**WORKPLACE LEARNING**

**(ADWPL)**

**Authority-developed endorsed program**

**Skills Journal**

**Teacher’s Guide**

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# Introduction

This document has been created to enable teachers to assist students to answer the questions from the *Workplace Learning Skills Journal*. It includes focus questions, sample responses, literacy strategies, key words, key concepts and examples of scaffolding.

The *Skills Journal* is an essential part of the Authority-developed Workplace Learning (ADWPL) endorsed program. It must be completed and submitted to the school’s Workplace Learning Coordinator for assessment after each 55 hours completed in the workplace.

The *Skills Journal* is designed to help the student gain additional benefit from the time spent in the workplace. It encourages the student to talk to the people he/she is working with about what the job involves, entry requirements and the advantages and disadvantages of working in the industry.

In the journal, the student is required to provide specific examples to demonstrate his/her application of a range of work skills, knowledge and understandings. The questions in the journal are based on the core skills for work.

## Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework

The core skills for work are a set of non-technical skills, knowledge and understandings that underpin successful participation in work. These skills are documented in the *Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework,* developed collaboratively by the Department of Industry and the Department of Education. <https://www.education.gov.au/core-skills-work-developmental-framework>.

### Skill Clusters

These skills are described in three Skill Clusters:

1. Navigate the world of work
2. Interact with others
3. Get the work done.

**Skill Areas**

Within the three Skill Clusters are ten Skill Areas, which are a combination of:

* knowledge – what someone knows about in a theoretical sense
* understanding – how they link it to their personal experience
* skills – how they put their knowledge and understanding into practice in work settings.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Skill Clusters** | **Skill Areas** |
| 1. **Navigate the world of work** | 1. Manage career and work life 2. Work with roles, rights and protocols |
| 1. **Interact with others** | 1. Communicate for work 2. Connect and work with others 3. Recognise and utilise diverse perspectives |
| 1. **Get the work done** | 1. Plan and organise 2. Make decisions 3. Identify and solve problems 4. Create and innovate 5. Work in a digital world |

### Stages of performance

These skills are relevant to all those undertaking work, not just those entering the workforce for the first time, and can be developed across the span of an individual’s working life. As such, *The Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework* describes performance in each of the Skill Areas in five stages from ‘Novice’ through to ‘Expert’. (Refer to page 7 of *The Framework* for descriptions of stages of performance.)

### Completion requirements

To complete the *Skills Journal*, students must respond to ten questions, one from each of the ten Skill Areas, after each 55 hours completed in the workplace.

### About the questions

A number of questions have been developed for each Skill Area to allow students to choose a question most relevant to their work setting. Questions of particular relevance to students undertaking a VET qualification are indicated, although there is no compulsion for students to select these questions.

Students can respond to a different question from each Skill Area after their second and subsequent 55 hours completed in the workplace, although at least some of the questions can be repeated, as they may elicit a very different response in a new work setting.

The questions can be selected by the student, the school or the Workplace Learning cluster. They can be scaffolded, paraphrased, broken into parts or similarly amended to suit the literacy and comprehension capacity of the student. Examples are provided in this guide.

The journal entries can be handwritten, typed or scribed.

### *Skills Journal* format

Schools can decide on the most appropriate format for their *Skills Journal*. It can be in print or in digital form. It can be a separate document or combined with the *Workplace Learning Logbook*.

### Standard of response

It is expected that the student will make a reasonable attempt to respond to each of the ten questions chosen, to the level of his/her ability. The workplace learning teacher/coordinator will determine what qualifies as an acceptable response. It may differ from student to student. The length and format of the response will depend on the question as well as the student’s ability.

Typically, a student with a high level of literacy could be expected to write a response of about 175–250 words; a student with a reasonable level of literacy could answer most questions in about 100–150 words; a student with a low level of literacy should aim for 75 words per response and a student with a very low level of literacy may use dot points, insert words or tick boxes. These are guides only as a student may waffle without answering the question, or alternatively, be able to respond quite succinctly in fewer words.

A student with special educational needs may be assisted to reflect on his/her work placement and respond to the questions in a manner suitable to his/her abilities. This may include responding orally, using symbols or pictures or selecting from a limited range of words or photographs. Some examples of scaffolded questions are provided in this guide.

## Skill Area definitions and key terms and concepts

To respond to the questions in the *Skills Journal*, it is necessary to define the Skills Area and understand the key terms and concepts of each. These are described on the following pages.

For each Skill Area, a set of leading questions has been developed to prompt the student to think about some of the points that could be included in the response. These questions do not require a written response, but are provided to guide the thinking and shaping of a written response to the question.

### Sample responses

Following each set of leading questions are a few sample answers that may help students to frame a response or assist teachers to determine a suitable standard of response.

Students should be encouraged to discuss the questions with peers, parents, workplace supervisors, trainers or workplace learning teachers as much benefit can be gained from sharing this kind of information and experience.

Many of the questions require a response to be written in one or two paragraphs. This information on how to write a paragraph may assist students to keep their response relevant and succinct.

### How to write a paragraph

A paragraph presents ONE idea. It usually contains several sentences. Some of the sentences have different functions:

1. The topic sentence explains generally what the paragraph is about.

2. Developing sentence(s) expand/clarify the idea expressed in the topic sentence.

3. Supporting sentence(s) support the idea through examples, facts, figures, reasoned argument and anecdotes.

4. The concluding sentence ‘wraps up’ the idea of the paragraph, or can introduce the idea of the next paragraph.

### STAR, SAO or CAR responses

If the question asks the student to respond with an example from the workplace experience, it may be useful for the student to use the **STAR** (**S**ituation or **T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esult), **SAO** (**S**ituation, **A**ction, **O**utcome) or the **CAR** (**C**ontext, **A**ction, **R**esult) technique; for example:

*Question*: Give an example of when you have dealt with an upset customer.

*Response*:

(**S**ituation) I work at IGA in Moora. Occasionally there are customers who are not satisfied with a product or, in some cases, the service. On one occasion a customer was served by another staff member and had left the shop. Around 10 minutes later, the customer came back to the shop. I attended to her; however, I could see she was very angry. I asked if I could help her and in a raised tone she said she had been overcharged by $40 and demanded that it was corrected this minute.

(**A**ction) I acted quickly, as I could see she was very irritated. I assured her that I would arrange a refund immediately and that I needed to call my supervisor, as this was the procedure for handling complaints. I spoke calmly and smiled. I called my supervisor and explained the situation. My supervisor then took over.

(**O**utcome) My supervisor checked the docket out, saw the mistake and corrected it and the customer left the store happy. My supervisor thanked me for acting so promptly and in a friendly manner.

### Spelling, punctuation and grammar

The completion of the *Skills Journal* questions provides a valuable opportunity for the teaching of literacy skills and it is expected that students will aim for correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. It is suggested that students are provided with the list of frequently used workplace words for quick reference while writing or proofing and editing their responses. The list could be contextualised for specific industries and added to as common spelling errors are noted. The vocabulary list could be included in the *Skills Journal* or displayed on a classroom wall.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Office, Business and Workplace Vocabulary Word List** |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A**  accountant accounting accounts ads advertise affordable agenda agreement  **B**  benefits bill of lading board board of directors bonus bookkeeping borrow boss bottom line break even briefcase budget business buy buyer  **C**  calculate capital career cargo chairman chairwoman charge clause client close cold call commerce commercial commission company competition compromise consumer contract copyright corporate cost corner office credit cubicle customer | **D**  database deadline deal debit demand department discount director dismiss distribution diversify download duty duties  **E**  economical economics economy of scale efficiency employ employee employer employment entrepreneur equipment estimate expenses export  **F**  facility factory finance financial fire foreman framework freight fund  **G**  goods graph gross growth guidebook  **H**  headquarters high hire hours | **I**  import incentive income inflation insurance intern interest rate interview inventory investment invoice  **J**  journal  **L**  labour labourer laptop lead lease leave letterhead liability loan  logbook log-in  lose  last  **M**  mailbox manage manager management market marketing meeting memo merchandise merchant money monopoly motherboard mouse pad  **N**  negotiate negotiation network niche notebook notice | **O**  occupation offer office offline opportunity order organisation online owner  **P**  packing list partner password payment paid personnel policy portfolio position presentation president price principal product production profit profitable promotion proposal prospects purchase order purchasing  **Q**  Quarter  quickly quit  **R**  rank receipt  recent recruit recruiter refund  regional resign résumé retail retailer retire risk | **S**  salary salesman sales tax saleswoman secretary seller service shareholder shipment shipping sick leave sign signature spreadsheet staff statement stock strike success supervisor supply  **T**  target tariff terms trade trade-off trainee transaction  **U**  upgrade upload unemployment union unit cost username  **V**  vacancy venture video conference volume  **W**  warranty wholesale win-win withdraw worker workroom workspace |

**Commonly misspelled or misused words**

**There** – as in ‘over there’

**Their** – belonging to them

**They’re** – short for ‘they are’

**Hear** – with your ear

**Here** – come here

**Where** is it?

**Wear** a hat

**We’re** – short for ‘we are’

**Your** – belonging to you, e.g. Put your hat on.

**You’re** – short for ‘you are’, e.g. If you’re working on …

**To** – to give it to someone

**Two** – 2

**Too** – also (You can come too.) or too big/small etc.

**Of** –one of two (sounds like ‘ov’)

**Off** –take your hat off (sounds like ‘fluff’)

A list of **sight words** (ones that cannot be easily sounded out and need to be recognised on sight) and   
**high frequency words** (ones that occur very often in reading and writing) that might help students with very low levels of literacy can be downloaded from the internet by following this link: <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/eppcontent/glossary/app/resource/factsheet/4109.pdf>

# Skill Cluster 1: Navigate the World of Work

## Skill Area 1(a) – Manage career and work life

### Definition

This Skill Area is about managing decisions throughout life about how, when and where to work. It involves the capacity to identify work and career options, to gain work or career advancement, and to undertake learning appropriate to work needs and goals.

### Key terms and concepts

*Work* – is activity involving mental and/or physical effort that is directed towards a specific purpose.

*Work options* – may relate to particular industries, fields or occupations, may be paid or unpaid and may be conducted under any type of work arrangement, including self-employment, casual, part-or full-time employment, flexible or remote.

*Work life* – refers to decisions regarding the conditions under which a person works, such as role, responsibilities, hours, remuneration and other benefits, location and travel. A person’s range of choices may be enhanced or restricted at any point in time by a range of factors.

*Career* – is the sequence and variety of occupations, including paid and unpaid work, which a person undertakes throughout a lifetime. Traditionally, the term was associated with paid employment and was likely to refer to a single occupation. However, now the term ‘career’ is seen as a continuous lifelong process involving work choices and associated learning that may cross occupations and draw on skills and knowledge developed in paid or voluntary work, or through family and community involvement and leisure activities.

*Career development* – is an explicit process involving the decisions individuals make as they attempt to shape their work lives. It is a unique process for each individual, involving choices about occupations, roles, tasks and associated learning, sometimes with a specific goal in mind, and other times in response to unpredicted, unplanned events or chance encounters. It may involve the traditional concept of moving ‘up’ through a hierarchy of better paid and/or influential roles, but also decisions about which tasks to take on within a role or whether to move ‘sideways’ or ‘down’ in order to satisfy personal interests and needs, gain experience and develop or demonstrate expertise.

*Factors influencing career and work life decisions* – may include personal interests, values, goals and expectations, occupational or organisational goals, requirements and expectations, family, culture, community, school, socioeconomic circumstances, geographic location, the labour market, task or organisational arrangements, such as child care availability, work from home options.

*Techniques/strategies for seeking and applying for work* – might include verbal or written enquiries, monitoring job vacancies and industry developments, accessing online job sites, approaching employment agencies, using written applications, completing job interviews, creating a professional online profile, establishing and using contacts and networks, using formal online channels, such as professional networking sites, and informal channels, such as social media sites and blogs.

*Learning* – includes all types of formal, non-formal and informal learning relevant to gaining, keeping and improving performance in a job. It includes structured education and training, on-the-job learning, such as mentoring and job rotations, learning that occurs through reading, observation, practice and reflection within a work context or in non-work settings, such as engagement in volunteer organisations and community activities.

*Industry areas used in the Australian census* –Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; Mining; Manufacturing; Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services; Construction; Wholesale Trade; Retail Trade; Accommodation and Food Services; Transport, Postal and Warehousing; Information Media and Telecommunications; Financial and Insurance Services; Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Administrative and Support Services; Public Administration and Safety; Education and Training; Health Care and Social Assistance; Hairdressing and Beauty Services; Arts and Recreation Services; Other.

*Attribute* – personal quality or characteristic, such as to be a good problem solver, punctual, able to get along with others and communicate clearly. It includes physical attributes, such as strength, stamina and flexibility.

### Unpacking the questions

1. What industry is the employer part of (e.g. retail, construction, hospitality, financial etc.) and has your experience in this workplace confirmed your wish to work in this industry area? Why/why not?

### Leading questions

To answer Question 1, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Where did you work?
* What best describes the business of your employer?
* What are the main goods produced or main services provided by your employer’s business?
* How are these businesses grouped/categorised?
* What are the different categories known as?
* Does the workplace you have been at fall into one of these?
* Which one?
* Did you enjoy being in this workplace?
* What did you like doing?
* What didn’t you like doing?
* Was the work challenging?
* Did you have the skills needed to do the job?
* What was easy?
* What was difficult or too hard?
* Did you feel comfortable with the people you were working with?
* Did the employees seem happy, satisfied, enjoy their work?
* Could you see yourself working here after leaving school?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

I’ve just finished working at ‘Cut, Curl and Create’ in the city. Hairdressing salons are part of the Hairdressing and Beauty Services industry. I loved every part of this work experience, even though there were many jobs I wasn’t able or allowed to do yet. I did quite a lot of sweeping and cleaning and coffee-making for clients, but these tasks were enjoyable because I worked with such a funny group of girls. They definitely made it a lot easier for me to feel comfortable while helping out in their salon. The boss invited me to work on Saturday mornings as well, which was very helpful in giving me some extra learning time. The experience has helped me to decide that hairdressing is definitely the job for me because I am a ‘people person’ and loved the interaction with both the clients and the salon ladies. I can’t wait to learn how to cut and colour hair and be really creative doing something I really enjoy.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

My last work placement was at ‘Cut, Curl and Create’ hairdressing salon. It is part of the Hairdressing and Beauty Services industry. I loved working here because I have always loved doing people’s hair and I got the chance to make people happy and feel good about themselves. I wasn’t actually allowed to do many of the hands-on jobs with the clients, but I learned a lot from watching and felt that I was part of the team because I made clients’ coffee and swept around them and had a lot of fun chatting to the clients and the other girls in the salon. This was a happy workplace and it has definitely confirmed my wish to work in this industry.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

Employer: Cut, Curl and Create.

