

G5 Learnings from 10 years of LLNP

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Mission Australia has now delivered the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) in Tasmania for 10 years. There has been a lot of hard work and learning and a huge amount of passion and commitment demonstrated by our staff over the last 10 years. We have all learnt that overcoming challenges produces 'perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.' There has been fulfilment and celebration as we have moved from no students and 4 staff to 210 students, 24 staff and many volunteers. Mission Australia, Tasmania has had 622 people in training since July 2010 and 75% of those people who have completed training have increased their skills across two learning areas.

What are MA's key learnings over the last 10 years that could improve LLN delivery in the future?

Referrals -Our experience has been that clients with easily identifiable low ACSF levels are referred; these include language clients and those difficult to engage. Many people are not referred even though there has been a lot of marketing and education of the changing staff at JSAs. Some of you may have already heard me tell of the joy I feel when I go through the Launceston airport and get checked in by a former student, Australian born, who came to LLNP for a short time to improve his spelling so he could change his vocational aims, then I get checked through security by a refugee student, who increased his English skills and persisted over a longer period until he was able to get work. That is what LLNP is all about. It is a progressive pathway that is capable of changing people's lives. However, often those who can benefit quickly from LLNP and move into work are not referred. Language clients and those with easily identifiable barriers to getting into work are referred. Those people who are articulate and have 'smaller' perceived needs are referred less often.

Overcoming barriers to learning

In our experience this referral pattern has meant that there are many barriers to overcome as well as the literacy and numeracy learning.

LLNP is at its most effective when the JSA and the LLN provider's work together to connect people with other support services such as different LLN services, AOD, homelessness, mental health, youth support, optometrists...

Recently, a client was not recommended for training. His JSA has now put in place mental health support through Headspace, arranged for other medical appointments to be put in place and the client has been re-referred to LLNP. After one client had been in class for some time his teacher identified that he needed glasses. He went off to the optometrist and then began progressing really well,

though was somewhat frustrated that this had not been discovered while he was at school!

Engaging clients – As well as overcoming barriers engaging relationships and training are important. I love to visit our U-Turn program. U-Turn aims to break the cycle of motor cycle theft by engaging participants in 'hands on' mechanical training while addressing life-skills and personal development issues. Several years ago we completed an innovative project there. Participants have the chance to engage in a really practical way fixing up cars to give to victims of crime. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed along with spray painting and mechanical skills, with anger management, AOD... This is a group of guys who just would not be turning up regularly in an LLNP class.

Community links – *value of local reference groups.* Recently, in Burnie the community has begun a process of working together across LLN providers in a much more holistic way. Key stakeholders in the Burnie area (LINC Tasmania, Tasmanian Polytechnic, Centrelink and Mission Australia) are undertaking a project to coordinate assessment, connect stakeholders, the community and individuals to language, literacy and numeracy or other training providers. The project will also work to educate health, housing, employment or utilities services staff about LLN strategies they could use in their settings, or about what services may be able to help their clients.

So, over 10 years some of the key learnings from the LLN Program have been the need to broaden referrals, to engage clients creatively, to assist clients to overcome life and learning barriers, and the benefits of building strong links within the community.

To determine whether Mission Australia's learning is shared experience or not participants moved into discussion groups to answer the following questions.

The notes that were recorded on paper do not reflect the breadth of discussions, or suggested answers to the questions, but have been added for your information.

Referral questions -

Should LLN assessment/referral be broadened across the community to other client groups who do not currently access LLNP? If so, how? If not, why not?

Options for attracting referrals identified

- *'First Gear course, basic computers, Genealogy...*

Engaging client's questions

What does good practice for engaging clients look like? Is it the same for a different ranges of client groups? If so, how? If not, why not?

Discussion identified different groups

- *Close to retirement*
- *Retrenched*
- *Workers compensation*
- *Migrants/refugees*
- *Young, easily disengaged*
- *Early school leavers*
- *Indigenous jobseekers*

Overcoming barriers to learning

Should it be the JSA and/or the LLN provider's job to connect people with other support services such as different LLN services, AOD, homelessness, mental health, youth support, optometrists...? If so, how can this be done most effectively? If not, why not, and who should do it?

Obstacles to learning identified

- *Health issues – physical, mental*
- *Family pressures*
- *Peer pressure*
- *For teachers and coordinators – the focus on assessment and on-going monitoring*

Community links questions

Should links between providers of LLN services and local communities (ACE, LLNP, TAFES, JSAs...) be stronger and more effective? If so, how? If not, why not?

- *Forge partnerships – include art galleries, community gardens...*
- *Eligibility criteria- advertising, promotion*
- *Who does the work?*
- *Capacity- assessment – how do we ensure appropriate referral?*
- *Networking – state/national – barriers brought about by revenue competition, lack of professional sharing*
- *Service mapping – Reading, Writing Hotline (national), state? Tasmania; launching network 24th October, 2012*