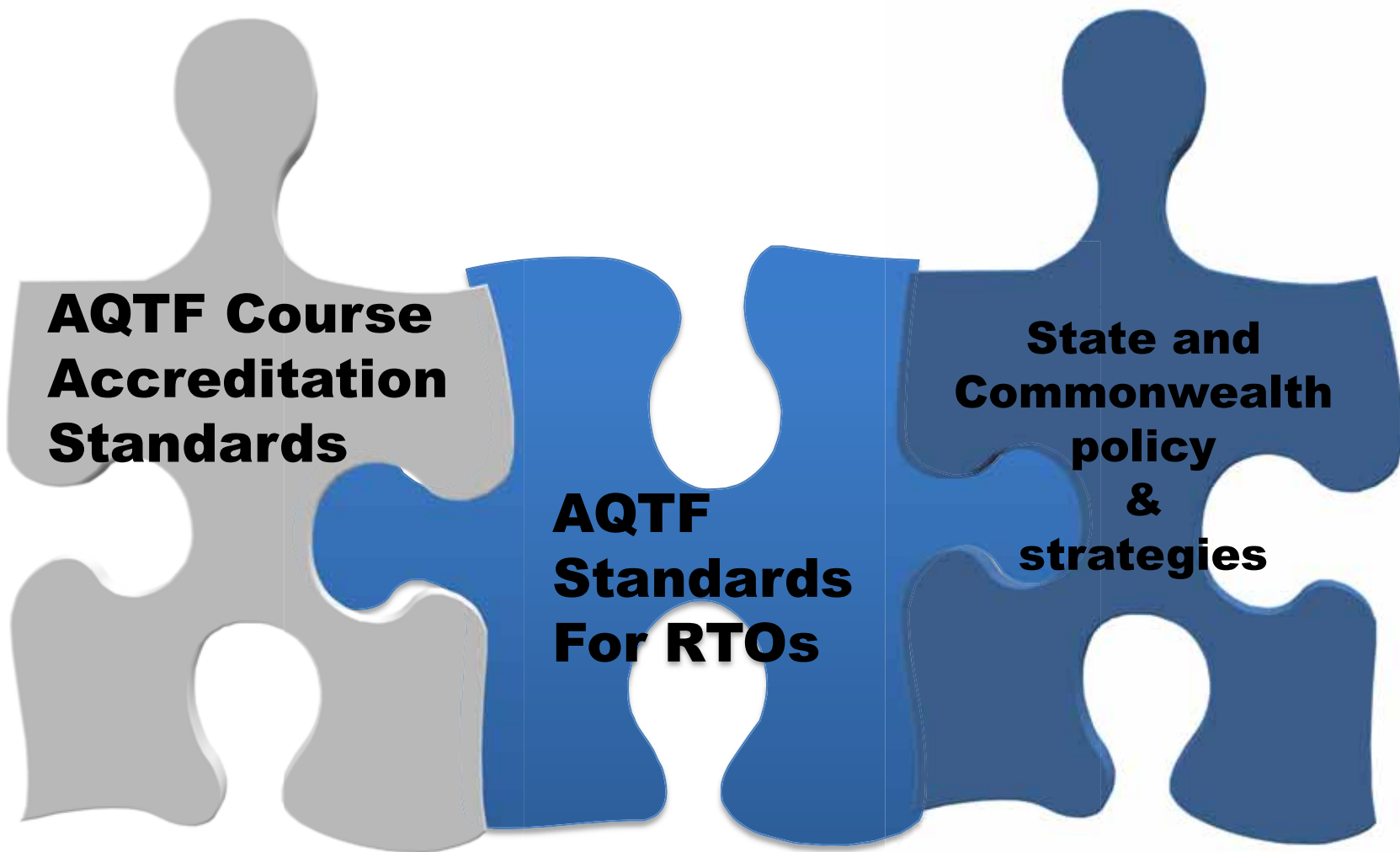


AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM

LLN teaching and learning involves either accredited curriculum, Training Packages or a combination of both