Industry area: Hairdressing and Beauty Services

Some of the jobs were a bit boring but the girls in the salon made it good fun. I think I would like to be a hairdresser. I liked talking to the clients and washing their hair. I would like to learn how to cut hair and make people feel great.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

I worked at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

This workplace is part of the (Construction, Hairdressing and Beauty Services, Agriculture) industry.

I loved/liked/didn’t like/hated this work placement. I do/do not want to be a hairdresser because:

□ I like talking and having fun with the other girls □ I like silence □ I like being inside

□ I like being outside □ I like doing people’s hair □ I don’t like touching people.

**Alternatively** (Scribed by a social trainer)

I liked being at Cut, Curl and Create. I have seen lots of other hairdressing salons but I liked working at this one. The girls made me laugh. They helped me do jobs like sweep the floor and showed me how to make the coffee. I would like to be a hairdresser but I think it will take a long time to learn how to cut hair.

1. Identify a job role in this workplace that interests you. What attracts you to this area/position and what educational level, qualifications and/or experience would you need to be considered for this job?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 2, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Did everyone in this workplace do the same things?
* What were some of the different tasks that were done?
* Were they done by different people?
* Did people work alone or in teams?
* Did all the jobs require the same skills?
* What job did you do or help with?
* Were you good at it?
* Did you enjoy it?
* Were other people doing things you would have preferred to do?
* What training, experiences or education would you need to work here?
* Could you apply straight from school?
* Do you have to finish Year 11 or 12 to be considered for a job here?
* Would you need to apply for an apprenticeship?
* Do they offer a traineeship?
* Do you have to get a qualification?
* Do you have to go to university?
* What are the entry-level positions for this workplace?
* How far can you go in this workplace?
* Could you see yourself as boss one day?
* How would you get there?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

The job role that interested me most during my work placement at ‘Cut, Curl and Create’ was that of the colour specialist, Bec. She has been working in this area for 14 years and is really skilled. Bec has been on several training courses to build her expertise – even going to Sydney to learn the latest colouring techniques from Pierre Scholle. She explained that colouring hair is such a sophisticated field now and involves an in-depth knowledge of hair structure and types and chemistry. (I didn’t realise my Chemistry classes would come in so handy as a hairdresser!) I was fascinated by the end results – always loved by the clients. You can’t just walk into this job. Firstly you have to train as an apprentice hairdresser and gain some expertise in all areas of hairdressing – cutting, perming etc. Even after you have finished your apprenticeship, you have to commit to working as a general hairdresser for a number of years to build your experience in working with hair of all types and colours. Over time and with additional training courses, you become better skilled in all areas and can specialise in colouring hair. Many of the companies that supply the hair dyes offer training courses and I would be open to this kind of ongoing learning.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

There were four of us in the salon on Wednesdays when I was on work placement. The receptionist was new and mostly answered the phone and booked appointments. I think her job would get very boring and I might get cross with the clients who wanted to keep changing their appointments. There were two ladies cutting hair and a colour specialist. She was also the salon manager and kept an eye on what everyone else was doing. She had been in the salon the longest and seemed to love her job. I think I would like her job best. She knew heaps about colouring hair and had done lots of courses even after she had become a fully qualified hairdresser. I will have to finish Year 12 and get an apprenticeship with a salon and keep doing courses to learn more about colouring techniques.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

All the people at Cut, Curl and Create did different things. One girl booked people in for appointments. Two ladies cut hair and the boss did most of the hair colouring. I would like her job because everyone loved what she did. That would make me feel good. It will take ages to learn everything you need to know. You have to be a hairdresser first.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

Select the photograph (or draw a picture) that shows you doing your favourite salon task. Tell your teacher why you liked this job best. (Teacher or assistant scribes answer.)

1. What was the highlight of this work placement? Is this the type of job for you? Explain your answer.

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 3, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Did you look forward to workplace learning days?
* Who did you feel most comfortable with?
* Who helped you the most?
* Who did you go to if you had a problem?
* Did you like working on your own or with others?
* What did you hate doing? Why?
* Did you like working inside or out?
* Did the noise level bother you?
* Did anyone give you praise or make you feel important?
* Did you feel fit/strong enough for this workplace?
* Did you sit or stand mostly?
* Did you stay in one place or travel to jobs?
* Did you have to talk to customer or clients?
* Did you get to see the end product or results of your work?
* How did that make you feel?
* Was there a strict hierarchy and division of jobs/tasks?
* Was the workplace culture formal or casual?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

It was difficult to choose just one highlight from my work placement at ‘Cut, Curl and Create’ hairdressing salon because I enjoyed the whole experience. However, I think I would have to say the thing I loved most about the placement was feeling part of the whole business. The atmosphere was extremely relaxed and there was a great deal of joking and banter among the salon girls as well as the clients. Most clients were regulars and so ‘work’ was very social. Before this work placement, I had always thought of work as serious business. It was quite a surprise to find that work could be so much fun. Of course, it was always important to do whatever task was given to you to the best of your ability, which is what we all did, but I know now that I definitely want to work in a fun, social environment. The relationships that I built with the salon girls over the two school terms that I was there was the highlight of this work placement.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

The highlight would have to be working with such nice people. I had so much fun with the girls while we did our jobs. I like working with others. I also like the music and lively feel of the place, though we always argued about which music to play. Sometimes the clients would too! Most of the salon girls were quite young – only a few years older than me so we all got along really well. I would definitely need a job where there was noise and chatter and everyone working together.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

The best part of my work was getting along well with the other girls. It was fun and noisy and busy. I liked that. Everyone was happy to help me. I liked it better than school where you have to be quiet and sit down all the time. Sometimes I had to go out and get coffees and things. It felt good to be trusted and part of the group.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy completed with assistance)

Being at work made me feel: ☺ ☹ (circle one)

The person I liked best was: (Select from a series of photos of workplace personnel)

Scribed reason: ‘Because she always helped me.’

The job I liked best was: (Select from a series of photos of student doing different jobs in the workplace)

Scribed reason: ‘Because I knew what to do and was good at it.’

1. What personal attributes and skills are best for this type of work and what advice would you give to other students considering working in this industry?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 4, a student could ask herself, or be asked:

* Did you have the physical strength, stamina and flexibility to do the job?
* Could you concentrate for long enough?
* Were you confident to talk to other workers?
* Did you get to work on time?
* Did you finish the job and put everything away after the job was finished?
* Did you ask lots of questions about the job?
* Did you know enough to carry out the tasks you were given?
* Did you know how to use the tools?
* Did you follow all safety rules?
* Did you help others when you could?
* Did you have to work inside or out or both?
* Did you have to start work early or finish late?
* Were the people you worked with male or female?
* How old were the people you worked with?
* Did they all speak English?
* Was it a clean or dirty workplace?
* Was there a lot of stress and pressure to finish jobs quickly?
* Were there any dangers associated with the job?
* Was there any conflict between workers or workers and clients/customers?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

Working in a hairdressing salon is not for everyone. It requires a person to be on their feet for at least   
8 hours, so anyone with back or knee problems wouldn’t be suited to this job. Physical strength is not so important, but you have to be reasonably fit. As there is so much contact and interaction with clients, only people who like people would like this job. Because clients are scheduled closely throughout the day, punctuality and reliability are important attributes for this industry.

Hairdressing is a service industry and so it suits people who get a buzz out of serving others and making them feel good about themselves. Most of the skills needed in hairdressing are learned on the job, but some of them are soft skills, such as communication. An ability to communicate with people of all ages and cultures and different temperaments is really important. An ability to work in a team is also really important. Tolerance of others and sensitivity to a client’s needs are also useful attributes to have if you want to be a hairdresser.

I would advise students wishing to go into this industry to get as much work experience in a range of salons as they can and choose a salon where they know they get along with the workers to seek an apprenticeship after finishing Year 12. I think the relationship with those around you is one of the most important aspects of work.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

Being able to work as part of a team and communicate well with lots of different people I would say are the most important attributes to have for hairdressing. I think it is important to be fashion conscious and up with the latest hairstyles and the way famous people are wearing their hair. You also have to be physically fit because you have to stand up all day and be on the go for many hours. People who work in hairdressing salons need to be on time and be able to work with lots of people in a fairly small space. That means you have to be fairly tolerant. Hairdressing might suit someone with children as it is the kind of job that you can leave and come back to or work part-time in.

The advice I would give other students who are thinking about hairdressing as a career would be to try out several different hairdressing places and ask lots of questions of the people in the industry.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

To be a hairdresser you have to like people and fashion and standing for a long time. It wouldn’t suit people who like to work outside. Most hairdressing salons I have seen are quite small so you would have to be able to get along well with other people. I would tell students that it is a good job for people who like people working inside with others.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

To work in a hairdressing salon, a person must be: (Student selects from pictures depicting various attributes, such as punctual/late; friendly/grumpy; safe/unsafe; fit/unfit; inside/outside; stand/sit; clean/dirty; daytime/nighttime; honest/dishonest etc.)

Circle the picture that best describes how you feel about hairdressing as a job for your future.

 [](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=Emoji+Sad+Face&view=detailv2&&id=7D8B7BADA4C2B482D708F055D8CF4E9D3E580ECC&selectedIndex=25&ccid=AeY7Pbaa&simid=608054785998195848&thid=OIP.M01e63b3db69a0588553e681b820022cfo0) [](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=Emoji+Sad+Face&view=detailv2&&id=6FFA03FE4954097490F1FCDF16B04B996813117D&selectedIndex=54&ccid=XM9Bq2CF&simid=608007562835001684&thid=OIP.M5ccf41ab608510a55a2fcc7a0e74b94aH1) [](http://www.google.com.au/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjo9-es5LLKAhXCXBQKHcnsAuQQjRwIBw&url=http://observer.com/2014/11/what-is-the-plural-of-emoji/&psig=AFQjCNH2GxD0L_uudc-QZdGHM9oYAzNlkA&ust=1453186668754685)

1. \* How has your work placement, combined with your industry qualification in the [INSERT INDUSTRY] industry, made your career path clearer?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 5, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What qualification/s are you working towards/have attained?
* What units of competency have you attained?
* Which units of competency were mandatory and what electives did you choose?
* Where have you done your work placement/s?
* If more than one, how were the work environments similar/different?
* How many hours have you worked in the hairdressing industry?
* What other experiences have you had of this industry?
* Have you done any paid work in this kind of workplace?
* What were all the jobs or tasks you either observed or assisted with?
* How many people worked in the salon?
* Was there a hierarchy of staff?
* Who was the boss and how did they become one?
* Were there any apprentices?
* If so, were they enjoying the learning experience?
* Did you talk to any of the staff about their career path to that point?
* Did you get any surprises
* How happy were the employees?
* What did they like or dislike about their roles?
* What did you like or dislike about the work setting?
* Where can you find information about the entry-level requirements for this industry?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

Over the last two years I have completed Certificate II in Hairdressing, achieving 13 units of competency. For electives, I chose the units that I thought were the most interesting, like ‘Apply hair colour products’. I have worked in three different salons so far for a total of 237 hours, and I especially loved watching the colouring process. The work placements have given me the chance to put into practice what I have learned in theory. I have learned a lot about the kind of jobs and roles carried out in a variety of hairdressing salons by watching carefully and talking to the staff. I now know that there is a lot more to this industry than just cutting hair. The unit of competency on conducting financial transactions was something I had never thought about when I was considering doing hairdressing as a career. I am so glad I have had so much time in hairdressing salons because now I am sure this is the career path I want to follow – even though some parts of the job are less exciting than others. Now that I have got my Cert II in Hairdressing, I am keen to do an apprenticeship in Hairdressing and get my Cert III. I think I have a head start on other school leavers.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

I’ve done my Cert II in Hairdressing and worked in three different salons over Years 11 and 12. I did a total of 237 hours which will look good on my WASSA for future employment opportunities. It was good to be able to use examples from the workplace when I was working on the theory parts of the units of competency. I wasn’t certain that I wanted to be a hairdresser when I first started WPL, but I am now. I know I have the ability to complete the work for a Cert II and I want to now do my Cert III. The boss of the salon where I did my last placement has offered me some part time work on Saturday mornings so I am hoping that will turn into an apprenticeship next year.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

In Year 11 and 12 I worked at three different hairdressing salons and loved it. I did a Cert II in Hairdressing. The written stuff was hard but I liked the work in the salons. I didn’t know if I wanted to be a hairdresser and now I know that I do, but I know it will be hard work.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy – scribed response)

‘I liked going to work at the hairdressers every Wednesday. I saw people washing ladies’ hair and cutting it and blow drying it. I liked helping by sweeping the hair up and making sure there were clean towels in the cupboard. I would like to work in a hairdresser’s salon again next year.’

## Skill Area 1(b) – Work with roles, rights and protocols

### Definition

This Skill Area is about understanding work roles and workplace rights and expectations. It involves the capacity to identify and manage responsibilities, recognise and respond to legal rights and responsibilities, and to recognise and respond to expectations and accepted practices of work situations.

### Key terms and concepts

*Role* – refers not only to a group of tasks and responsibilities related to a particular position in a work situation, but also the sense of purpose and patterns of behaviour that a person brings to it. For example, a person might have a job description that stipulates that they are responsible for a series of tasks, but they may also see themselves as playing a leadership role, which involves behaving in certain ways.

*Responsibilities* – refers to the duties associated with a work role and the degree of autonomy to determine what is done, with whom, by when and by what means.

*Legal rights and responsibilities* – as stipulated in legislation and regulations related to conditions of employment, equal opportunity and discrimination, safe work practices etc.

