Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) programme · Common Misconceptions

Misconception One: ‘SEE is only for non-English speakers’

The SEE programme is for all job seekers with any Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) barriers. The expectation is that improvements to LLN will enable them to participate more effectively in training or in the labour force. The programme is particularly well equipped to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Youth and Mature Aged job seekers.

Jake is a young man from Northern Sydney who went through to year 10 at high school in Australia. Jake enrolled in the Youth Employment and Study Skills (YESS) programme, which delivers a combination of literacy, numeracy and learning skills and vocational experience, developing employability skills, under the SEE programme.

Jake says, “When I found out that the course was more self-paced learning and some hands on work, I thought great, I just could not handle going back into a classroom like school... Instantly I felt more relaxed and knew I could do this”.

A year on from starting in SEE Jake is on track to completing his Certificate IV in Health and Fitness. He is a personal trainer at the gym facility on campus. He now helps other people with life goals and provides them with strategies in how to achieve them.

TAFE NSW – Northern Sydney Institute
Jake (21), Australian

Misconception Two: ‘Participants in SEE have zero Language, Literacy and Numeracy ability’

The SEE programme is for job seekers of all abilities who have some form of LLN based barrier that prevents participation in employment or training. SEE Training providers assess all job seekers for LLN ability against the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) in the Pre-Training Assessment (PTA). The five core skills outlined and measured in the ACSF are learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy. The PTA determines the level of support for which job seekers are eligible by splitting them into three different streams related to the barriers they face. The three streams are broken down as follows:

• Initial Language Stream – Solely for clients whose first language is not English and/or at the time of the PTA, achieve ACSF Level 1 or below in all ACSF reading and oral communication indicators
• Basic Language, Literacy and Numeracy Stream – For clients focussed on consolidating functional skills
• Advanced Language, Literacy and Numeracy Stream – For clients who have reasonable to high skills in some areas (between ACSF Levels 3 and 5) at the time of the PTA, but may require additional assistance in some other areas

SEE is suitable for all three streams, however, the bulk of referrals are participants in the Initial and Basic streams.

Training courses then take many different forms, ranging from short to long term, including work experience, Cert I through to Cert IV in areas such as Hospitality, Aged Care, Accounts Administration and Retail Services to name a few.
Initially Selina was angry and resentful of a system, which pushed her back into study after losing her job at the nursery. The pre-training assessment interview revealed that she had almost completed a Certificate III in Horticulture and had no difficulty with reading and writing but major deficit in numeracy skills. During the first three months of training, the long-term goal, which emerged from her interest in soil, was to get into university and study science. Selina structured her preparation for her university course, scheduling the maths unit for the second term to allow more time to consolidate numeracy.

Selina completed the pathway to success course at the end of 2013 and with sufficiently high grades to be accepted into the undergraduate science course at SCU.

NORTEC – Lismore Campus

Misconception Three:
‘Training has to deal with all three conditions at once, i.e. Language, Literacy and Numeracy.’

Clients referred to the SEE programme do not always require language, literacy and numeracy training. They are often proficient in one of more of these areas and just require some additional help in one discipline.

The Pre-Training Assessment (PTA) identifies the areas where clients require the most assistance. The clients are placed into one of the three streams of training (Initial, Basic, Advanced), and the individual areas that require assistance are explored and training is tailored.

The different streams of training available can often be to help remove other similar barriers to employment such as computer literacy or coaching in resume writing and job interview skills.

I commenced with the programme in January as a referral from Centrelink for the purpose of gaining skills with use of computers.

Being honest I was doubtful whether the programme was for me as I was well educated, even though it was a long time ago. I have had 10 years out of the workforce overcoming ill health. I felt low in confidence and had no recent experience in the job market. I had no computer skills.

Now I am so glad that I have done this programme and had the pleasure of meeting these teachers. Their teaching style involves all types of communication and is relationship based. They support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order to maximize their own potential, develop their own skills, improve their performance, and always encourage the student to become the person they want to be while encouraging mutual trust and respect. They make this particular programme motivating, inspiring and challenging.

NORTEC Ltd
Lismore NSW

Misconception Four:
‘The SEE programme is not vocational and does not connect to future employment’

Many different providers deliver the SEE programme, delivering a large range of courses. The embedding of LLN activities in courses with a large vocational component is very common amongst SEE providers.

All providers are encouraged to include a work experience component in their training where possible. This allows clients to practice the outcomes of their courses and better prepare them for the work environment. Some providers have taken this a step further by forming partnerships with providers to train, and later employ students.

The participants attained the Certificate III in Aged Care while being supported in their LLN needs by a dual qualified teacher/trainer. The course was run over one semester.