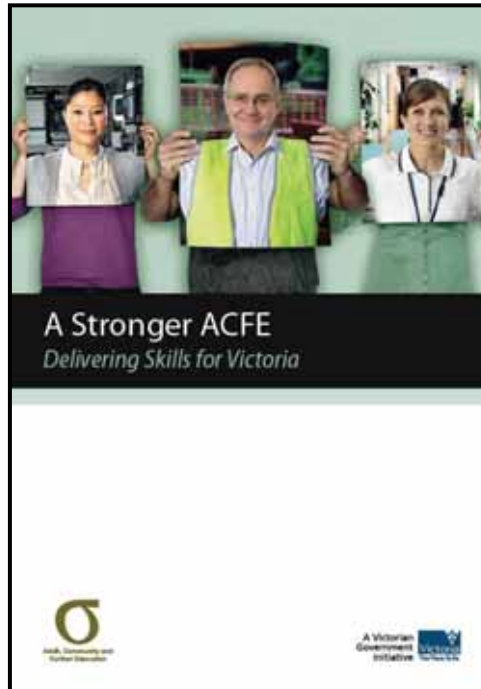
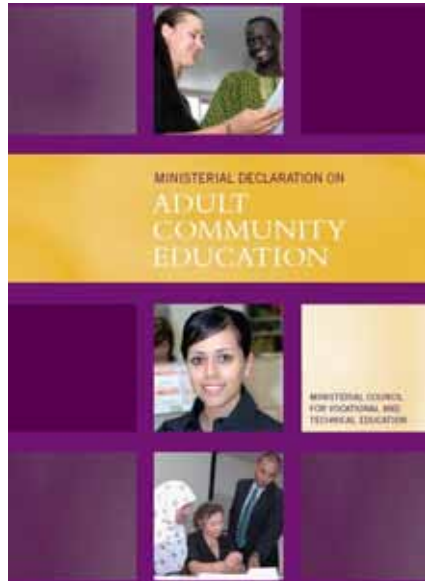


VET POLICY INFLUENCES ON ADULT LLN



THE AUSTRALIAN QUALITY TRAINING FRAMEWORK (AQTF)





NATIONAL AGREEMENT FOR SKILLS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Council of Australian Governments

An agreement between

- the Commonwealth of Australia and
- the States and Territories, being:
 - The State of New South Wales;
 - The State of Victoria;
 - The State of Queensland;
 - The State of Western Australia;
 - The State of South Australia;
 - The State of Tasmania;
 - The Australian Capital Territory; and
 - The Northern Territory of Australia.

This agreement defines the objectives, outcomes, outputs and performance measures, and clarifies the roles and responsibilities that will guide the Commonwealth and States and Territories in delivery of services across the skills and workforce development sector.

POLICY CONTEXT ADULT LLN - NATIONAL AND STATE POLICY AND STRATEGIES (POLICY LEVERS)



POLICY CONTEXT

Focus on the provision of LLN in relation to the development of workforce skills

Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Skills and Workforce Development agreement seeks to:

- “reduce the gaps in **foundation skills** levels of working aged Australians”
- “improve utilisation of human capital”



POLICY CONTEXT

‘A strong Language, literacy and numeracy workforce will ultimately increase opportunities for working age Australians to develop the skills and qualifications they need to gain employment, keep a job or advance within existing employment. This investment recognises that foundation skills ...are not only important in building a skilled labour market but critical in developing a socially inclusive society.’
(ACAL Website - Budget Fact Sheets 2009).



NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT VET PRODUCTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY - FINAL REPORT

National Quality Council (NQC) and the COAG Skills and Workforce Development Subgroup

Recommendation 5: “Reaffirm a single organising framework for VET qualificationsthat achieve or contribute to occupational outcomes or foundation skills (ie LL&N)

LLN will continue to be integrated into VET in Training Packages and in accredited curriculum



NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT VET PRODUCTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY - FINAL REPORT

Recommendation 6: undertake a full and comprehensive review of:

- packaging rules as applied in Training Packages to ensure maximum flexibility and consistency within and across Training Packages and Accredited Courses, where both possible and appropriate;
- the use of units from accredited courses within Training Packages;

Integration of vocational and LLN skills will be facilitated in a more flexible framework



NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT VET PRODUCTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY - FINAL REPORT

Recommendation 8: “Ensure a stronger focus on preparatory and enabling qualifications aimed at building general workforce capability...”