*Protocols* – the rules, procedures, common practices or expectations governing behaviour in a work situation. Protocols may be explicit, such as those detailed in policy and procedure manuals, or implicit, such those arising from the cultures and customs of different work contexts.

*Sources of support* – may include supervisors, peers, work colleagues, policy and procedure manuals, training and development activities, online and external information sources, external expertise and networks.

*Boundaries* – how far you are allowed to go or the limit of what you are allowed to do.

*Conditions of employment* –that part of an employment that sets out the duties, responsibilities, hours of work, salary, leave and other privileges to be enjoyed by persons employed. Most professional organisations provide a proforma of such an agreement.

### Unpacking the questions

1. Describe the main tasks, responsibilities and boundaries of your role in this workplace.

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 1, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Where did you work?
* What best describes the business of your employer?
* How many people worked there?
* Did they all do the same tasks? Did they have different responsibilities?
* Were the roles and responsibilities grouped in some way? e.g. office jobs/workshop jobs
* Who was responsible for what jobs?
* Was there a hierarchy of authority?
* Who gave you your instructions?
* Were you shown any policy or procedure manuals?
* Did you work alone or with others?
* Were you allowed to do all tasks or just some?
* How much supervision did you require for specific tasks?
* What kinds of tasks were you NOT allowed to do? Why do you think this was?
* Did this change over the time you were in the workplace?
* How did what you did fit into the work of the others?
* How did your work help the organisation/business meet its goals?
* Who were you responsible for?
* Were you responsible for any tools or equipment?
* Were you responsible for managing yourself and your work?
* Were you responsible for anyone or anything else?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

In my role as a roof carpenter, I was allocated specific tasks by my workplace supervisor that I could accomplish on my own and other tasks where I worked with the others as part of a team. Teamwork was especially important when carrying long, heavy, timber beams and constructing roof segments, as two or three people had to synchronise their actions so that the tasks could be completed in the right order and without anyone getting injured.

The boss assembled everyone at the start of each job to outline the tasks to be done each day and he gave his staff special areas of responsibility. As the least experienced person on the job, I knew there were boundaries to the tasks I could do and the decisions I could make. My jobs were usually to help one of the more experienced workers, so I did as I was told a lot of the time. However, as I became more knowledgeable and skilled, I was given greater autonomy and I just checked from time to time with my supervisor that I was doing the right thing. Sometimes I was getting the right end result, but the hard way. I was pleased to listen and learn how to get things done more efficiently without so much effort.

I was allowed to use many of the tools without supervision, but some I couldn’t use unless I was given some specific training and safety induction and much closer supervision, for example when I needed to use the more dangerous electric tools, such as the circular saw and nail gun. I know this was for my safety and well-being, but any injury on the job means a loss of productivity and efficiency which equals a loss of money for the business.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

I was involved in a variety of tasks in my role as a roof carpenter. I was happy that my trainer gave me specific tasks and important things to do. It made me feel valued and a part of the team. I worked with many skilled tradesmen doing things, such as carrying timber beams, assembling joists, boxing eaves and constructing roof segments. I used tools and equipment, such as ladders, circular saws, hammers and even a nail gun. I was supervised very closely when using dangerous equipment as work, health and safety was important to them and their ability to complete the jobs on time.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

I worked for a roof carpenter and helped with most jobs, such as carrying lengths of timber, getting things from the ute, setting up the ladders and unpacking the tools. I did as I was told and if I didn’t know what to do, I asked my supervisor. I didn’t make any decisions and someone always checked my measurements before the timber was cut.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

With the assistance of a teacher or education assistant, the student can put together a photographic record of the different tasks he/she undertook in the workplace. Each task could be rated using a 3-star rating to indicate the degree of assistance needed for each. Include some pictures of tasks that the student must NOT attempt at all.

1. Give an example of one explicit workplace protocol (i.e. a rule, written procedure) and one implicit workplace protocol (i.e. a common practice understood by everyone but not written down) and explain why it is beneficial to keep to these written and unwritten rules in the workplace.

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 2, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Were there rules in your workplace?
* Were there certain procedures for doing things?
* How did you know what they were?
* Were all the rules written down?
* How did you know what the rules or protocols were?
* Were the rules necessary? Why or why not?
* What would happen if the rules or procedures were not followed?
* How would you know if you did something that went against the workplace protocol?
* Many workplace rules are to keep people safe. What was one of these in your workplace?
* Some rules are to make sure everyone is treated fairly. Were there any like this in your workplace?
* Some rules or protocols are for workplace harmony, e.g. everyone listens to their own music through headphones. Were there any like this in your workplace?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

My last work placement was in an automotive repair workshop. I attended every Tuesday for 10 weeks, starting work at 7.30 am and finishing at 4.30 pm. On the first day, the workplace supervisor took me through some of the workplace safety procedures and protocols. They were all pretty straight forward – things like if you spill some liquid or oil, clean it up immediately, and make sure you wear steel capped boots at all times in the workshop. I was familiar with most of the rules of this type of work environment because I had done the general and automotive industry Worksafe Smartmove online safety tests. It didn’t hurt to be reminded of them by my supervisor, though!

There were many safety reminder posters around the workshop too, such as ‘Wear eye protection in this area’ etc. The purpose of these rules and protocols is to prevent injuries. There were also well established procedures in the workshop. These didn’t seem to be written down, just accepted and practiced by all of the mechanics as a way of getting things done in the right order and most efficiently.

One implicit protocol in this workshop was that you could listen to music providing you wore headphones. I guess this was because there were many people of different ages and nationalities working in a small area and everyone’s taste in music varied. It would be extremely annoying to have to listen to something you didn’t like all day and could lead to disharmony in the workplace!

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

On my first day in the mechanic’s workshop, my supervisor showed me around and told me about a lot of workplace rules. Most of them were rules and procedures to keep all employees safe. He showed me how to look after the various tools and where they were kept. They all had to be clean and put away after use. Some of the rules were not so obvious and it took me a few days to work out that everyone had their own set of protective equipment. I used whichever one was nearest until I got told! I won’t make that mistake again. I was glad there was a written procedure for nearly everything because it made it much easier for me to learn what to do and how so I didn’t have to ask for assistance so often. Checklists were useful too. I think the written procedures made sure the jobs were done to specification all the time, no matter who did the job. If people ignored the rules and procedures and protocols, I think there would be cranky customers and angry employees – the business might even go broke.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

There were heaps of rules in the workshop. I didn’t see too many written rules, but I took notice of the safety posters and listened to the supervisor on my first day. The rules he told me about were to keep us safe, to keep the tools good and get the jobs done well every time.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

Tell your teacher what these signs mean. (Show various pictures of workplace safety signs). Were there some like this in the mechanical workshop? What could happen if you didn’t understand or follow the rules? The student’s responses or the discussion could be recorded or the main points noted or scribed.

1. A workplace is governed by legal rights and responsibilities related to conditions of employment, equal opportunity and discrimination and safe work practices. Explain what you would do if you believed these rights and responsibilities were not being adhered to in your workplace.

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 3, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What are the conditions of employment in this workplace? (See key terms and concepts above)
* Were men and women in your workplace paid equally?
* Were start and finish times stipulated for all workers in this workplace?
* Did employees belong to a union?
* How are employees appointed in this workplace? Through written application and interview? Other?
* Are employees provided with personal protective equipment – safety glasses, overalls, gloves, hats, helmets, harnesses etc.?
* Were your duties, responsibilities, hours of work, salary, leave and other privileges set down in a formal agreement?
* Were you given a duty statement? If not, you could ask to see one for an entry-level position in this workplace.
* Did your workplace have a union representative?
* Was there a safety officer in your workplace?
* Who would you speak to if you thought there was a safety issue?
* Read through the workplace rights and responsibilities page in your *WPL Logbook* that lists general workplace rights and responsibilities.
* Did everyone act in a proper manner?
* Was anyone bullied, ostracised, harassed or teased?
* What was the workplace process for dealing with employees who did not act responsibly or adhere to workplace rules?
* Did everyone work to do the best in their job and for the business?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

I understand that workers are entitled to a workplace that is safe and free of bullying, discrimination, harassment or intimidation. In the automotive repair workshop these rights and responsibilities were taken seriously and adhered to by all employees. I think this is because the boss was pretty strict and most of the employees seemed to be members of the union and were aware of their legal rights and responsibilities. However, if I witnessed someone harassing another worker, I would like to think that I would intervene if someone was being treated with a lack of respect. This wouldn’t be easy, especially being the workplace learning student at the bottom of the hierarchy in a workplace. I would mention it to my workplace supervisor and probably to my WPL teacher as well. If I was being harassed or treated in a way that I thought was unfair, I would definitely report this immediately to my supervisor. If it was the supervisor that was being unfair, I would go to the boss or my school.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

There was an apprentice mechanic in my workplace that seemed to cop a fair bit of ribbing from some of the others. He gave a bit of cheek as well and I think it was all in fun. However, I think there is a fine line between this good natured kind of teasing and harassment. If I thought the apprentice was being badly treated, I would ask him about it quietly one day and maybe suggest that he mentions it to his boss. Everyone has the right to feel safe and be able to do his job without harassment. The first place to go is to the employer. If that didn’t put things right, I would go to the union.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

If someone picked on me in the workplace I would tell my supervisor and my WPL teacher. If my boss asked me to do something like drive a car around from the front to the workshop, I would say I couldn’t because I didn’t have a license and wasn’t allowed to drive on work placement. If I saw someone was being treated badly I would stick up for him.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

If someone was rude to you or treated you badly in the workplace, who would you tell? Indicate suitable support from pictures of significant support personnel and others who would not be in a position to help.

1. Australian workplaces are very diverse. Some are quite formal and some are very relaxed. Describe your workplace in these terms: expected dress codes, communication styles and day-to-day routines.

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 4, a student could ask himself, or be asked:

* Would you say your workplace was formal or casual?
* What do you have to wear to work? What do others wear? On their feet?
* Is there a uniform? Is everyone’s the same?
* Do people talk to each other through the day?
* How do people talk to each other?
* Do they communicate by phone, email or social media?
* Do they use slang?
* Is swearing acceptable?
* Do people use nick names when they are talking to each other – about each other?
* Is there much interaction between employees?
* Is it acceptable to speak to anyone at any time or are appointments required?
* Does the boss address the whole of staff or individuals?
* What does a meeting look like? Is a record of meeting taken? Does anyone take notes?
* How much laughter is there in the workplace?
* Is there music or the radio on in the background?
* How noisy is the workplace?
* Are family members welcome in the workplace?
* Do they celebrate birthdays, end of the week etc.?
* Are employees recognised for doing a good job?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

The automotive workshop is a relatively casual workplace in many respects, even though the boss is strict about safety and maintaining a busy and productive business. No one is allowed to be lazy or untidy or the boss has a word to them. All employees wear a uniform – the receptionist’s is a little different to the mechanics, but all are practical and smart with the business name on the shirt. I think this gives us a professional look. I was even given a shirt to wear during my work placement which made me feel part of the team. Because everyone had their own jobs to do, and were busy doing them, there wasn’t a great deal of chatter throughout the day but the radio was blaring most of the time. Everyone had lunch at the same time in the lunch room and that was a favourite part of my day because there was a lot of joking and some good-humoured banter. Sometimes quite colourful language was used but this seemed to be acceptable and was never directed at anyone – just part of the language used. I never heard swearing when any of the public were around. The boss was quite approachable but I picked times when he wasn’t busy in his office if I needed to talk to him. I was made to feel very welcome in this workplace and got to know people quite well.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

I really loved this workplace because it was friendly and relaxed. It was quite noisy with some people whistling or singing along with the radio – or shouting over it! We were all busy working on different tasks so there wasn’t a lot of talking to each other during the day. Everyone had lunch together in the lunch room and there was a lot of laughing and joking around then. I felt that I could ask anyone for help or advice while we were working – even the boss, but I didn’t interrupt him when he was in his office. The blokes swore a bit in the workshop, which surprised me, but they didn’t swear in front of any of our customers or the office girls. There was a dress code which was heavy duty practical work clothes and an expectation that everyone came to work clean – though we generally didn’t go home that way!

A**nswer 3** (Low level of literacy)

The workshop was casual and all the people were friendly to each other and to me. We joked around over lunch which was cool but we got on with the job for the rest of the time. We had to wear safety boots and overalls with the business name. They called each other by their nick names – they gave me one too.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

Answer Yes or No to a series of questions about the workplace: (Expand on these orally)

* Did you have to wear a uniform or special clothes to work?
* Were you allowed to talk during your work?
* Did everyone have lunch together?
* Was the workplace noisy?
* Was there a lot of laughing and joking around?
* Did you do all your work in the same place?
* Was the workplace air-conditioned?

# Skill Cluster 2: Interact with others

## Skill Area 2(a) – Communicate for work

### Definition

This Skill Area is about using communication skills to achieve work outcomes. It involves the capacity to recognise communication protocols and etiquette, use communication systems and processes, understand messages and get messages across to others.

### Key terms and concepts

*Language* – in its broadest sense, language involves the words, verbal structures and gestures used to convey or understand meaning. It also includes visual communication skills, including Australian Sign Language (AUSLAN).

*Communication practices and protocols* – refer to the explicit and implicit ‘rules’ or conventions that govern communication in different settings and with different people. For example, there may be protocols surrounding what and how to communicate with those in a position of authority, or with people from a particular cultural background. There may also be implicit social conventions about the kind of language that is expected and considered acceptable in different circumstances. These practices and protocols have a strong influence on the choices an individual makes when communicating, such as choice of vocabulary, tone, non-verbal behaviour. They may also influence how others interpret those choices, e.g. as interested, respectful, rude, persuasive, assertive or aggressive.

*Message* – is used broadly to refer to any work related unit of communication, and may be oral, written or visual. Messages contain information, news, advice, requests etc., and may be captured in many different ways, e.g. written documents, plans, verbal instructions, diagrams. Visual and sensory messages are transmitted and received through actions, such as a raised eyebrow, a smile or a handshake. Messages may carry both explicit and implicit meanings, themes and ideas, and may be interpreted in different ways by different people.

