A note on ‘proficiency’
The word ‘proficiency’ in the presentation was taken from terminology used in Stephen Reder’s research. I acknowledge that the questions would have been clearer had they read something like “increases in proficiency in the five core literacy skills”.

I apologise for any confusion or angst I inadvertently caused in my attempt to make the questions more succinct. I assumed there would be a shared understanding of the intention of the questions within the context of the presentation. To assume etc. etc. as the saying goes.

I can see by the outcomes you have described that the conversations you had were fruitful despite this, and hope that you’re able to carry the conversation on as you return to your individual workplaces.

Thank you for attending our presentation.

Ali

Question 1: Is proficiency the most important outcome?
Q: Is proficiency the most important outcome?

* Dependant on individual (what is their needs/goals?)
* Depends on nature of work (TO SEE program it is)
* " " " Cohort
* " " KPI - funding source! Need "hard" outcomes to validate program / tenders / finding ...
* Can disable us from considering other 'proficiencies'
* Must be contextualised (perspective)
* Depends on cultural requirements
  ie: Indigenous communities, need inclusiveness + other skills / alternative from traditional proficiencies.
* Not suitable to apply to some (s)
  * Customer / supplier relationship (DEPT of ED / Jobactives. / RTD)
Proficiency is the most important outcome of our work. People with these skills already exist. It's important to understand how people apply learning to real-world situations. For example, when we talk about growth of the person, what do we mean? Literacy is about what someone can do at any point in time, not just at a certain moment. We need to measure self-management, self-efficacy, and safety. Why not continue self-assessment? How do we measure proficiency? What are we measuring? What is the purpose of the assessment? Are we measuring self-reflection or measurement?
Proficiency is an important outcome and in turn builds confidence.

Confidence 

Learning is holistic

how do you measure?

Proficiency is not the only measure.

It is important for students to experience proficiency and understand success.
Is proficiency the most important outcome of our work?

- Confidence
- Self esteem
- Self belief

Confidence builds perceptions
builds skills.

Confidence leads to sharing.

Empowerment

Question relates to the proficiency and skill of the practitioner.
Proficiency outcome is most important?

Partly for teachers need to take account of learners' needs
Partly for learners initially likely most
Maybe for learners not necessarily later
Learners are diverse no single goal sustainable for all
Yes for funding bodies
Question 2: What other important changes do you see in learners? How do you know?

- Belonging
- Confidence
- Empowerment
- Students more engaged with community
- Trust
- Language barriers LLN + other services

SHORT TERM
- Mental health
- Loss of identity

* How do you know
  - They tell you
  - Own voices
  - Observations
  - Expanding on ideas moving beyond yes & no
  - Body language
  - Share tell real reasons

* Very broad depends on the program. Open up just surviving & tell the story move on -- & aspirations? Long or dependency!
What other important changes do you see in learners?

- They "became" learners.
- They understand how to learn.
- Gaining residency/citizenship... growing confidence.
- Community (strengths), dynamics, further involvement.
- Initiate conversation.
- Barriers are broken down.
- Facilitates engagement.
- Anecdotal records.
- Multi-language conversations (permitting to extend communications & learning).
- Good news stories. Pathways to employment, outcomes, further learning, confidence.
- Empowerment -> personal growth.
- Achievements
- Learning journals, information gleaned from lives external to class.
- Sharing cultural experiences/traditions.
- Strengthened social skills.
- Holistic learning.
Other important changes

- intergenerational benefit
- role model for children
- longer benefit
- employment outcomes??
- social capital
- proficiency
- progress
- confidence
- language outcomes
- learners of little literacy in LP
- English
I. What are the important changes in learners?
   How do you know your learners well?
   Communication, background, beliefs, values, strengths, weaknesses, school experience, self-esteem, confidence, attendance, self-reporting, stories, and more.

II. Personal characteristics
   - Health/hygiene
   - Physical appearance
   - Socially isolated
   - Personal experiences
   - Attitudes about school

III. Observations of learners
   - Small changes in behavior
   - Interpersonal skills
   - Confidence

IV. Physical health
   - RHS swear
   - Shortness of breath
   - Loss of appetite
   - Fatigue

V. Emotional well-being
   - Mood
   - Stress
   - Anger

VI. Social Development
   - Social interactions
   - Rules of the game
   - Social expectations

VII. Mental health
   - Feelings of anxiety
   - Communication
   - Coping strategies

VIII. Violence
   - Domestic violence
   - Harassment
   - Peer support
   - Mental health

IX. Conclusion
   - How do you motivate peer pressure?
   - Can we talk or peer support?
Social networking interaction
See a future and make plans
Responsibility
Body language
Participation in further study
Participation in employment
Engagement with family, friends, community and others along with them
Positive relationships
Risk taking
What other important changes do you see in learners? How do you know?
Quality of work
Question 3: How can we encourage policy-makers to value outcomes other than proficiency?

1. Collect data
   - qualitative
   - "tell the stories"

2. Policy makers as apprentices
   - "1 day in the classroom with the learners every week."
   - #1 redefine proficiency

3. Science biology of learning
   - "Australian Childhood Foundation"
   - measurable KPI
   - Proficiency + other proficiency includes:
     - "literacy practices"
     - "human development"
     - "holistic"
   - the whole person
   - the whole community
   - social skills
   - inter-generational skill transfer
   - "socialization of learning"
How do we encourage policymakers?

Overkill of audit + red tape

different Gilt demands

→ What do we value

Research / Making policy

How do we measure?

→ Other outcomes? Public money with real world performance?

Wrong auditor? Measure risk

Check Papanicolaou / Cheney clarifying

Harmonisation COPA

→ $576 or

Collation between cause - affect

in non-faking achievements

$156 linked to outcomes
How can we encourage policy makers to value outcomes that are not based in proficiency?