Recommendation 15 “ Ensure that LL&N requirements are made more explicit in the development of occupational....qualifications”

Reaffirms the role of accredited curriculum and support for LLN



STATE POLICY CONTEXT VICTORIA

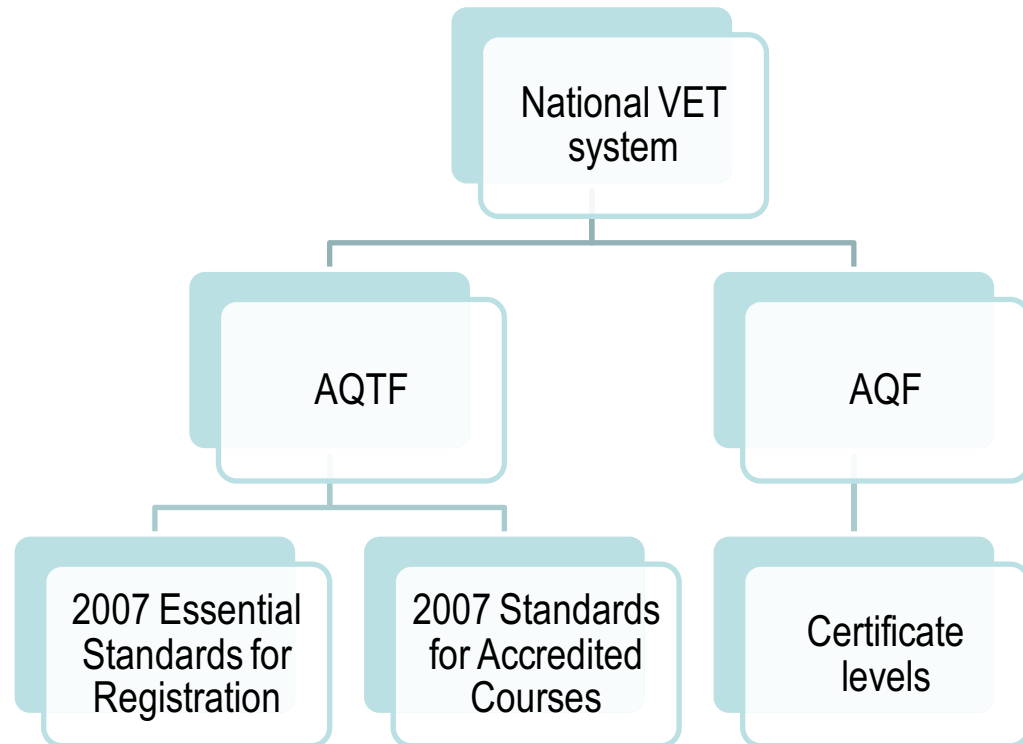
A Stronger ACFE: delivering skills for Victoria (2009)

“ACE delivers skills training to equip individual Victorians to participate effectively in the workforce and in their communities and ensures these skills match the needs of local economies”

