

Training when English is not the first language



How to make training clearer for culturally and linguistically diverse learners

Common challenge:

Some learners appear to follow along, but they may miss key meanings, safety language, or task details.

What good looks like:

More learners can understand, demonstrate and apply the required standard safely and consistently.

What to do:

1. Use plain language. Reduce slang, vague phrases and long explanations. Say exactly what the worker needs to do.
2. Show as well as tell. Use demonstrations, equipment, diagrams, examples and step-by-step sequencing.
3. Check understanding properly. Ask learners to show the step, explain it back or point out the hazards and controls.
4. Respect ability. A learner can have strong technical skills but still need support with language.

Try this in your next session:

- Break instructions into short chunks. Pause between steps and check before moving on.
- Use the same keywords consistently. This builds familiarity and reduces confusion.

Watch for:

- Only asking "Do you understand?" Most people will say yes. But this does not prove what they know. Nor does it identify any gaps in their understanding.
- Lowering the standard. Make the training clearer, not easier.

Learn more about the Trainer and Assessor VET Career Framework

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