* clear message about economic status
* create a story to sell the message that resonates with them.
* Validation: Quantifiable to Re: soft skills.
* Develop the connections between sectors.
* Embed it in the holistic learning.
* Explain the social benefits
  * Employability skills
  * Facts + figures re: reduction in anti-social behaviours, mental health.
  * Statistics / Research results.
* Cross-sectoral approach.
  * Beneficial relationships forged between a wide variety of stakeholders / partnerships.
  * To enrich the dialogue through sharing.

* Strategic ways to have voice heard — lobby / networks.
  * Development of tools to measure social inclusion, participation, to validate / qualify.
* Increase in productivity
* Current minister.
How can we encourage policymakers to value outcomes that are not based in proficiency?

- Barriers to communication
- Research
- Voice of customer
- Through local members + Ministers
- Lobby groups + peak bodies
- Showing an ROI
- Social media

What is proficiency? Proficiency of the total person
Encouraging policy makers to value outcomes other than proficiency.

Feedback to state contract managers.

Whose research counts? Feed research back contacts.
3 most important things for you:

- Funding bodies recognising improvements outside the ACSF
- Proficiency is hard to measure in a reportable manner
- Proficiency and social skills go hand in hand for success
- We need to find ways to capture progress in ‘soft’ skills
- Proficiency does not develop in isolation
- Learning happened when learners feel good about themselves
- We need to encourage policy makers to recognise that all skills are important
- Proficiency is not the only important outcome for learners
- The general agreement that what is happening now is not serving the programs or the students
- Proficiency is not even the most important outcome
- Students come with a variety of needs, of which LLN is only a part
- Benefits are not always seen in the short term
- Need for investment in foundation skills
- Most teachers have the same concerns and issues despite the variance in the student cohort
- Stay positive and keen teaching to the whole person
- Importance of community development/engagement as an outcome, not just employment
- Short termism of funding is killing us!!!
- Small changes in literacy practices can lead to long term proficiency gains
- Self reporting of confidence
- Third party as in ‘my kids said…’ in relation to confidence
- Who makes decisions (policy) and how to influence
- Anxiety issues can impede social skills development. Therefore necessary to focus on managing these
- Learners becoming learners as an important and noticeable change
- Got to cut the red tape! Stop reporting for reporting sake! Understand we do need to be accountable though
- Considering proficiency in terms of the context: i.e., work & employment, learning & study, personal & community
- Vast difference in objectives at a teaching level vs policy ‘makers’ level i.e., purpose, KPIs, goal/focus
- Important to measure ‘progress’, not only final outcome
- Research and evidence is important ongoing
- What priorities? Who sets them?
- Empowerment
- Measuring what learners can do at a given level, including social progress
- Keeping the conversation between providers and government
- The breadth of LLN in its impact both shorter and longer term
- Literacy (ies) is a lifelong activity which is not a single download
- How much intelligence, passion and dedication present in one room!
- Confidence
- How important it is to develop those ‘soft’ skills/proficiencies! So important and valuable
- Pigeon-holing proficiency at the risk of the whole person and outcomes
- Be cautious about creating more metrics. What about trusting teachers’ professional judgements
- Social and identity capital are important outcomes, but do they need to be measured and reported
- Policy makers need to look not just at $ and short term outcomes, but also long term outcomes
• How to measure proficiency
• Sharing story with emotional elements of the story retained is impactful
• High social outcomes as a result of lit/num
• Educators recognise the importance of social skills, this is lost on the way to the top
• More research on qualitative approach
• Need to re-define proficiency to acknowledge social skills
• Policy-makers should come into the classroom once a week
• Value the ‘soft outcomes’ much more
• Need to acknowledge the neuro-biology of learning: social safety, engagement, then LLN
• Discussing how to influence policy
• Hard outcomes still provide soft skills
• The questions are not either-or, they are both-and
• Hearing other points of view
• Recognising different motivations of learners
• Issues surrounding quantifying/measuring improvement ‘soft areas’
• Context
• The funding model is flawed
• Documenting/supporting learners to tell their stories
• Personal growth in individuals
• The idea of promoting the community development model of adult literacy and numeracy
• Soft skills measurement is important
• Social skills and confidence leads to proficiency
• Accepting different definitions of success
• The passion of the sector to deliver and change lives and opportunities
• Flawed funding model driving access to programs
• Qualitative information is important and can be captured
• Need for some measure of engagement with literacy/numeracy activities
• That I’m being asked to use the word ‘proficiency’ to cover only KPI elements from policy makers, but proficiency actually includes social skills and personality development skills.
• Proficiency occurs in all of the human faculties
• Funding compliance – importance of measurable outcomes which are broader than just an increase in ACSF levels
• Proficiency is a holistic concept encompassing: confidence, self belief, motivation, as well as LLN development
• Connecting policy and practice, including the feedback loop
• Defining literacy – what is the context?
• The difficulty in convincing/designing measures that are not red tape burden but still give accountability
• Funding models for different delivery methods and programs
• Directing research to the right place to make an impact
• Holistic achievement measures
• Flawed funding model
• Necessity for some sort of quantifiable data for funding bodies
• Foundation skills – raising community awareness in relation to strategy
• Importance of building confidence
• Flexibility of delivery to reach learners
• Not just proficiency that needs to be measured. ‘Soft outcomes’ are just as important, if not more
• Lobby your local MP
• Diversity
• More money needs to be allocated so that we can implement and practice a framework around developing human and social (‘soft’) proficiency skills among our learners
• Not compromising the dignity of learners by creating more and more ‘measures’