How we learned to love the FSK

Personal reflections on using the Foundation Skills Training Package in vocational learner support

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Vocational Training at Ballina Campus

- Business Services
- Information Technology
- Nursing
- Community Welfare
- Child Studies
- North Coast Maritime Training Centre
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Retail
- Education, Employment and Support (us)
A history of collaboration -
Personalised learning and employment support initiatives
An evolving process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From tutorial support and individual learning centre to…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry-based support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contextualised support workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team teaching approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-enrolment in ABE and vocational qualifications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your Tutor online</td>
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<td>Aboriginal Teacher Coach</td>
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## Different horses for courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contextualised support services</th>
<th>Courses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Team teaching</td>
<td>IT, Hospitality and Retail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentoring support – phone, Skype</td>
<td>Maritime</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic writing skills</td>
<td>Community Welfare, Nursing and Child Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study groups</td>
<td>Aged Care, Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-enrolment</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
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</table>
More horses…

Whole-of-Campus services
  • Prepare for TAFE study days
  • Employment support – resume writing, work experience

LLN in pathways and partnerships
  • Aged Care skill sets for CALD or Aboriginal learners
  • Hospitality skill sets for youth at risk, CALD learners
  • Get Licensed Get Legal Get Work – Foundation skills for Learner Drivers
  • Introduction to Computers

All this has led to good relationships and recognition of the value of LLN
Embedding learner support in vocational qualifications

Foundation Skills Training Package
- Lends itself to co-enrolment and embedding of Foundation Skills
- Packaging rules of Training Packages allows inclusion of LLN in vocational training

“Smart and Skilled” Changes to NSW 2015
- Prioritises funding of qualifications
- Demand driven – entitlements for learners
- Completions payment structure
- $$$ for Tutorial Support???
Our Experience:
Teaching FSK units within Cert III Business

• 2 FSK units incorporated:
  • FSKWTG09 Write routine workplace texts
  • FSKNUM08 Identify and use whole numbers and simple fractions, decimals and percentages for work
• FSK units counted towards course completion of Cert III Business
• A more seamless delivery
• More financially viable
The students

• Diversity of skills
• Diversity of goals
• Pre-course skills indicators used for information, not exclusion
Certificate III Business Administration

FSKWTG09 → BSBWRT301A

FSKNUM08

BSBITU202A
BSBITU304A

BSBITU307A

Other Business units
Writing

Delivery was built around
- Assessment – using scenarios
- Writing process
- Text types (genres)

Students had to plan, draft, edit, publish 3 texts
1. Accident report
2. Email response to customer enquiry
3. Letter of complaint

Source: Working Women, Women’s Welfare Blog
Stand-alone delivery enabled a systematic approach

- Discussion of purpose, audience, context
- Use of model texts
- Analysis of text features
- Use of templates
- “Writers’ workshop” atmosphere:
  - seeking feedback
  - “critical friends”
  - sharing good writing ideas
  - high level of engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1       | **Writing in context**  
Concepts of audience, purpose, context.  
Range of routine texts in an office environment  
Writing process – PowerPoint presentation.  
Concept of text type - PowerPoint presentation  
- Discussion of text features | **Whole Text**  
1. Purpose, audience – editing activity  
2. Small group text analysis  
3. Tone – memo activity |
| 2       | **Reports**  
Discuss purpose/audience of reports.  
**Assessment Event 1: Accident report**  
• Discuss the scenario  
• Draft, edit and publish an accident report | **Paragraphs**  
1. Purpose, structure  
2. Topic sentences  
3. Sequencing activity |
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<th>Content</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Technology and writing</td>
<td><strong>Sentences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John McWhorter’s TED Talk, “Txting is Killing Language”</td>
<td>1. Correcting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Written/spoken language</td>
<td>• Run-on sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Constraints of email communications with customers</td>
<td>• Subject-verb agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assessment Event 2:</strong></td>
<td>• Correct pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Critique a model email to a customer</td>
<td>2. Discussion: avoiding passives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Draft, edit and publish an email response to a customer enquiry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Writing formal letters</td>
<td><strong>Words</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>View How Cast: How to Write a Letter of Complaint</td>
<td>Proofreading activity:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Characteristics of effective formal letter writing</td>
<td>• Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adequate detail</td>
<td>• Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assessment Event 3:</strong></td>
<td>• Punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Examine 4-paragraph structure, model letter</td>
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Opportunities for

Students
• Addressing individual literacy skills gaps
• Getting immediate feedback
• Collaborative editing strategies – a 21st century workplace skill
• Gaining confidence
• Developing essential knowledge and skills for BSBWTG301A

Teachers
• Teaching good written communication skills – politeness, tone and plain English
• Literacy by stealth
• Dealing with sentence- and word-level issues
• Laying the foundations of good writing practice
• Leaving students with a reference bank
Numeracy

Teacher qualifications in Business AND Numeracy

Teaching program included:
• FSKNUM08 Numeracy
• BSBITU202A and BSBITU304A Excel
• BSBITU307A Typing

Delivery of numeracy was mainly embedded within delivery of Business units

Numeracy assessments were partially integrated into Spreadsheets assessments
Opportunities to...

- Discuss individual numeracy needs during typing sessions
- Give individual students extra practice to develop skills in decimals, fractions and percentages where required
- Make sense of fractions and percentages through application to typing speed accuracy
- Relate the maths behind typing speed calculators to the formulas contained in them
Opportunities to…

• Emphasise estimation skills – do Excel formula results make sense?
• Help students understand “The Why”
• Discuss issues of order of operations when developing formulas for Excel
• Seamlessly slip between numeracy and Excel
• Be on the spot for any unexpected numeracy issues in Excel context
Some Specific Numeracy Activities

- Small session on what is numeracy
- Number talks and times-table drills
- Practice/discussion on how to estimate
- Numeracy in the context of manual ordering, invoicing, paying by cheque and receipting of goods and services, including GST calculations
- Completing tables of common decimals, fractions and percentages and discussing ways of quickly calculating these
Activities (cont)

- Business skills checklist problem-solving activities
- Calculating typing speed and accuracy manually
- Completing simple timesheets and calculating pays (before tax)
- Completing excel activities that calculate wages (before tax)
- Creating till change tables (floats) and tallies, calculating daily profit
- M&M’s activity
M&M’s Activity

- Orange: 10%
- Brown: 10%
- Yellow: 20%
- Green: 10%
- Red: 30%
- Blue: 20%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Orange</th>
<th>Brown</th>
<th>Yellow</th>
<th>Green</th>
<th>Red</th>
<th>Blue</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number in my Bag</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>=SUM(B2:G2)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My %</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Reflections: how we learned to love the FSK

- LLN in context rules!
  - Students are motivated
- The FSK is flexible
- Inclusive, “universal design” philosophy – everyone likes a bit of support
- Students learned it’s OK to make a mistake – results in more opportunities for learning through reflection
More love…

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- LLN are taught by stealth
- Individual LLN weakness can be quickly picked up and addressed
- Positive reflection
Outcomes

Positives

• Very low drop-out rate
• High completion rate
• High satisfaction
• Post-course pathways to further study and employment
• Strong support from Business Head Teacher

Negatives

• Misgivings amongst Business teachers
What of the future?

- Back to co-enrolments
- FSK20113 Certificate II Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways and Certificate III Business Administration
- Vocational teachers delivering FSK Units?