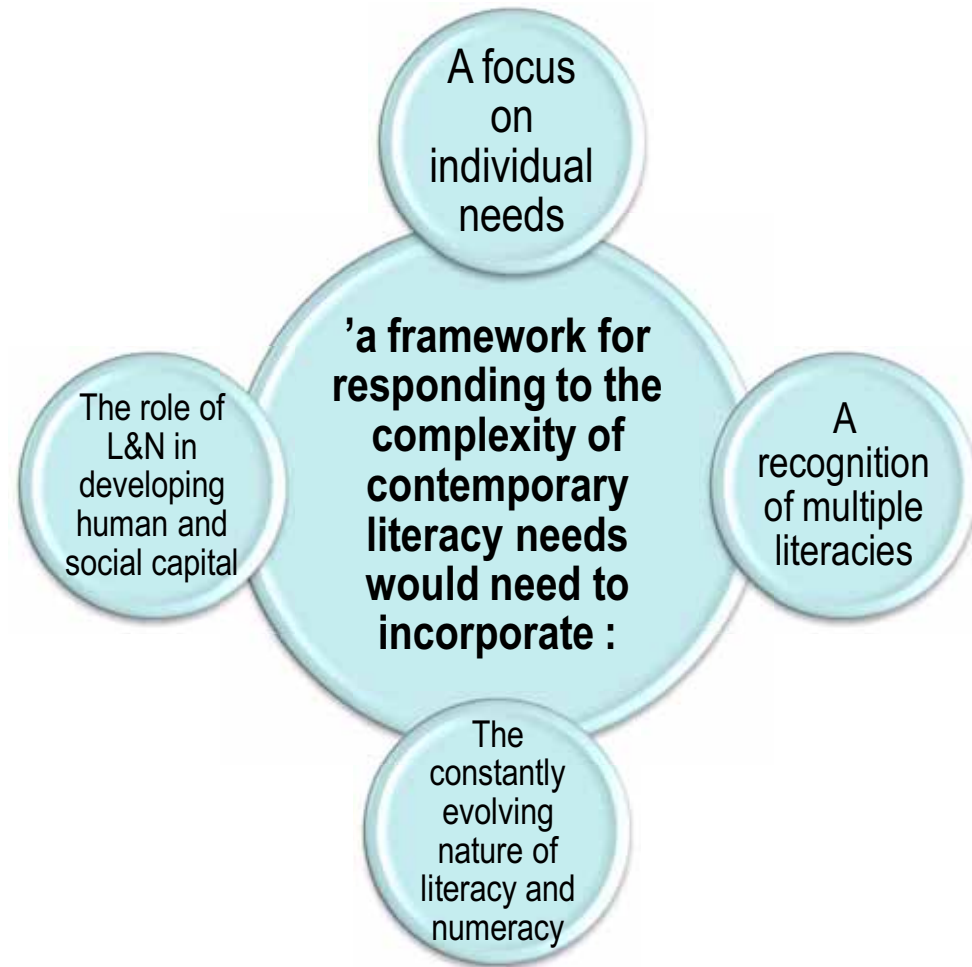
CGEA is ACFE curriculum



COURSE ACCREDITATION



A CURRICULUM TO MEET LEARNER NEEDS



MEETING LEARNER NEEDS – A REALITY?

- Are the standards a straight jacket for course development?
- Can learner needs be met?
- Can teachers work innovatively with curriculum?
- Can they work effectively with the AQTF standards for assessment?



THE CERTIFICATES IN GENERAL EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