*Communication channel* – the route of a message through one or more of three broad media – written, spoken and non-verbal, e.g. face to face interaction, [print or](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/print-media.html) broadcast (electronic) media.

*Mode* – is the choice of communication method, e.g. spoken, written, visual; formal, informal.

*Vocational vocabulary* – refers to the language of a particular field of work. This includes specific technical terminology, but also words and phrases that carry specific meanings within that field, e.g. the term ‘cookie’ carries a different meaning for a lighting rigger, a baker and an IT worker.

### Unpacking the questions

1. Describe a situation in your workplace where you had to listen, understand and act on an instruction/s. Were you able to follow the instruction/s? What was the result?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 1, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Who did you have to listen to? Why?
* What did you do if you didn’t hear properly or didn’t understand what was said?
* Could you follow the instruction?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

Communication is vital in the hospitality industry – especially in a café where food is being prepared for immediate sale. Customers don’t like to wait too long so we can’t afford to make mistakes with orders. That means I had to listen very carefully to the customer’s lunch request and relay the order to the kitchen, exactly as it was given. Sometimes I had to ask additional questions, such as ‘Would you like salt and pepper in your sandwich?’ It was not always an easy task because customers frequently changed their minds and added to their order and the café was usually very busy and noisy so it was hard to hear. I always confirmed their order to ensure I had it right. For particularly long or involved orders, I made a written note and gave that to the kitchen staff with the verbal instructions. Body language is really important and customers are more likely to return if they receive friendly service with a smile. When it’s really busy it’s easy for an impatient tone to creep into your voice, so I had to remind myself to be patient and keep my tone of voice light and friendly. The end result of these good communication skills is repeat customers, which is what makes a successful business.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

I had to apply good communication skills when working with a colleague to prepare food. This involved me giving her my full attention, listening to what she was saying, following the instructions given, as well as speaking clearly, so that I could communicate to her that I understood what was asked of me. The end result was efficient production of the food item we had to produce. I see verbal communication in a workplace as being critical to be able to complete tasks to the required standard. It means being able to ask questions as well.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

*Situation*: Lunch time in the café where I worked was always noisy and busy. People came in to buy their lunch and they didn’t have much time before they had to be back at work. My job was to take their order and tell the kitchen staff.

*Action*: I asked the customer what they would like and listened very carefully to their request. I looked at them as they spoke and repeated back to them what they had ordered to make sure I had it right. If I didn’t hear or understand something, I asked them to please repeat it then I confirmed what I heard. I gave the order to the kitchen staff exactly as I had heard it, speaking clearly and loudly.

*Outcome*: The customer was happy that he got what he ordered and didn’t have to wait too long.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

Jumble the following sentences and ask the student to put them in order.

* Look at the customer.
* Smile and say hello.
* Ask what they would like for their lunch.
* Listen carefully as they tell you what they would like for lunch.
* Repeat their order back to the customer.
* Ask if you had the order right.
* Repeat the order to the kitchen staff loudly and clearly.
* Happy customer leaves with the right lunch.

1. Describe a situation in your workplace where it was necessary for you to write. What was the outcome?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 2, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What did you have to write? Why?
* Who had to read what you had written?
* How much detail was required?
* Was it hand written or keyed into a computer or device?
* How long does what you have written need to be saved?
* Did you write into a form or template?
* How often did you have to write?
* Did you have to use a particular format for your writing?
* How much time did you have to write?
* How neat did it have to be?
* What would have happened if you didn’t write?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

*Situation:* During my work placement at the South Terrace Café some of the regular customers had complained that there was not enough variety of lunch offerings for vegetarians.

*Task:* I was asked to create a new and tempting sandwich filling suitable for a vegetarian.

*Action:* I was delighted at the opportunity to be creative and spent several hours browsing through recipe sites online for ideas. In the end I thought of all the ingredients that I love and put them together. After some experimenting I came up with a recipe that I called ‘Nutmix’. It consisted mostly of finely chopped walnuts, spring onions, red chili, lime juice and cream cheese. I typed up a good copy of the recipe and printed it out and took it in to the café with a sample that I had made for their feedback. The kitchen staff followed the recipe exactly and were very happy with the taste and texture of the filling.

*Result:* Nutmix sandwiches were added to the menu and became a popular choice for both vegetarian and non-vegetarian customers.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

*Situation*: My job in the café was to take people’s lunch orders and relay them to the staff in the kitchen who were making sandwiches to order. One of the customers had such a long and specific order that I couldn’t remember it all. It was important that I got the order right or the customer would not have been pleased.

*Action*: I asked the customer politely if he would mind repeating the order while I wrote it down. I grabbed a pen and paper from near the till and clearly jotted down the order as the customer dictated it to me. I used abbreviations for common items, such as ‘ch’ for chicken and ‘mayo’ for mayonnaise so that I could write quickly. It had to be neat enough for the kitchen staff to read, so I printed it instead of writing – my writing is a bit messy! I gave the written order to the kitchen staff.

*Outcome*: The order was made to the customer’s specifications and he left happy and hopefully will return.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

*Situation*: I couldn’t remember all the things that the customer wanted in his sandwich. I had to get it right so the kitchen staff could make up the sandwich.

*Action*: I found a piece of paper and a pen and wrote down the order neatly. I checked it with the customer. Then I gave the written order to the kitchen staff. They could easily read it and make the sandwich just the way the customer wanted.

*Outcome*: Happy customer.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

*Situation*: I couldn’t remember what the customer wanted in his sandwich.

*Action*: I made a list of everything that he wanted and gave it to the kitchen staff.

*Outcome*: The customer got his sandwich just the way he wanted it.

1. Is reading essential in your workplace? What did you need to read and why? What are the likely consequences of not being able to read in this workplace?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 3, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What did you read in your workplace?
* How much did you have to read?
* What did you read from – a poster, a computer screen, manual, recipe, message pad, container?
* What information did you get from reading?
* Was this information available in any other way?
* What would you have done if you couldn’t read?
* Would your safety or that of others around you be put at risk?
* Would you have still been able to do your job/task?
* Did you find the reading difficult?
* If you didn’t have to read anything, why not?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

Reading was essential in the café where I completed my work placement. I was on the counter taking people’s orders and relaying them to the kitchen. I also had responsibility for keeping the front of the café clean and tidy so there were many things I had to read, including the:

* menu board – so I could assist the customer with his or her selection
* till – so I could press the right buttons to enter the correct menu items
* roster – so I knew who I would be working alongside
* duty statement – so I understood clearly what my tasks were
* ‘use by’ dates on the contents of the fridge – so we didn’t poison anyone!
* instructions on the cleaning products – so I used the right amount for the right purpose

I can’t imagine what life would be like if I couldn’t read. It would certainly make life much more difficult in the workplace. I wouldn’t be able to provide such good service to the customers or my work colleagues, and might even make mistakes that could lead to accidents or injuries or cause people harm.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

In my workplace I had to read several documents including menus, the till, cleaning roster, use by dates on food, labels on cleaning products, instructions for using the EFTPOS machine, people’s credit cards and lots of other things. Reading is so important in any work situation to be able to perform your tasks safely and well. It would be disastrous if I couldn’t read the labels on the cleaning products and mixed together a couple that could cause a chemical reaction that could hurt me or others or property. At the counter, I sometimes had to read from the menu board for elderly people or those that had forgotten their glasses. If I couldn’t do this I would not be able to provide such good service to our customers.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

Every day in the café I had to read the menu board so I could tell customers what there was to buy. If I couldn’t read I wouldn’t remember all the choices. I also had to read the instructions on the cleaning products so I knew how to use them and where not to use them. If I couldn’t read the labels I might use the wrong product and not clean properly.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

Circle the things you had to read in your workplace. (Provide pictures of iPads, computer screens, mobile phone, menu, magazine, cleaning products, safety posters etc. Include some reading materials that they would NOT have to read in the workplace.)

Could you read them? If you couldn’t read or understand what was written, tell your teacher what you would do.

1. Describe a situation in your workplace where you had to communicate ideas or information. How did you approach this and was it successful?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 4, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What sorts of information did you have to communicate?
* Where did you get the information? Did someone tell you? Did you read it? By phone?
* Who did you have to pass on the information to?
* Did you have trouble remembering what you had to communicate?
* How did you pass on the information?
* Were there any barriers or problems in this communication? Noise levels, general business etc.
* Did you check that the information was heard, received, understood?
* Did the person you were communicating with have to ask for more information or clarification?
* How do you know the communication was successful?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

*Situation*: Communication is vitally important in the hospitality industry as the success of the business relies on customer satisfaction. I had a particularly difficult time one day in the café where I did my work placement. An older gentleman came into the café to buy some lunch. It was busy and noisy with the coffee machine making a racket, people talking and a lot of noise from the street. The customer didn’t hear me when I asked for his order, so I gathered that he might be a little deaf.

*Action*: I waited until the coffee machine had finished its noisy work, and then greeted the old man again with a smile and eye contact and a clear, slightly louder voice. I began with ‘Good afternoon Sir, what would you like for lunch today?’ rather than a more casual greeting. I also gave him a copy of the lunch menu rather than tell him what was available as I thought it would be easier for him to read than to hear. I listened patiently while he detailed his order. I communicated this to the kitchen and when his order was completed, I took it around to the other side of the counter rather than call to him from behind the counter.

*Outcome*: This took a little more time, but I could see that the gentleman was pleased that I had gone out of my way to make it easier for him to order his lunch. He is more likely to return than if he couldn’t make himself heard or hear what I had to say.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

We have a regular customer who is old and quite deaf. He is retired now, but comes into the city quite often. I know he finds it hard to hear, so I waited until the coffee machine had finished before greeting him by name. I think that using his name gets his attention better and when we were both looking at each other he gave me his order for lunch. When it was ready, I walked around and gave it to him personally. Sometimes I pat his arm or shoulder to say goodbye. I always say ‘See you next time,’ as I know he feels welcome and keeps coming back. Was this a success? Yes, I was happy and he was happy and he is a regular customer.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

When the old man who comes here often wanted to order his lunch, I waited until it was a bit quieter before asking him what he wanted because he is a bit deaf. I listened carefully and asked him a few questions to be sure I had the order right. When it was ready I didn’t call out his name, I handed him his lunch on the other side of the counter. The communication was successful because he got what he wanted for lunch and didn’t have to shout over the noise, and I was happy because he will come back.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy – Recorded observation)

I went to visit Peter in the workplace and was impressed to see that he smiled at the old man who came in to order his lunch. Peter looked at the man and asked politely and clearly for his order. Peter then relayed the order to the kitchen and when it was made, he called out the order but the old man didn’t seem to hear. So Peter came around the counter to give it to the customer, repeating the order to be sure it was the right one.

## Skill Area 2(b) – Connect and work with others

### Definition

This Skill Area is about building the work-related relationships needed to achieve an outcome within a workgroup, or achieve goals through team-based collaborations. It involves the capacity to understand others and build rapport, which in turn involves understanding one’s own values, goals, expectations and emotions, and making choices about regulating one’s own behaviour, taking the needs of others, and the often implicit social rules of the context, into account.

### Key terms and concepts

*Interacting* – acting towards others or with others in order to get the work done. The focus in the *Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework* is on social and work related interactions involving direct contact with people within a work context generally and within a workgroup or team specifically.

*Co-operate* – to assist someone or comply with their requests.

*Collaborate* – to work jointly towards the same end.

*Interpersonal skills* – the capacity to use specific forms of behaviour in face-to-face or virtual interactions, to bring about a desired state of affairs.

*Rapport* – a relationship of mutual understanding and trust in which those involved feel comfortable and accepted.

*Empathy* – the capacity to identify with, and understand, another’s situation, feelings, and motives.

*Workgroup* – a group of people with individual roles, responsibilities, tasks and accountability who come together to share information and perspectives and who may collaborate to achieve outcomes

*Team* – a highly sophisticated form of workgroup made up of a small number of people with complementary knowledge and skills who are committed to a common purpose and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. An effective team focuses explicitly on building and maintaining understanding and trust, and designs and manages the processes that support effective interaction.

*Working relationship* – a relationship with a colleague, employer or employee. In a *positive working* relationship, those involved are on good terms and usually feel some personal compatibility based on values, beliefs and interests. In an *effective working relationship*, those involved understand and respect each other’s values, perspectives and skills, and work together to achieve outcomes without necessarily feeling closely compatible on a personal level.

### Unpacking the questions

1. Describe a situation in your workplace where you were required to work as part of a team. What was your role and what was the result?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 1, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What is the main business of your workplace?
* What tasks require more than one person?
* Does everyone have to be present at the same time or do they do things in sequence?
* Could the job have been done by one person? Was it easier or faster or safer with others?
* What advantages are there to working as a team?
* Was everyone’s role the same? e.g. It took four men to move the heavy table.
* Did people have different roles? e.g. Two people lifted the table, one held the door open and one shifted the chairs out of the way.
* How did you feel working in this way?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

During my work placement with bricklayer, Paul, I was involved in building an undercover outdoor area in a residential back yard. It was certainly a team effort. The project involved a design team, an electrician, a bobcat driver, Gyprock workers, roof carpenters, concrete workers and others. So we were part of a broader team. Usually we worked in sequence, but occasionally overlapped with other workers.

While Paul and I worked together on the brick laying, our roles were very different. While we were actually laying bricks, my job was to mix the mortar and barrow it over to Paul, who expertly laid each brick. I did quite a lot of fetching and carrying – bringing the spirit level when requested, shifting the ladders, ferrying the bricks as needed etc. I was also in charge of cleaning up – sweeping, hosing and washing the trowels and concrete mixer. These were relatively unskilled tasks, but enabled Paul to get on with the more skilled tasks like setting the string line correctly and laying the bricks.