They undertook extensive work placement experience. All of these students gained employment in the Aged Care industry.

Six secured employment during their placement and the 7th shortly afterwards. Student quotes taken from student evaluations:

“The work placement experience was helpful.”

“The assessments are helpful to improve the knowledge in Aged Care. Also the class work was very enjoyable and the placement training was a great experience for everybody.”

AMES
Bayside and Yarra VIC

Misconception Five:
‘The SEE programme is only classroom based teaching; therefore it is not suitable for my Indigenous and youth clients who always hated school.’

SEE programme providers are encouraged to contextualise training wherever possible, and to embed LLN into innovative and flexible training options. The majority deliver training through vocational and mixed-mode delivery. Providers embed LLN in courses tailored for the students and the employment opportunities available in the area. They often include courses such as cooking, art, welding, horticulture etc. This style of delivery encourages students to get out of the classroom and undertake ‘hands-on’ activities to further their learning.

An increasing number of providers are also using a range of alternative teaching methods to minimise or remove ‘classroom based teaching’. Examples of some of these alternative teaching methods include:

• Vocational style training where students learn practical skills required for a certain area of employment
• Work experience, where students actually gain experience working with an employer
• Group based activity, where students are encouraged to sit together and discuss and share learnings
• Project based, where students work collaboratively to deliver a project or plan and host an event
In 2013, Hunter TAFE in conjunction with Hunter Labour Force Solutions and numerous other Disability Employment Service Providers in the Cessnock area, worked together to fill the gap in training for young disengaged males, who otherwise would not participate in literacy and numeracy training. These clients were reported to be unable to maintain concentration in a classroom for a long period of time.

In order to engage this cohort, delivery was set at 25 per cent in the trade workshop, 25 per cent in the computer room and 50 per cent in the classroom. Contextualised literacy and numeracy training to the metal fabrication trades area allowed the practical components of the programme to be reinforced.

As a result of this programme four students gained employment and two continued to study with Hunter TAFE in the SEE programme.

Misconception Six:
‘The SEE programme is not tailored to an individual’s needs’

After referring agencies have established the needs of clients, the agencies initiate contact with training providers to discuss the specific needs of all referred clients.

After initial meetings and completing the Pre-Training Assessment (PTA), training providers are required to complete an Individual Training Plan (ITP) with all clients before training can begin. The ITP is an agreement between the client and the provider outlining the specific tailored training the client will undertake and the provider will deliver. This includes all PTA results and compiles a record of the clients training progress in terms of ACSF indicators and competence.

‘Mason and Michael applied for places in an electro technology course and were declined due to deficits in their numeracy. Both are keen to improve this area as well as their writing skills to help with the study required in the electro technology course. Mason and Michael have focussed their learning on mathematics specifically tailored to the electro technology area.

The electro technology programme has provided problems and learning activities designed to engage Mason and Michael in the area before they start the course later this year. Mason and Michael have enjoyed the variety provided by the SEE programme having been able to spend two training days working on algebra, basic numeracy and writing and two days on employability skill related activities. All activities have increased the student’s use of numeracy skills in everyday contexts.

Both students have gained a place in the next electro technology course due to their increase in skill levels.’

Mason (18) & Michael (25)
TasTAFE

Misconception Seven:
‘The SEE programme cannot be combined with other activities or training.’

SEE Providers are encouraged to embed LLN training in other skills and work based training. Often referred to as ‘contextualised training’, these flexible learning approaches involve students spending a set number of hours/days on one type of activity, then a set number of hours/days on another, generally vocational or work experience type activities.

This assists to keep the students engaged and motivated, by not focussing on one area for too long a period, while developing a broader set of skills.

‘I teach a group of students who are all undertaking different programmes of study, but this customised approach satisfies individual students’ learning goals. In the first hour of a 2.5-hour session, I work with the whole group teaching basic literacy/numeracy skills. For the remainder of the session, I work with individuals or groups on whatever they are studying. I mostly proof-read, edit and assist them with interpreting questions. There are times though when I do teach a group – for example, the financial unit in the hospitality course, because a number of them were struggling with the same concepts. In the meantime, the other students continue to work on their own tasks.

This semester the class is a mix of Hospitality, Conservation and Land Management, Tourism, a Tertiary Enabling Programme and Education & Skills Development. This is a very challenging environment, but the programme is thriving and the students are happy.’

TAFE SA
Victor Harbour

Misconception Eight:
‘I can only refer clients at the start of a semester, or the start of the year.’

Delivery of the SEE programme is on a ‘rolling enrolment’ basis. Clients can be referred and begin training at any point during the year and semester.