

MEDIA RELEASE

Literacy and numeracy crucial for work readiness

13 May 2015: The modern workplace demands a workforce with increasingly sophisticated skills, higher-level qualifications and the flexibility to undertake retraining. Underpinning these demands is a focus on the foundation skills of language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) and employability skills, a conference in Adelaide will hear tomorrow.

Delegates from across the vocational education and training (VET) sector will gather at the fourth annual National Adult Language, Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Conference, hosted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), to share insights and address a range of crucial issues surrounding adult and youth literacy and numeracy assessment, teaching and learning.

Speaking ahead of the conference, ACER Chief Executive, Professor Geoff Masters AO, said reforming educational assessment is crucial if we are to equip young people and adults in the VET sector for the future.

“Good assessment identifies the points that learners – individually or as groups – have reached in their learning, whether LLN skills, specific vocational skills or employability skills such as leadership, teamwork and critical thinking skills, so that educators, trainers and learners together can determine the best next steps to take to ensure progress in learning,” Professor Masters said.

“One of the key issues in the VET sector is how best to enable educators, trainers and learners to undertake assessments that are comprehensive, valid and fair, and that assist learners in developing their work readiness.”

David Tout, Senior Research Fellow and Manager of Vocational, Adult and Workplace Education Services at ACER, will run a session on why there is an urgent need to improve youth and adults’ skills in numeracy, and to address and enhance the teaching and learning of maths and numeracy in the VET sector.

“Quality assessments are critical if we are to support the successful teaching and learning of foundation skills, but a focus on numeracy skills is hugely important since research is showing that numeracy is a key indicator of economic success and productivity,” Mr Tout said ahead of the conference.

Addressing employability skills and work readiness, Kate Perkins, a Senior Research Fellow at ACER, will run a workshop and sessions on evidence-based models and tools that have the potential to support young people to develop the work ready skills and knowledge they need to make their entry into employment a positive and valued experience.

ACER Senior Research Fellow, Justin Brown, and the Australian Industry Group’s Policy and Project Manager, Michael Taylor, will report on research that estimates the returns to employers from their investment in workplace literacy training.

The fourth National Adult Language, Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Conference takes place at the National Wine Centre, Adelaide, on Thursday 14 and Friday 15 May 2014. More details are available at <http://www.acer.edu.au/nallnac>

Mr David Tout is available for comment.

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