In this way, I contributed to the efficiency of the job. Paul could concentrate on the task of laying the bricks accurately and quickly. By keeping the area clean, I was also helping to keep the workplace safe. The end result was that the brick pillars were straight and even and we finished the job in less time than anticipated. This was a huge benefit to the people who were next onto the site to pour the aggregate for the floor of the outdoor area, as they were keen to start. The end result couldn’t have been achieved without every member of the team doing their bit.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

Paul and I worked together to build brick pillars and a low brick wall in someone’s back yard as part of an outdoor undercover area. There were other construction workers coming and going over a couple of months, and we all fitted in with each other to do the tasks in the right order. So we were part of a bigger team, each with special skills. The team included various trades people – electrician, concrete workers, roofing carpenters, brick layers (us) and others. No one person or smaller team had all the skills needed to construct the undercover area. Paul and I did the brick work. Well, he did the brick laying which is quite a skilled task, and I did a lot of fetching and carrying and cleaning up. These are essential jobs too, as they helped Paul to get on with the job more efficiently and safely.

The end result of our teamwork was excellent brickwork completed early. The end result in total was a fantastic looking completed outdoor undercover area, finished to the satisfaction of the owner and the project manager. There were no injuries or damage to property or equipment. Working as a team was essential in getting this job done in a timely manner. (And time is money – so Paul says!)

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

I helped to build a patio. There were lots of people needed to get this done. Everyone had different skills. Sometimes we worked together like when heavy things needed to be shifted. Sometimes we worked one at a time because things had to be done in a certain order. We got the job done faster by working together and more safely too. We finished the job early and the owner was really pleased about that. The builder was happy too because we could get on with the next job.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

Use these words to fill in the gaps below: wall; hosing; brick layer; team; washing the trowel; faster.

I worked with a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We built a brick \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I helped by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.   
We got the job done \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and safer. I liked working as part of a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. Have you had to ask for feedback or advice in this workplace? Who did you ask, what was their response and what was the outcome?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 2, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Did you get any feedback from anyone?
* Was the feedback about something you did or did not do?
* Did you have to ask for the feedback or was it just given?
* Did you think the feedback was useful?
* Was the feedback fair or justified?
* Did you act on the feedback?
* How did the feedback make you feel?
* Did you have to ask for advice?
* Who did you go to for advice?
* How did you decide who to go to for advice?
* Did you go to the same person for all advice?
* Did the advice help you do your work better or more safely?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

I had to ask advice plenty of times in my work placement with a brick laying team. It was all new to me and at first I felt a little shy about asking questions. My supervisor soon put me at ease. He was always willing to explain things and never made me feel dumb or stupid. Actually I think he was rather pleased to pass on his knowledge when he realised that I was really interested in finding out more about how and why things were done. I learned so much – not just about the brick laying process, but as other tradesmen came on site, I would ask them about what they were doing as well. I noticed that everyone was happy to answer questions about their field of expertise – providing you didn’t get in their way and asked at the right time.

I didn’t really ask for feedback apart from things like ‘Is this OK?’, ‘You mean like this?’ etc. If I wasn’t doing something quite right, I listened carefully and watched while I was being shown what to do and always acted on the feedback. My supervisor filled in the evaluation of student performance and showed me at the end of the placement. I got all ‘Very High’s which made me feel really great.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

When I was working with Paul, the brickie, I often asked him for advice because he was the expert. I was shown how to make the mortar in the cement mixer. It had to be just the right consistency. I watched the way Paul shoveled in the sand and concrete and the number of shovelfuls per batch. The tricky bit was knowing how much water to add. I asked Paul to show me first, and then I asked him to watch me make the first batch. He told me to add a little more water. I followed Paul’s instructions and before long he left me to do it on my own. I checked every now and then to be sure, but after a few batches, I became quite confident and could tell when I needed to add more or less water. Practice makes perfect I guess.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

When I didn’t know how to do something, I just asked my boss, Paul. He didn’t mind answering my questions because he didn’t want me to make too many mistakes. Once I had to make up a batch of mortar. I had watched him do it but when he asked me to do it, I didn’t know how much water to add. I asked him and he showed me how to measure it. I soon got to know when it looked and felt right. I think it is better to ask than be sorry. It felt great when my boss told me I was good at it.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

For this activity, the student will need photographs of all the people he worked with. Ask the student to identify (point to, circle, say their name aloud, draw a line to – whatever is most appropriate) the person he would go to for advice of different kinds. The questions may be asked orally.

* Who would you ask if you needed the bathroom?
* Who would you ask if you couldn’t find your safety glasses?
* Who would you ask if you needed to do a particular job and you didn’t know how to do it?
* Who told you what to do?
* Who told you how well you were doing your job?
* How did you feel about the feedback? ☹ ☺

1. Organisations look for paid and unpaid personnel who are willing to learn. How did you show you were interested and enthusiastic about learning all you could while you were completing activities in this workplace?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 3, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Did you turn up on time?
* Did you ask questions?
* Did you show interest in the response and ask further questions?
* Did you find out more at home and bring it up on your next work placement day?
* Did you talk to different people in the workplace about what they were doing?
* Did you watch what was happening around you?
* Did you volunteer to assist anyone?
* Were you quick to take on a task?
* Were you willing to have a go at something new?
* Did you persevere when something was hard or you didn’t get it quite right the first time?
* Did you set your own tasks?
* Did you prioritise your tasks?
* Did you look for further jobs when you had completed yours?
* Did you complete your tasks to the best of your ability?
* Did you show an interest in what others were doing and offer to help if appropriate?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

I have just completed 110 hours work in the office of a caravan and camping hire company. It was a busy office environment and I was able to observe and undertake many of the daily office duties. I was quite nervous for the first couple of days, but I was keen to learn and practice many of the skills I had learned at school through the Business Management and Enterprise course and Certificate II in Business. Being in a real workplace, I was able to demonstrate many of the units of competency from the certificate.

I showed I was enthusiastic in this workplace by being punctual – early most days – and getting stuck into whatever I was asked to do. I asked many questions about how and why things were done the way they were, and was committed to fulfilling my duties to the best of my ability. If I was unsure about something I asked before messing something up. This became really important the longer I worked, as I was given more and more responsibility. By the end of my placement, I was setting my own tasks and prioritising them. If there was ever something new happening, I took great interest. For example, we got a new photocopier a few weeks ago and I asked to be included in the short user-training session. One thing I learned in this office was that there is always something to do and I made sure that if I ever finished a task I always found myself something else to do. Occasionally I chose to stay a few minutes late to get a job finished or help someone to finish their job. I learned so much from this workplace experience and soon felt like one of the regular employees. In fact, because of my enthusiasm and interest, I was invited to do some paid work in the school holidays for this business.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

It wasn’t hard to show my enthusiasm and interest in working for the caravan hire company in their office. It was a great place to be and I loved working there. I always arrived early and spent a few minutes chatting to the other staff and finding out what I was to do for the day. It usually involved lots of different tasks so I was never bored. If I didn’t know how to do something I asked and checked to make sure I was doing it right. I never sat around doing nothing. I watched what others were doing and asked if I could help if I had finished my jobs. I found this the best way to learn – by doing. I asked to be shown how to use the new photocopier and eventually became the ‘expert’ as I used it so often. My interest and enthusiasm was rewarded with a few days of paid work during the school holidays!

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

I showed I was interested and enthusiastic at the office by getting there on time and doing my work as well as I could. I asked lots of questions to learn more. Sometimes I helped others do their jobs and sometimes I found extra jobs to do so I was never bored. I got some paid work for them in the holidays because they said I was a good worker and wanted to learn more.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

An assistant could record on an iPhone the student in action in the workplace, showing them asking questions, smiling, interacting with staff, helping others, concentrating on doing their job to the best of their ability and showing their pleasure in completing a task well. The footage could be played back to the student to form the basis for a discussion about the ways that enthusiasm and interest can be demonstrated.

1. Explain how you showed respect and concern for others and their rights in your workplace?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 4, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What is respect, and how can you show it?
* Read through the workplace rights and responsibilities in your logbook to remind yourself of the workplace expectations.
* Who are you working with – age, gender, level of education, cultural background, experience, abilities etc.?
* Does anyone in your workplace have special needs, disability or impairment?
* Was anyone in your workplace dealing with problems outside of the work place, such as illness, relationship issues or family worries?
* Did you see any bullying, discrimination, harassment or intimidation in your workplace?
* Were there arguments or fights in the workplace? What caused them? Did everyone react the same way?
* Did people get along well with each other?
* Did anyone annoy or disrespect you? How? How did you feel? What did you do about it?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

I had great respect for everyone in my workplace. When I first started, I greeted people by name and as I got to know them better, I began to make conversation with them – maybe a bit of banter about the footy or what they did on the weekend. I tried to remember if they had something special happening and ask them about that. For example, one of the office ladies daughters had just had a baby so I asked if she had a photo of the new baby. I think it shows respect to someone if you try to talk to them about what they are interested in, not all about yourself. I also showed respect for people by not interrupting them when they were busy or concentrating. I tried to notice if someone was struggling with a job and offered to help them. I didn’t use my phone while I was working – just had a quick check at lunch time – and if I was doing a job on my own that didn’t need too much concentration, I listened to music through my earphones so I didn’t disrupt anyone else. I respected individual’s office space and never used anything without first asking. I returned anything I borrowed promptly and in the same condition that it was when I borrowed it. I followed all the workplace rules and over time picked up on the unwritten rules – like not using someone else’s coffee mug!

As the most junior member of the office team, I found it a bit difficult to show my concern for the older and more confident workers. I was aware that there is a fine line between showing concern for someone and invading their privacy. If someone looked like they were under pressure or having a bad day, I just kept out of their way and got on with my own work.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

Everyone in my workplace showed respect for each other. They got along well together. I showed my respect for them by speaking nicely to them – using a bit more formal language than I would use at school or with my friends because they were older. I didn’t borrow anything without asking and always put it back straight away when I had finished. I didn’t interrupt anyone who was busy or concentrating on a task and if someone was having problems with a job I would offer to help them. One afternoon I helped the receptionist finish unpacking the new stationery so she could get away from work on time as I knew she had an important appointment.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

I was polite to everyone in my workplace and listened when they were explaining something to me. I waited until my supervisor wasn’t busy before asking him about something. I took care of the office equipment and returned anything I borrowed. If I saw someone needed help, I would offer to help them. I showed respect by not playing music or using my phone on the job.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

I said good morning to everyone when I got to work. I did my job without interrupting people so they could do their jobs too. Sometimes I helped them do their work. I made a cake at school one day and took that to work the next day to show everyone I cared about them.

## Skill Area 2(c) – Recognise and utilise diverse perspectives

### Definition

This Skill Area is about the capacity to recognise and respond to differing values, beliefs and behaviours, to draw on diverse perspectives for work purposes and to manage conflict when it arises.

### Key terms and concepts

*Perspectives* – points of view, particular attitudes towards, or ways of regarding something.

*Difference* – the state or condition of being dissimilar.

*Diversity* – exhibiting variety or difference. In work contexts, the term ‘diversity’ is used to collectively describe differences based on gender, ethnic, sexual orientation, religious or cultural background, age, physical ability, beliefs and personal preferences.

*Dispute –* a serious [disagreement](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/disagreement), argument or conflict, [especially](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/especially) one between [groups](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/group_1) of [people](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/people_1) that [lasts](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/last_2) for a long time.

### Unpacking the questions

1. Describe a situation where a dispute occurred in your workplace. Was the dispute resolved satisfactorily? Explain.

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 1, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Was there ever a serious disagreement in your workplace?
* Who was involved?
* What was the dispute over?
* Was there more than one point of view?
* How did people speak to each other?
* How were the facts established?
* Were other people called in?
* What was the desired outcome?
* Was one person right and the other person wrong?
* What was the consequence of not resolving the dispute?
* Was there an advantage to the organisation/workplace for resolving the dispute?
* Was the dispute resolved?
* Does the organisation have a dispute resolution policy?
* If you did not see any disputes, did anyone tell you about one?
* Why do you think there were no disputes?
* Did the office have processes and procedures that helped to ensure there were no disputes or if there were they would be quickly resolved?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

While I was working in the office of Bates’ Caravan and Camping, I witnessed a dispute between the manager and a customer who claimed she was overcharged by $250 for the campervan her family had hired for a couple of weeks during the school holidays. Initially, I greeted the customer at the counter but could see quickly that she needed to speak to the manager as she was very cross and aggressive. I explained that I was a work placement student and that I would fetch the manager who was in a position to be able to resolve the dispute. While we were waiting for the manager to arrive, I asked for the customer’s name and enquired whether she had brought in the contract she had signed and the disputed account. By the time the manager arrived, she had produced the documentation and I introduced the manager to her and left them to discuss the situation. She had calmed down by the time the manager arrived and together they went through the documentation. It became apparent that the customer had not realised that the contract she had signed included insurance of $250 which was not included in the original quote. Once the facts had been established and the paper work examined, it became obvious that the customer had not been overcharged. However, as a gesture of goodwill, the manager offered a 10% discount on the next hire or purchase. The dispute was resolved to the satisfaction of both the customer and the company.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

A dispute situation actually occurred with a customer early in my work placement. It was stressful but a good learning outcome for me. A customer came in complaining that she had been overcharged for an item on her account. She was quite aggressive and upset and was yelling at me. I remained calm and said I would get the manager. The manager acted quickly and the situation was sorted out to the customer’s satisfaction. The customer then came back to me and apologised. The fact that I was wearing my badge, saying I was a work experience student, helped the customer realise that someone else with more experience was needed to sort out the matter.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

An angry lady came into the office to demand a refund of $250 because she said she had been overcharged for the hire of a caravan. I said I was a workplace student and asked her to wait while I got the manager. They looked at the paperwork and it seems that the lady didn’t know the insurance cost was added to the bill. She asked for the insurance so accepted that she was not owed any refund. She apologised and the manager and the lady were happy in the end.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

When the angry lady came in I smiled at her and said hello. Then I called my supervisor. They looked at the bill and sorted it out. They were both happy when she left. It frightened me for a while but then I felt OK.

1. Explain, using an example from your workplace, how a task/activity was better accomplished because of the different strengths, skills, age, gender, race or religion of the people working on the task/activity.