Victorian ACFE adult literacy and numeracy curriculum first accredited in 1993

Designed according to the AQTF Standards - competency-based

flexible, i.e. outcomes can be contextualised for specific learner groups

reaccredited every 5 years – reviewed mid point

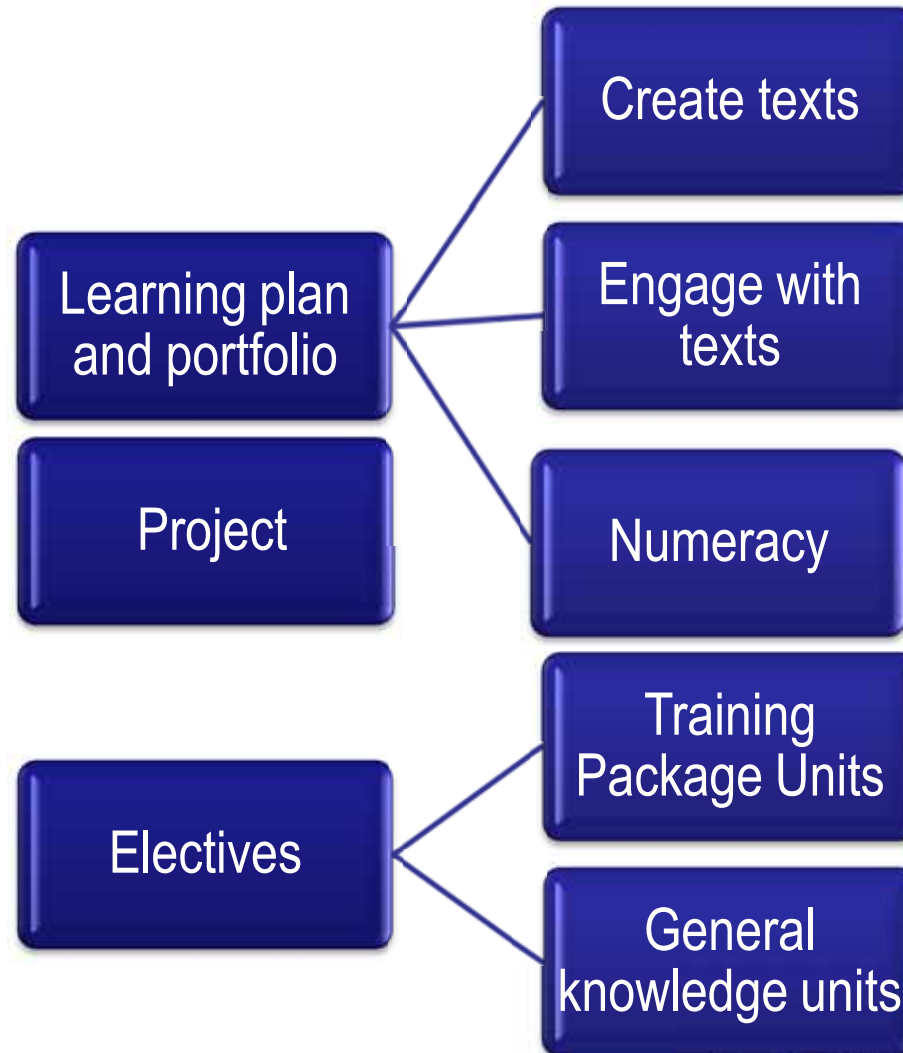
Practitioner and key stakeholder involvement in its review and development