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 2, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What diversity was there in your workplace?
* Were the employees all the same age?
* Had they all been working at the same place for an equal length of time?
* Did everyone have the same level of education?
* Were some educated in another country?
* Did they all speak English?
* Did some speak more than one language?
* Did everyone know how to use a computer or other equipment in the workplace?
* Did the workplace have men and women?
* Was physical strength required in your workplace?
* What physical differences were there amongst the staff? Were some strong, large, tall or tiny?
* Was anyone born overseas?
* Did anyone have parents that were born overseas?
* Did you know what religion people followed?
* Did everyone have all the same skills and experience?
* What benefits can you think of for having diversity in the workplace?
* Were there any problems caused by people’s diversity?
* Imagine a workplace of cloned individuals. Would you like to work there?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

*Context*: At first when I was thinking about this question I didn’t think we had any diversity in our workplace. However, on reflection, I could see that although we were all female and were all born in Australia and all spoke English, we were all very different and brought to the workplace many varied experiences, skills and knowledge. The employees were aged from me – the youngest – to an older woman, Marie, who I would guess was in her sixties. She had been with the business since it began about forty years ago. She had seen many changes over those years and adapted to them and updated her skills as necessary. A couple of the younger women were more comfortable with some of the latest technology as they had grown up with it. The advantages of the diversity in this workplace were most evident when we had to adopt a new electronic filing system.

*Action*: Marie called a meeting of all employees and explained that we were going to have to learn to use a new electronic filing system. She admitted that she thought it might take her a while to learn to use it so she called for a volunteer to attend the information session offered by the software company and then act as a ‘super user’ to help others use the system. Jessica, one of the younger admin girls accepted the role – she was the ‘go to’ person for technical issues already and had a good brain for computer programs.

*Result*: After Jessica had attended the training, she ran a session for the rest of us and everyone eventually became familiar with the program. Several of us had to call on Jess a few times when we got stuck on something, but together, with Jess’s help, we all learned to use the electronic filing system. We can’t believe how much time it saves us all – not to mention the saving in paper.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

*Context*: At first I thought everyone in our workplace was pretty much the same – that there wasn’t much diversity, but actually, when I thought about it a bit more, we are quite different in age and what skills and experiences we bring to the workplace. One of the differences is that the younger employees are a bit more confident with using new computer software. Marie, our office manager and in her sixties, was really worried when the boss said we would all have to use a new electronic filing system.

*Action*: Jessica, one of the younger administration officers volunteered to do the training and then taught us all how to use the program, offering to help when it was needed. She found it quite easy and was very patient.

*Result*: Marie took a while to catch on but, with Jess’s help, eventually became quite competent, as did everyone else. Jess felt really good about being able to demonstrate her skills, both in the use of the software and as a trainer!

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

*Context*: One of the differences in my workplace is age. The oldest office lady, Marie, found it very hard to use the new computer program because she is not used to computers.

*Action*: Jessica did the training and came back and showed all of us how to use the new software program. She is one of the youngest office ladies, but is good at the computer because she learns new stuff easily.

*Result*: We now all know how to use the new electronic filing system, even Marie, because Jess showed us. She still helps us if we get stuck. I did most of the filing before, so I love the new system – saves me heaps of time. Jess feels good because she was able to use her computer skills to help us.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

*Context*: In our office we are all (picture of men/women). Marie is (young/old). At work she is good at (writing/climbing mountains). Jessica is (young/old). At work she is good at (computers/swimming).

*Action*: Jessica helps Marie to (use the computer/write). Marie helps Jessica to (use the computer/write).

*Result*: All the jobs get done.

Alternatively, the student could match up photos of the employees with a range of activities showing the tasks each undertook or were best at.

1. One of the roles of the person in charge is to allocate the right people and/or resources to a task/activity. Give an example of where this has occurred in your workplace. What was the result?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 3, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Who was in charge in your workplace?
* What were this person’s roles?
* Which workers were available to carry out the tasks in this workplace?
* Did they all have the same skills, interests or levels of expertise?
* Could you see who was best at what tasks?
* How could you group or categorise the tasks in your workplace? E.g. clerical/practical, inside/outside
* How do you think the person in charge decided who would do what?
* What resources were needed to complete the task? (People, tools, safety gear, machines?)
* Do you think the person in charge got it right?
* What could happen if the boss didn’t allocate the right people or resources to a job?
* What would be the likely outcome if the right people and resources were allocated to a job?
* Is this always possible?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

I have just completed a 2-week block work placement at Southside Panel and Paint. The tasks could be categorised as administration or office jobs and practical or workshop jobs. I was involved mostly in the office and under instruction from the office manager. It was not easy to see how she allocated the various tasks as most of the employees have been with the company for a long time and become experienced in different tasks. However, when I was allocated a task, Mary made sure it was within my capabilities and that I had all the tools I needed to complete the job. For example, one of the jobs given to me was to update the client contact list. This meant that I had to email everyone on the contacts database and record the names of the clients whose emails bounced back or could not be delivered. I then had to ring these people and record in a spreadsheet the new email addresses for those I could and make a separate list of those clients who I was not able to contact via phone or email. I was set up with a computer and phone and the office manager checked on me from time to time. She knew I was able to complete this task as I had demonstrated my computer skills through other jobs I had done previously. If she had allocated this task to one of the boys from the workshop, I think it might have been a disaster – the same as if I was asked to spray paint a vehicle! Someone would have had to either spend a great deal of time teaching me or would have had to redo it – costing the company time and money and probably frustrating the client who would have had to wait longer for his vehicle to be fixed. Because the person in charge made sure the right people and resources had been allocated to each task, the tasks were successfully completed in a timely and stress free manner.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

My last work placement was at a panel beaters. There were two people in charge – one for the inside office jobs and one for the workshop where the panel beating and spray painting was done. Everyone knew their own job well, but at some point the people in charge had to allocate the right people and resources to each task. I had spent several weeks helping the spray painter in the workshop, watching closely and doing small jobs while I was being supervised. I was shown how to use the paint gun and given a face mask and protective clothing, then asked to paint a car door. I did a pretty good job because the person in charge had seen that I had the skills and was ready to do the job. I am glad he didn’t ask me to do one of the office jobs though. I hate working on a keyboard and am not very good at it. I would have been angry and embarrassed if I messed up an office job and I am sure the person in charge would have been cross too as it would have cost the company time and money.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

At the start of every day the office manager told everyone what jobs had to be done by the end of the day. She knew everyone pretty well and gave the jobs to the people that could do that task the best or fastest. For example, we teased Jessica because she was so fussy about stuff, but that’s why she was given the job of checking the client database and updating it. If she didn’t get it right, we might lose customers and that would cost the business in advertising to get new customers.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

Match the people to the jobs they did in the workplace. List several quite distinct tasks and pictures of each staff member. Have students draw a line between the staff member and his job. Have the student explain verbally why each person did a particular job. Discuss what would happen if the people and jobs were mixed up. Scribe student’s response.

1. What would you do if you noticed that a client/customer/participant/colleague was being harassed or bullied in the workplace because of his beliefs or values?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 4, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What is harassment? Is it the same as bullying?
* What kinds of harassment might there be in a workplace?
* Is there a difference between harassment and jest/tricks/joking around?
* What might motivate someone to harass another in the workplace?
* Can more than one person be the target of harassment?
* Can more than one person do the harassing?
* What is the difference between beliefs and values?
* Did your workplace have a harassment policy? Bullying policy? Code of conduct?
* Did you see anyone being harassed in your workplace?
* Was harassment or bullying tolerated in your workplace?
* What could you do if you noticed someone being harassed in the workplace?
* What **would** you do?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

At my last work placement several guys constantly took the mickey out of one of the employees, Mohammed. He came to Australia as a refugee several years ago, but still struggles with English – especially the slang and coarse language used in the workshop. They wrap cloths around their heads and pretend to pray on their knees all the time. I think they do it in jest, but I don’t think Mohammed thinks it is quite as funny. He must get really tired of it. It is a pity because he is really skilled as his job. If I was being harassed as much as him I would be really upset and hate coming to work. He doesn’t show it, but keeps pretty much to himself. It is hard to know what to do about it. I don’t join in the laughter as his expense, and I choose to work with him when I can. I try to introduce another topic of conversation to distract the people doing the harassing. If I was brave enough, I would mention the issue quietly to the workshop manager to at least make him aware of the issue and hope that he puts a stop to it.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

Mohammed really cops a battering in the workshop! He has to pray at certain times every day because of his religion. It doesn’t really stop him from doing his job, which he’s really good at, but it seems to annoy some of the other employees. They mock him and make fun of his beliefs by pretending to pray as well. I have seen this several times while I have been on work placement. I don’t think this kind of harassment is fair and I refuse to join in with the jokes. I asked my supervisor why it was allowed to happen and he said he would talk to the boss about it. I hope he does because I don’t think Mohammed likes it, but he doesn’t like to say anything because he is trying so hard to fit in.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

Some of the people at work tease Mohammed because he has to pray three times every day. They copy him and make fun of him. He doesn’t have very good English yet and he pretends to think it is funny, but it’s not. I don’t laugh and I told my supervisor.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

I feel sorry for Mohammed because some of the men tease him when he prays. He is a good worker. I told my supervisor that it is not fair when they make fun of him. I sit with Mohammed to eat my lunch.

# Skill Cluster 3: Get the work done

## Skill Area 3(a) – Plan and organise

### Definition

This Skill Area is about identifying and completing the steps needed to undertake tasks and manage workloads. This involves the capacity to organise self and information, plan and implement tasks, and plan and organise workloads.

### Key terms and concepts

*Workload* – the amount of work assigned to or expected from someone in a specified time period. Individuals will have different degrees of input into, and control over, decisions regarding what needs to be achieved, by when, with whom, and by what means.

*Work-life balance* – in its broadest sense, refers to the balance between various aspects of an individual’s life, including work, family, friends and leisure activities. It differs from one person to the next, depending on personal values, goals, priorities and needs at any point in time, and is subject to change in response to changes in circumstances.

### Unpacking the questions

1. One method of managing your time in the workplace is to make a list of what needs to be done and then prioritise the tasks. What factors must you consider when setting priorities?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 1, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* How much control did you have over what needed to be done?
* Could you choose who to work with?
* Were you allowed to make decisions about what work to do and when and how?
* Did you make a list of the tasks you had to do each day while you were on work placement?
* Did you see anyone else make a jobs list?
* Was there a jobs list on a white board or similar that included all jobs that had to be done by all staff?
* Did you identify jobs that were urgent?
* If you didn’t make a list of the jobs that needed to be done, what did you do to help you prioritise tasks?
* Did you need to know more about the businesses processes and longer term plans to be able to prioritise tasks?
* Did you ask someone to help you prioritise tasks? Who and why?
* Did you know how long a task would take?
* Was it easier to estimate for some jobs than others?
* Did you always get all the tasks done in time? Why or why not?
* What might stop you getting a job done on time?
* Did you have control over these barriers to getting work done on time?
* Did you have to rely on other people to get your work done?
* Did you have to access certain tools or resources to get the job done?
* Were these things readily available?
* Did you have to be flexible and adaptable?
* Did you know when to change your plan or re-evaluate your priorities?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

I completed two 2-week block placements at my last workplace, which was in a retail clothing company. By the last week, I understood pretty well what tasks were required and I had quite a degree of responsibility for managing my time and setting my own priorities. I had to consider several factors when deciding what work to do and in what order. Factors included safety, customer service, the urgency or importance of the task, the resources needed, my own capability and any deadlines. Workplace safety was always the first priority regardless of what other jobs had to be done. For example, occasionally customers would accidentally drop garments on to the floor creating a trip or slip hazard and I automatically picked up such things immediately before continuing on with my other tasks. Customer service was also a priority in this store, so I had to drop everything if a customer needed assistance. However, I was usually able to set myself a couple of goals for the day and follow through with them. For instance, when a new order arrived, it was important to unpack and tag all the merchandise and get it onto the shelves promptly. Maintaining a well organised and attractive shop front was also important so sometimes I had to interrupt my big task to tend to little things, such as replacing clothing on the right rack or picking up rubbish from the changing room floor. Occasionally I had to wait for someone else to be free to help me with a task, or my job had to wait while I helped someone else. It is good to be flexible, but not to be too side-tracked!

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

At Cotton On, a retail clothing store, I was given a lot of freedom to manage my time and the jobs I had to do, especially in the last week of my placement. The manager of the store let all of us know if there was anything urgent that needed doing, but otherwise I organised my own time. Safety and customer service were always a priority, but after that, I prioritised my tasks according to how much time they would take, if I needed someone else to help me, if I had everything that was needed and occasionally what I felt like doing.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

At the clothing shop where I worked, the store manager mostly told me what I had to do and when, but sometimes I could do things in the order that I wanted. I liked doing some things and hated doing other jobs, so I usually did the jobs I liked first. I know it is important to serve the customers first, so I always did that even if I was doing something else.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

A student with a very low level of literacy may have very little choice over managing his own time or making decisions about priorities, but may be able to put tasks in order of importance, e.g. Which job first? Hang up the clothes on the floor OR wash the coffee cups?

Alternatively, the question may focus on how to stay on task and complete it to a satisfactory level.

1. Describe a situation where you were asked to complete a task/activity and you felt that you did not have the skills, knowledge or enough time to complete it. What action did you take and what was the result?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 2, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Were you asked to do something you didn’t know how to do?
* Were you asked to do something you thought was unsafe or illegal or dangerous?
* Were you asked to do something that you knew would take longer than the time you had?
* Who asked you to do it?
* Was the urgency or importance of the task explained to you?
* Was there someone else who was able to assist you with the task?
* Did you witness someone else being asked to do something that they did not have the knowledge, skills or time to complete?
* How did you feel when you were asked to do something you didn’t feel comfortable doing?
* What did you do about it?
* Did you do what you were asked? Why? Why not?
* Did you express your concern? Immediately? Later? To whom?
* What could happen if you did something you were not able to do?
* How could this be bad for you? Bad for the workplace?
* Would you respond differently if the same thing happened again?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

*Situation*: I found myself in an embarrassing situation at the end of one work day when my supervisor asked me to vacuum the shop floor and the back of shop area before I finished for the day. This is a task that takes approximately 30 minutes. It was twenty five minutes past five and I was due to finish at 5.30. Ordinarily, I wouldn’t have minded staying back to do this job, but it would have meant that I missed my bus and would not be home in time to babysit for my neighbour.

*Action*: I immediately explained my situation to my supervisor, and suggested that I had time to do a quick once over of the shop front but really had to leave by 5.40 or I would not be able to meet my previous commitment. I offered to come in a little earlier the next day to finish off the vacuuming before the shop opened.

*Outcome*: My supervisor apologised and said she didn’t realise how late it was and, of course, I should leave at 5.30 to get to my babysitting job on time. She thanked me for offering to come in early the following day, but said it wouldn’t be necessary. I am glad I spoke up straight away, even though I hated having to say that I couldn’t stay late that day. I am sure my neighbour was grateful too.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

*Situation*: Five minutes before I was due to finish work, my supervisor asked if could vacuum the shop front and back. This is a 30 minute job and if I said yes, I knew I would miss my bus. If I took the next one I would be home too late to babysit for my neighbour like I had promised.

*Action*: I immediately said I was sorry I couldn’t stay late or I would miss my bus and not be home in time to babysit. I said I could do it as soon as I came in the next day.

*Outcome*:My supervisor said she didn’t realise it was so late and said to head straight off. I thanked her because I didn’t want to let my neighbour down.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

*Situation*: I couldn’t do the vacuuming before I went home like my boss wanted because I would have missed my bus. I had to get home to babysit.

*Action*: I said I was sorry I couldn’t because I would miss my bus and not be home in time to babysit.

*Outcome*:She said that was OK, I could do it in the morning.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

Mrs Smith asked me to vacuum the floor but I didn’t know where to find the vacuum cleaner or how to turn it on. I told her I didn’t know how and she showed me. It was easy and the floor looked really clean.

1. List the steps you took to ensure you were well organised before completing a task/activity? If you were in a similar situation in the future what would you do differently?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 3, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What tasks or activities did you have to do?
* What tools did you need?
* Did you know how long the task would take?
* Where did you have to carry out this task?
* Did you have to do it by yourself? With one other? As part of a team?
* Did you have to use any technology?
* Did you need electricity?
* Was it an inside or outside job?
* Did you need to use Personal Protective Equipment?
* How difficult was the task?
* Were there many steps to completing it?
* Did each step have to be done in the right order?
* Did you get the job done?
* Would you do it differently next time?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

One of the tasks I had to complete independently while I was working on the farm where I did my work placement was to change the oil in one of the service vehicles. I had been shown how to do this and assisted with the task on several occasions, so I thought I knew how to complete the task. Firstly I made sure I had everything I needed. My supervisor ran the utility over a pit to allow me to access the underneath side of the engine. I made sure I had my safety glasses, an old drum to collect the used oil, a spanner to undo the plug, the right type of fresh oil and oil filter as specified for the engine and a filter spanner. I remembered a few rags which was just as well, as when I began to pour the new oil into the engine, I had forgotten how it glugs and managed to get oil everywhere. I hadn’t remembered the funnel but thought I had a steady hand and could get away without needing one. I made quite a mess and wasted some of the oil. I will certainly make sure I have everything I need before I start the job next time.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

I was asked to change the oil in the farm ute at my last workplace. I’d seen it done lots of times so thought I could do it by myself. The boss ran the ute up onto the ramp so I could get to the oil and oil filter. I got everything I needed ready, including safety glasses, the tools I thought I would need, a drum for the dirty oil and some rags. The first part of the job went well, but I forgot to get a funnel to pour the new oil into the engine. I thought I could do without it but ended up with oil all over the motor. It took ages to wipe up the excess oil and I was a bit embarrassed that I had wasted some. I won’t make that mistake again!

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

Before I do a job I make sure I have everything I need. When I changed the oil in the ute I got all the tools ready and I had the new oil and an old drum to drain the old oil into. I found my safety glasses but I couldn’t find the funnel. I reckoned I wouldn’t really need it. When I tried to pour the new oil in, it went everywhere. Next time I wouldn’t take any short cuts because it took me longer to clean up the mess than it would have to find the funnel.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

Take photographs of the student cleaning the windscreen of a vehicle, from gathering everything to putting it all away. Make sure there are several steps, such as gathering the cloth, spray cleaner and stool to stand on, spraying the windscreen, using the cloth and finally putting everything away. Have the student put the pictures in the right order.

1. Consider one of the tasks/activities you were asked to complete. Did you do it to a satisfactory standard? How did you know you had done a good job – or not?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 4, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What tasks did you do?
* Did you do them on your own or with others?
* Did you get shown how to do this task?
* How experienced was the person who showed you what to do?
* How many times had they done the task?
* How difficult or complex was the task?
* Who were you completing the task for? The public, coworkers, clients?
* Was it possible to do this task well and not so well?
* Who decided on how well the task was completed?
* Did you have a chance to practice the task?
* Were you told what standard was expected?
* Did you gain feedback on how well you completed the task?
* Were you able to have another go at completing the task?
* Were you satisfied with the job you did?
* Was your supervisor satisfied with the job you did?
* Did you receive praise? From whom?
* Were you asked to do the same thing again?
* Were you given more difficult tasks to complete?
* How did you feel after completing the task?
* Would you choose to do the same task again?
* Would your workplace ask you to do the same task again?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

Some of the tasks I was allocated in my last work placement were quite simple and were either completed or not completed – there was no specific standard required. However, most of the tasks I was asked to complete had to be done to a satisfactory standard because clients were paying for the service and it was important that they received value for their dollar and were happy to come back. One of the activities I had to do was wash a client’s hair in preparation for a cut or colour. The apprentice showed me how to do this the first time. This was one of her duties and she was very experienced. I followed her instructions and kept checking with the client that the water temperature was okay and I wasn’t massaging too hard. I was careful not to get water in the client’s eyes or ears. I also made sure I didn’t take too long, but when the cutter wasn’t ready, I gave the client an extra-long massage – they all seemed to like that. I liked the positive feedback from the clients as it made me feel satisfied that I had provided them with good service and that I had completed the task to a satisfactory standard. The salon manager told me I was doing a great job and I was asked to wash the hair of many clients.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

After I had spent many hours sweeping and cleaning the salon and making cups of coffee on my last work placement, I was finally asked to wash a client’s hair. One of the apprentices showed me how to do this and watched me as I did my first one. I wasn’t quite careful enough and the poor client ended up with water in her ear, which she wasn’t too happy about. I got instant feedback from her! I apologised and gave her an extra-long head massage to make up for it. After doing several more it became much easier to keep the client comfortable and complete the task to a satisfactory standard. The salon manager said she was pleased with the job I was doing, and commented especially on how efficiently I did the job and how well I cleaned up afterwards. I loved the contact with the clients and was pleased that the salon were happy with me.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

I had to wash a client’s hair. It wasn’t as easy as I thought and I don’t think I did it very well at first. I was a bit nervous. Once I got water in the lady’s ear and she didn’t like that. The apprentice showed me how to do it better and soon I got the hang of it. The salon manager said I was doing a good job and asked me to do more of the hair washing. I liked giving the customers a head massage.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

I washed a lady’s hair. Louise helped me. She told me I did a good job. I like washing people’s hair. I think I did a good job too.

### 

## Skill Area 3(b) – Make decisions

### Definition

This Skill Area is about making a choice from a range of possibilities. It involves the capacity to use different decision-making approaches and to reflect on the outcomes of decisions.

### Key terms and concepts

*Decisions* – are required in many different circumstances, ranging from simple, highly predictable situations with a limited range of options, to highly complex, unpredictable situations with many possible options. Some decisions can and/or must be made quickly, with limited time for exploration while others allow for more extensive consideration. While most approaches to the development of decision making skills focus on formal, systematic processes, in reality, most decisions are made unconsciously or intuitively. Although closely associated with problem solving, decisions are also required when a change of any kind is being considered, even if there is no obvious problem involved.

*Take the initiative* – the ability to make decisions and take action without waiting to be told what to do.

### Unpacking the questions

1. Describe a situation where you had to make a decision on the best way to complete a task/activity you had been given. How effective was your action? If you were asked to complete a similar task/activity what would you do differently?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 1, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What tasks did you do?
* Did you do them on your own or with others?
* Did you have to make any decisions to complete one of these tasks?
* Was the decision simple or difficult? How and why?
* How many options were there?
* How many factors were involved in the decision?
* Were the consequences of the decision serious?
* Was a wrong decision going to cause harm to anyone or anything?
* Was a wrong decision going to cost the business money or time?
* Was a wrong decision going to cause you embarrassment?
* What did you have to know before you made a decision?
* Did you have all the facts before making a decision?
* Did you have a chance to ask someone else before you made your final decision?
* Did you act on any feedback provided to you?
* Did one decision lead to you having to make another decision or change?
* What was the end result?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

*Situation*: I have just completed my work placement in a pre-school where I frequently worked alongside the education assistant to prepare the children’s activities. I soon found myself taking on some of this responsibility and some of the decision-making.

*Task*: The EA asked me to set up the activity tables with two different activities for students to explore the colour red. I had to decide what the activities would be and how best to set them up.

*Action*: I discussed with the EA some possibilities and asked what they had done yesterday, so I could organise something different. I checked in the store room to see what resources were available. Based on my previous experience and observation, I knew the children loved finger painting and play dough. I had about 30 minutes to prepare, so I had to decide quickly on the activities so that I had a reasonable amount of time to set up. I found a couple of cans of shaving cream and some red powder paint so I quickly decided that finger paint prints would be one of the activities. As this had the potential to be rather messy, I decided that the second activity should be cleaner – red play dough with plastic cutters and rolling pins.

*Result*: The students loved both activities. They certainly explored red in a very tactile way. The only issue we had was keeping the play dough and the finger paint separate. Next time I would move the two long activity tables further apart so the children participating in the finger painting were out of reach of the play dough table.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

*Situation*: I did my work placement in a pre-school. I worked closely with the EA who set up lots of activities for the children.

*Task*: After I had been at the Centre for several weeks, the EA asked me to choose two activities for the students to do to explore the colour red and set up for them.

*Action*: I asked what the students had done lately so I could organise something different. I knew the children loved painting so I checked to see if there was any red paint. There wasn’t, but I noticed some cans of shaving cream and powder paint which gave me the idea of doing a finger painting activity like I’d seen on TV. I only had 30 minutes to decide and prepare for the activities. The finger painting activity took most of the time to set up, so I quickly decided on play dough for the other activity. I found some red play dough in the fridge and some plastic cutters and rolling pins.

*Result*: The students loved both activities but sure made a mess with the finger paint. Next time I would move the activity tables further apart so the finger paint didn’t end up in the play dough!

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

*Situation*: I worked in a pre-school helping the EA.

*Task*: One afternoon I had to pick 2 activities for the kids to do.

*Action*: I decided on finger painting and play dough. I knew the kids loved those things and I knew we had play dough and finger paint in the store room.

*Result*: The kids had a great time but made a lot of a mess. Next time I would set up the painting outside.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

Written observation from social trainer in the workplace.

*Wednesday 12/56/16, ‘Ben was not given many chances to make a decision about anything at his last work placement, being more intent on following direct instructions. However, today the education assistant asked him to choose two activities for the pre-school children to do after lunch. She gave him a limited selection of options and he was quite excited to be able to choose two activities that he had seen the children enjoy previously. He decided on play dough and finger painting and helped the EA collect the resources and set up these two activities. He beamed from ear to ear while he watched the children eagerly participate in the activities he had chosen. He was less enthusiastic when he had to help clean up the mess. He said he thought the children should do the painting outside next time.’ Mrs C Smith.*

1. Making a wrong decision can cause major problems in a workplace. Explain what you would do if you could not decide what to do?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 2, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What is a wrong decision?
* What makes a decision wrong?
* Do you know whether a decision is wrong when you make it?
* Have you ever made a wrong decision?
* How did you know it was wrong?
* Do you make decisions in your workplace?
* What kind of decisions?
* What is a right decision?
* How do you know it is right?
* What are some of the consequences of making a wrong decision at work?
* Does the length of time it takes to make a decision affect whether it works out to be right or wrong?
* Do you consider more than one option before making a decision?
* What sort of problems can be caused by making the wrong decision?
* What benefits can be had by making the right decision?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

As I became more experienced in the café kitchen where I worked, I was asked to do more and more things without supervision, and so the number of decisions I had to make increased. When I had time to spare one afternoon I decided to get a head start on the jobs that needed to be done for the following day. I knew this would be helpful to my supervisor and the others in the team. However, I couldn’t decide whether to prepare the salads or fold cutlery into the napkins. I wanted to show some initiative and didn’t like to bother my supervisor, but I really didn’t know what would be the most beneficial so I decided the best thing to do was to ask. My supervisor explained that while both the jobs were necessary, she had another workplace learning student who had a disability coming in the following day especially to fold the cutlery into napkins as she had been learning to do. She said fresh vegetables were being delivered first thing in the morning and so it would be better to do the salads in the morning. However, she said the most pressing job was to scrub the exhaust fan over the stove because she had just been told that an inspection by the Authorities was imminent. I set to straight away and by the time I left, the kitchen stove area was immaculate. In this instance, it was a good thing that I asked my supervisor to help me make the decision as I was able to help in a more practical way. Sometimes you don’t have enough facts to be able to make the best decision on your own.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

After I had worked in the kitchen of the local café for several weeks, I began to do more and more things unsupervised. This meant I had to make some decisions on my own. One day I finished all the jobs that I had been given quite quickly and I couldn’t decide what to do next – fold cutlery into the napkins for quick takeaways, or top up the salad containers in the fridge. I knew both jobs had to be done and would save the staff time the following day, but really didn’t know which had the highest priority. I wanted to show my initiative and didn’t want to disturb my supervisor, but in the end I decided the best thing to do was to ask. Lucky I did because she said neither – her priority was to clean the exhaust fan because a health inspector was coming. I am glad I asked, as I wasn’t aware of that.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

I like to think for myself at work and so when I had finished everything I had to do I tried to think of other jobs I could do to save time the next day. I knew that cutlery had to be folded into napkins for the takeaways and that the salad containers needed to be topped up but I couldn’t decide which job was more urgent. So I asked my supervisor. She was glad I did because she had an even more urgent job for me to do. If you can’t decide something – just ask!

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

I had to decide what job to do next. I didn’t know which one was needed first so I asked my supervisor. I didn’t want to do the wrong thing.