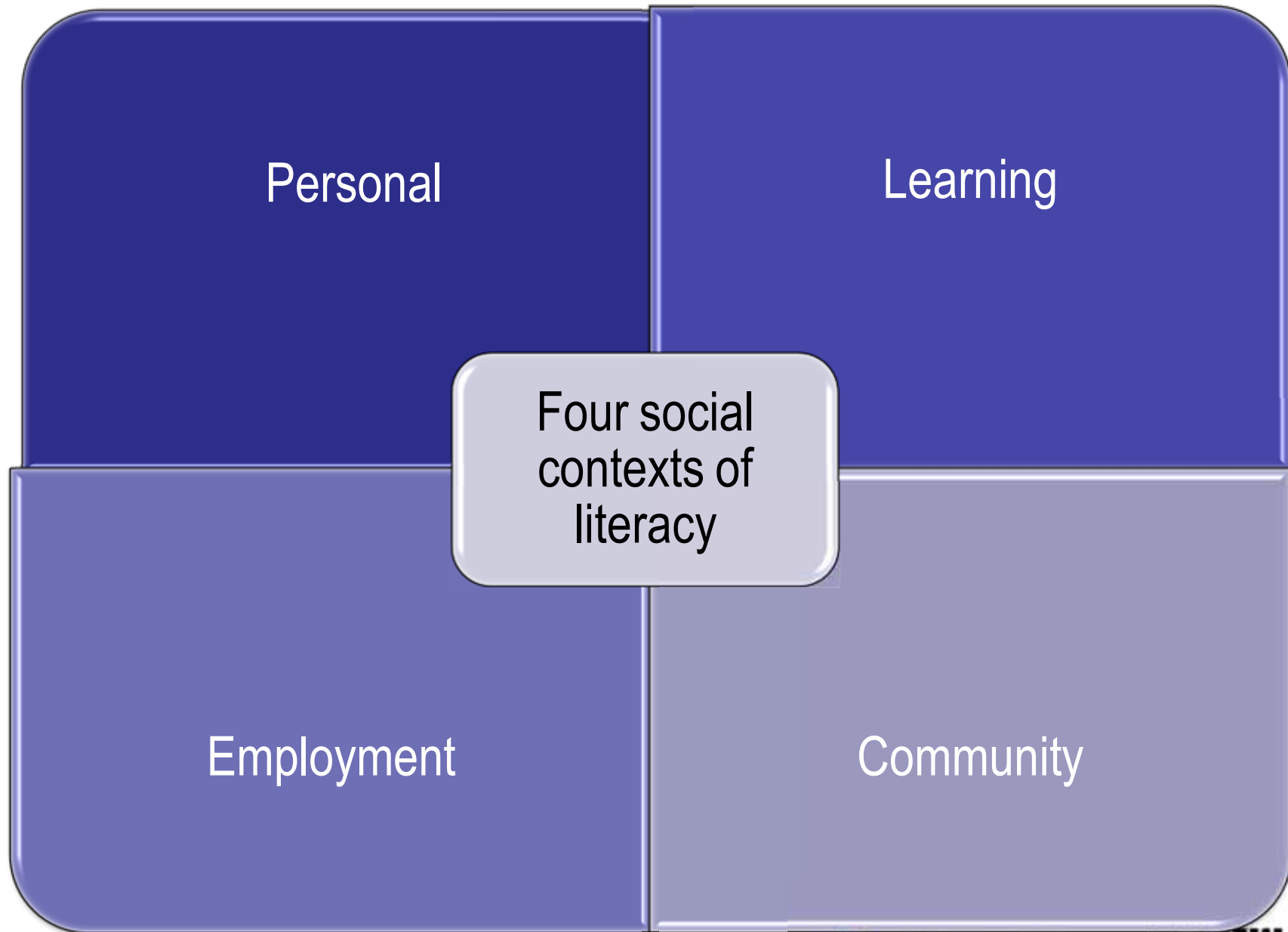
FEATURES OF THE CGEA

- 5 courses aligned to the 5 levels of the Australian Core Skills Framework
 - core & elective structure
 - focus on the individual
 - ‘social perspective’ on literacy and numeracy
 - scope to explore many text types across all social contexts
-
- Learners are able to make choices about the contexts in which they develop their skills and knowledge

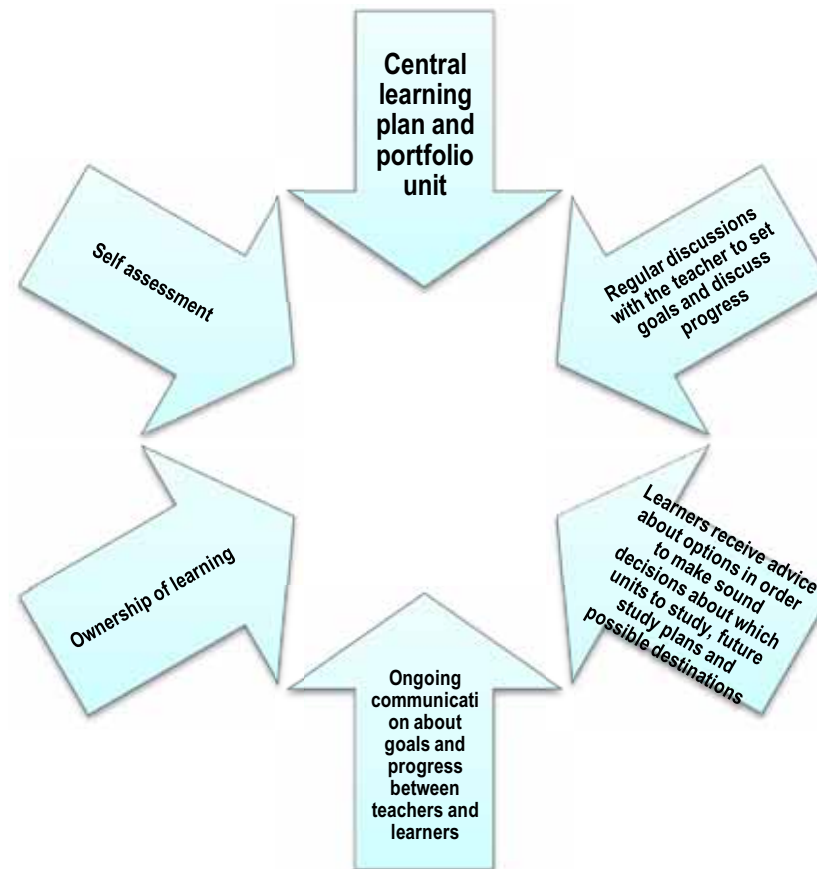


COURSE STRUCTURE





DIVERSE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE CURRICULUM



DIVERSE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

WITHIN THE CURRICULUM

- problem-based learning explicitly included by building in a unit on 'working on a project' – a context for learning
- group-based or individual learning
- practical application in an activity of a range of literacy, numeracy and oral communication skills for the purposes of further developing those skills in a context and/or around a specific content area.
- provides an opportunity for learners to develop personal skills such as working collaboratively with others, planning and organizing self and others, problem solving, and using technology.



TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

- Adult literacy and numeracy pedagogy as part of the national VET framework
- CGEA provides scope for the application of a range of teaching and strategies
 - Participation in community projects
 - Interaction with peers
 - Development of new networks and relationships
- CGEA provides scope for assessment practices – AQTF principles



AQTF

- ‘There are no formal policies which govern how teachers will go about conducting formative assessments ... However there are national mechanisms for assessing and reporting on outcomes...for assuring the quality of ...VET” (Misko 2006: 6).
- programs are dependent on an individual’s or an organisation’s interpretation or reinterpretation of standards (Grace 2005).



STRAIGHT JACKET?

- “The review in 2004 of the AQTF (KPA Consulting 2004) suggested... there was concern about the AQTF’s prescriptive nature, process rather than outcomes focus, and over-reliance on documentary evidence. Some providers see themselves as mired in layers of bureaucracy, making it difficult to be the creative, innovative and responsive organisations industry wants. In the battle between compliance and innovation many providers feel compliance wins...” (Guthrie 2008: 15-16).



POLICY CONTEXT -POLICY MEDIATION

- policy enactment is ‘contextual, processual and negotiated’ (Ramanathan & Morgan 2007)
- adult LLN programs dependent on an individual's or an organisations interpretation or reinterpretation of standards (Grace 2005)
- there are multiple acts of translation and retranslation of policy at different points in a long chain (Spours et al. 2007)
- alternative readings of ruling texts within VET (Grace 2005)
- Recent research into VET Practice gives a positive account of innovative teaching and learning (Figgis 2009, Hillier 2009)



TEACHERS' VIEWS OF AQTF

- *I can be flexible. I wouldn't like to think that I couldn't be.*
- *I use my professional judgment. I respond to the students, then make it fit in. if I could just talk to the auditor I feel I could justify what I do. I have the students' interest at heart.*
- teachers have a commitment to a learner-centred approach and to developing relevant and culturally appropriate learning programs. Misko (2006)



- ‘in addition to pedagogical beliefs, political and personal ideologies are salient in the policy to practice connection.’ (Stritikus 2005: 33).
- Grace (2005) found there were ‘varied experiences of the impact of Training Packages and the AQTF, ranging from those who reported having almost total freedom to exercise their professional authority, to others who described the displacement of their authority as educators in favour of the authority of auditors’.



LLN TEACHERS' VIEWS OF AQTF

- *what we were trying to do was to find a way to meet the student needs and administer in a way that doesn't t kill us*
- *Generally we do work around it (the AQTF) , we try to read it and how can we use it for our students. There is definitely flexibility to - as long as you meet the requirements.*
- *In assessment I make sure the task is a learning experience not just an assessment, that students learn from it. I feel I can make a professional judgment, I have control over assessment.*



IMPLEMENTATION – INTERPRETATION AND OWNERSHIP

‘The constraints are in our own minds’

CGEA Teacher – regional PD

Get the students involved in their own assessment – self and peer assessment share with the teacher in the process

CGEA teacher – Teacher network meeting

There isn’t a mismatch between student needs and what’s in the curriculum. You can adapt it,... [make] meaning for them.

ESL teacher

Assessment is ok; it’s not daunting, it’s a positive experience

ESL teacher



ACCREDITED CURRICULUM IN ACTION

- The following examples of the CGEA in use in Victoria in both TAFE and ACE are taken from accounts from our teacher networks to illustrate what's possible



THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

Students develop and maintain a sustainable community garden
Set up, maintain, harvest, present and sell the produce.



THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

- Block of land designated to project
- Majority of students participate for 3 hours per week
- Stakeholders from the community, businesses and local government
- Launch of Garden - invited community, institute personnel, local media
- Flower and Vegie market



THE CURRICULUM

- Successful completion of the **21772VIC Certificate I in General Education for Adults** requires successful completion of
 - 2 Core units
 - 3 Core Skills - Reading
 - 3 Core Skills – Writing
 - 2 Core Skills – Numeracy and Mathematics
 - 70-90 hours - Special Interest electives



PROGRAM

Core units		
VBQU130	Develop and document a learning plan and portfolio	The learning plan was negotiated with learners on an individual basis, and revolved around their short term and long term goals. The portfolio resulted from documenting the project: digital stories and notes were the main record keeping.
VBQU131	Plan and undertake a project	The project agreed on was the community garden; it was a collaborative project. It would involve learners developing teamwork, self-management, initiative skills.



PROGRAM

Core Skills - Reading		
VBQU134	Engage with texts of limited complexity for employment purposes	<p>Literacy texts were related to the project and included:</p> <p>information in simple electronic, printed, handwritten and visual texts</p> <p>garden related brochures, instructions on products, plans and designs, community directories, internet search for suitable plant species etc.</p>
VBQU133	Engage with texts of limited complexity for learning purposes	
VBQU135	Engage with texts of limited complexity to participate in the community	

PROGRAM

Core Skills - Writing		
TDTE49B	Prepare workplace documents	<p>Writing included:</p> <p>formatted texts with own personal details, factual, numerical information and / or symbols (✕).</p> <p>simple sequenced texts e.g., Instructions for others, records, diaries</p> <p>Letters to sponsors</p> <p>Invitations to the launch.</p>
VBQU137	Create texts of limited complexity for learning purposes	
VBQU138	Create texts of limited complexity to participate in the community	



CORE SKILLS NUMERACY AND MATHEMATICS



VBQU139	Work with time, money and directions in familiar situations	Measurement and design was a major focus, as was money (the budget was very small).
VBQU140	Work with measurement and design in familiar situations	



ELECTIVES

MNCG1026A	Operate a computer to produce documents	<p>Students used a computer to word process reports, create invitations, produce digital stories, search internet for elements to add to their documents.</p> <p>Students receive credit for TP units if they join 'mainstream' vocational classes.</p> <p><i>Explore chemical and change</i> is one of the CGEA science electives. To do additional science electives could lead onto Certificates III & IV in Science and a science pathway</p>
RTE1005A	Support horticultural production	
RTC1701A	Follow basic chemical safety rules	

CGEA LINKS TO VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Dual Qualifications – integrated and parallel support
e.g. CGEA + Certificate III in Child Care



CGEA LINKS TO VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS



Parents in community classes

CGEA program built around hospitality skills and linked to resources in the immediate community

Project = working in school canteen, and organising a community day lunch

Electives – selected from Certificate I in Vocational Preparation (Job Seeking, Career Planning) and Hospitality - OHS and food handling



CGEA LINKS TO WORK & SOCIAL INCLUSION

Units imported into CGEA – e.g. ‘tasters’ from a range of vocational areas and linked to visits to local businesses and Practical Placement (work experience). LLN skills development linked to this experience and a focus for portfolio development.

Youth forum – CGEA project organised around planning for this event in a regional centre where a number of social issues faced a group of young people. Involvement of community, e.g. Local police, school principals. CGEA students’ LLN all contextualised in the preparation of this event.



IMPLICATIONS FOR LL&N PROGRAMS

- Does the current policy environment place constraints on meeting the needs of a diverse group of learners?
- Are current LL&N curricula designed to provide scope to achieve a range of learner outcomes?
- What are the implications for teaching and learning practices?
- Is there a need for a reframing of adult literacy and numeracy pedagogy?
- Are social and human capital outcomes mutually exclusive?
- How can we build on strengths in future curriculum development?



CONTACT DETAILS

Nadia Casarotto & Liz Davidson
Curriculum Maintenance Manager
General Studies & Further Education

[Nadia Casarotto@vu.edu.au](mailto:Nadia.Casarotto@vu.edu.au)

Elizabeth.Davidson@vu.edu.au

based in Melbourne, Victoria