1. There are many decision-making approaches for both individual and group decision making. Describe a situation in your workplace where a group decision-making strategy was used (e.g. vote, group consensus, majority rules). Was this effective and was everyone happy with the decision?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 3, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What kind of decisions require a group decision-making strategy?
* What are some group decision-making strategies?
* Were any of these strategies used in your workplace? (one person decides; vote – majority decision or unanimous decision; compromise; consensus; postponing a decision – wait and see what happens.)
* Will the group decision affect everyone?
* How would you feel if you didn’t agree with the group decision?
* Would you expect everyone to abide by the group decision?
* Did everyone have an equal opportunity to contribute to the group decision?
* Did everyone have their say?
* Were the facts established?
* Should a group decision be binding on everyone?
* Should you use the same strategy every time a decision is required? Why/why not?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

I can give an example of where a decision that affected everyone was made by consensus. There was a great deal of discussion about whether workers without school-aged children should be allowed to take leave during the school holidays. Obviously those with children faced all sorts of childcare issues if they couldn’t take leave while their children were on holidays. Some employees without school aged children wanted to take their leave during the school holidays for different reasons. They all seemed like they had a good reason and one day it came to a head and the boss called everyone into the lunch room to give everyone an opportunity to have their say in a controlled and respectful manner. He invited everyone to express their views and ask questions and then he read out a bit from the company’s leave policy that said all employees had the right to take leave at the discretion of the manager – nothing about school holidays or whether or not workers had children. After the boss had heard from everyone, he went away and drew up a leave roster for the next 12 months. He asked all employees to put down all the leave they wanted to take and when. He then looked at the times where more than one employee wanted to take leave at the same time. This wasn’t as often as it was thought. Where there were double-ups, he made sure there would still be enough staff to cover the jobs that had to be done. Where this was not possible, he approved one’s leave but said the other could have priority in the following year. The boss brought everyone back together and explained the situation and asked for further comment. There was consensus that this was the fairest way of allocating leave and while not everyone got exactly what they wanted, they were all happy to abide by the consensus decision.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

In my last workplace, quite a few of the employees wanted to take their leave while their children were on school holidays. There were others who didn’t have school-aged children but also wanted to take their leave during school holidays for a variety of reasons that all sounded fair to me. I wondered how this issue would be decided. The boss called a meeting and clearly stated that the company’s leave policy said nothing about priority for leave being given to those with school-aged children. However, he did acknowledge that this might be an issue for the business and was obviously causing some conflict within the staff. He gave everyone a chance to have their say, then he went away and drew up a leave roster for the next 12 months. He asked everyone to put in their leave requests so that he could see if there really was a problem and found that there were not as many issues as thought. On the one occasion when two employees wanted to take leave at the same time and there weren’t enough others to cover the business needs, the boss said he would approve the leave for one and gave the other priority for the next year. Everyone was happy with that consensus decision.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

There were a few arguments in my workplace about who could take their holidays in the school holidays. The boss called a meeting and everyone had their say. He told the staff that there was nothing in the policy to say that people with school-aged children should have leave priority over those that didn’t. In the end everyone had to fill in a leave roster. There weren’t as many problems as expected. Everyone agreed that when there was a problem, one would have the holidays this year and the other would get priority next year. Not everyone got the holidays they wanted, but they all felt like the decision was fair.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

Lots of people wanted holidays from work at the same time as their kids. The boss said one could have holidays this year and the other could have the school holidays next time. That was fair.

1. ‘Flipping a coin’ is one way to make a decision. Do you consider this a good way to make a decision in the workplace? Why/why not?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 4, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What kinds of decisions are made by ‘flipping a coin’?
* What are the benefits of such a decision making strategy?
* What are the drawbacks of making a decision by flipping a coin?
* Is flipping a coin fair?
* How quickly does the decision need to be made?
* Do people get to have their ‘say’ when a decision is made in this way?
* Will people abide by a decision made in this way?
* How important is the decision?
* What are the possible consequences of making a wrong decision?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

Flipping a coin might be a good strategy when a quick decision is required that carries little importance, such as who will start first in a game. However, in the workplace, it is a very risky strategy. Most decisions that are made in the workplace have an impact on several people, and sometimes many more. A decision has the ability to make money for a company, or lead to the business making a loss. Where the consequences of a decision are serious or important, much more time and energy needs to be given to the decision-making strategy. For example, if a workplace was putting on a morning tea for their staff and a decision had to be made about whether to have sausage rolls or party pies, the flip of a coin might be a relevant strategy. It doesn’t really matter. On the other hand, a decision with greater consequences, such as should sausage rolls and party pies be added to the lunch menu for sale to customers, should be considered more carefully – has the kitchen got the capacity to store the products, heat the products, do customers want to buy these items, will they make a good profit for the business etc.? This is a decision that requires more research and thought than a toss of a coin.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

Flipping a coin is a really quick way to make a decision and is fair in that each option has equal chance of being chosen. However, it is not a really good way to decide something that is important or has serious consequences. While I was in my workplace, I had to decide whether to have the first lunch break or the second. My colleague said it didn’t make any difference to her and I didn’t mind either, so we tossed a coin. That strategy worked in that instance, but would not have been suitable for deciding if I should do the stock taking task or the filing task first. I needed to know which task was the most urgent and also if there was someone who could help me as the stock taking job required two people. The decision needed to be made quite quickly, but not immediately, so I had time to discuss the options with my workplace supervisor before deciding what to do first. If I had flipped a coin to make this decision, it is possible that I wouldn’t have been able to complete the task as there was no one to assist.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

Flipping a coin to make a decision is quick and fair. It works for some decisions that don’t really matter, but it’s not a good way of making important decisions because it could end up being the wrong decision. It could even cost the business money or someone could get upset.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

Which of these decisions could be made by flipping a coin?

* Shall I take an apple or orange to work for morning tea?
* Shall I go to work or stay at home?
* Shall I eat my lunch with Tim or Rob today?
* Shall I wear my safety glasses or not?
* Shall I go home early or stay until the end of the work day?
* Shall I wash my coffee cup or put it in the bin?
* Shall I ask my supervisor how to use the photocopier or try to figure it out myself?

## Skill Area 3(c) – Identify and solve problems

### Definition

This Skill Area is about identifying and addressing routine and non-routine problems in order to achieve work objectives. This involves the capacity to anticipate or identify problems, take steps to solve problems and reflect on the outcomes.

### Key term and concepts

*Problem* – any question or matter involving doubt, uncertainty, or difficulty. Something may be perceived as a problem by one person but not by another, or may be an issue in one context but not in another. Work related problems may involve few or many variables, be obvious or hidden, predictable or unpredictable, expected or unexpected. A problem may have one right answer, but often there will be many possible solutions, from which a choice must be made.

*Problem solving* – involves identifying and implementing a selected solution and seeing if it works. An individual’s problem solving performance at any time will be strongly influenced by their understanding of the context in which they are operating.

*Trial and error* – experimenting until a solution is found or a satisfactory result is achieved.

*Intuitive* – is instinctive behaviour based on what one feels to be true, or ‘right,’ even without conscious reasoning. When used in regard to problem solving, the term refers to an expert’s capacity to draw quickly on vast amounts of past experience in order to sum up a situation, identify the root cause of a problem and devise a solution that is generally considered by others to be effective. The ability to act intuitively and effectively is a characteristic of experts. It is developing in those at the proficient stage, and is a key indicator that someone has moved from the ‘capable’ to the ‘proficient’ stage. A novice or advanced beginner may act on gut feeling without conscious reasoning but is highly unlikely to act effectively, especially in a complex situation.

### Unpacking the questions

1. Describe a problem you encountered in your workplace. What steps did you take to solve this problem? Was the problem solved? Explain.

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 1, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What caused the problem? Someone? Something?
* Did everyone else agree or recognise it as a problem?
* How serious was the problem?
* Could the problem have been anticipated?
* Could anything have been done to prevent the problem from arising?
* How quickly was a solution required?
* Was there more than one solution possible?
* What would have happened if the problem was not solved?
* Were others part of the problem?
* Were others part of the solution?
* Did you discuss the problem with anyone?
* How did you decide that the problem was solved?
* Was the problem likely to recur?
* Was anything done to make sure the problem wouldn’t recur?
* Did the problem cause any damage to the business or people?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

I encountered many problems in my last work placement, but none of them were very serious and most were quickly and easily solved. I was working in a busy lunch bar and we were always rushed off our feet. Some of the problems were things like the customers not receiving what they had ordered. One of the problems was that when we got really busy, we kept falling over each other trying to take the order and deliver it to the kitchen, take the money, clear the tables and deliver the right order to the right table. Everyone was trying to do every task. When the rush was over one day, I discussed the problem with my supervisor. We looked at the tasks and decided that it might be better if each person was allocated a particular role – for example one person only took the order, one person only handled the money etc. When we tried it the next day, it worked well and everyone got the right order and probably more quickly than before. It taught me that it is good to stop occasionally and look at the work systems and practices and try something different, even if you’ve been doing something the same way for ages.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

Problem solving was a feature of my work role because of the type of industry I was working in, i.e. Hospitality. I was in a busy kitchen environment where problems arise regularly because that is the nature of this type of work. One time a customer was given a different meal from the one he ordered. My first step, once he told me, was to apologise and tell him I would rectify the situation. I reconfirmed his original order, took the meal away, and then went straight to the head chef to get the new meal as quickly as possible. I also explained things to the manager. He suggested I go and offer the customer a free drink while he was waiting, as a way of lessening the inconvenience. I believed this solved the problem because the customer enjoyed his meal and thanked me before he left.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

One problem in the lunch bar where I worked was sometimes people got the wrong order. This happened mostly when we were very busy. The boss asked everyone if they had any ideas about how we could make fewer mistakes. We decided to give each person a special job. Mine was to wipe the tables. It was much easier and we didn’t mix up so many people’s orders.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

I had a problem knowing when it was time to go back to work after my lunch break. Mrs Tyson set an alarm on my phone. When it buzzed I knew I had to pack up my things and get back to work. (Recorded by the social trainer after a discussion with student.)

1. Sometimes more than one person is needed to solve a problem. Describe where this method of problem-solving was used in your workplace. What are some of the benefits of solving a problem in a team?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 2, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What caused the problem? Someone? Something?
* Did everyone else agree or recognise it as a problem?
* How serious was the problem?
* Could the problem have been anticipated?
* Could anything have been done to prevent the problem from arising?
* How quickly was a solution required?
* Was more than one solution possible?
* What would have happened if the problem was not solved?
* Were others part of the problem?
* Were others part of the solution?
* Did you discuss the problem with anyone?
* How did you decide that the problem was solved?
* Was the problem likely to recur?
* Was anything done to make sure the problem wouldn’t recur?
* Did the problem cause any damage to the business or people?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

Occasionally a problem is complex, involving more than one person, or is not considered to be a problem by everyone, or has serious consequences or a range of possible solutions. Sometimes solving one problem causes another problem. If the problem is like this, more than one person might be needed to find the best solution. This was the case in my last workplace, RGT Plumbing. Most of the employees worked a 9-day fortnight and were allowed to choose the day they didn’t work to suit themselves. This was causing a problem in that some days we couldn’t do some jobs because we were under staffed. The boss called the team together to discuss the issue. Everyone had a chance to offer a solution and have their say. Some of the suggestions included:

* everyone had to take the same day off and minimal work would be contracted for that day
* stagger the days off to ensure that only one person was missing on any given day
* accumulate the days off and take them in a block at a pre-arranged time.

As this was a decision that affected everyone, a consensus decision had to be reached. It was agreed that each employee would take either a Monday or a Friday, with some flexibility allowed for swapping days providing the boss approved. In this way, the team could plan their work around the number of workers. I think the benefits of solving a problem in a team are:

* different people have different ideas so more options for solving the problem are likely
* people are more likely to comply with the solution if they have been part of the decision making process
* when people work together, they feed off each other and their ideas and are more likely to come up with a workable solution.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

At RGT Plumbing, everyone worked a 9-day fortnight and could take their day off whenever they wanted to. This was creating a problem for the team, as it was hard to plan the work. Some days we just didn’t have enough people to do the job efficiently and safely because often we were short of two or more workers.

The boss called everyone together and explained the problem and asked for solutions. It even affected me because one day my supervisor was on his day off and I didn’t know who I should report to. Everyone had a chance to say what they thought and these were some of the solutions that we came up with:

* everyone had to take the same day off and the boss wouldn’t schedule much work for that day
* stagger the days off so that only one person was missing on any given day
* save up the days off and take them in a block at a pre-arranged time.

Everyone agreed that Mondays and Fridays were the best days to have off so the boss drew up a roster and asked each person to choose to take either of those days off so he could schedule the work to suit how many workers would be available. Because everyone had a chance to have their say, they were all happy to do as they were asked. I am glad I had a say as well, because I now know that my supervisor will be at work when I am on my work placement.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

A big problem at RGT Plumbing was that we didn’t have enough workers to do some jobs because the men could take one day off every two weeks. They could choose the day and sometimes more than one worker picked the same day. One day my supervisor wasn’t there and I didn’t know what to do. At lunch time when everyone was at work, we had a meeting to talk about the problem and together we worked out a good solution. It was good that everyone helped to solve the problem because they didn’t mind picking either Monday or Friday for their day off.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

*Problem*: My supervisor was not at work. It was his day off. I didn’t know who to ask for help.

*Solution*: Everyone talked about which days they would not come to work. My supervisor said he would always be at work when I was. I was pleased about that.

1. ‘Guess and check’ and ‘trial and error’ are two methods of solving problems. Using a situation from your work placement, describe where you have used either of these methods of problem solving. Was it effective?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 3, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What caused the problem? Someone? Something?
* Did everyone else agree or recognise it as a problem?
* How serious was the problem?
* Could the problem have been anticipated?
* Could anything have been done to prevent the problem from arising?
* How quickly was a solution required?
* Was more than one solution possible?
* What would have happened if the problem was not solved?
* Were others part of the problem?
* Were others part of the solution?
* Did you discuss the problem with anyone?
* How did you decide that the problem was solved?
* Was the problem likely to recur?
* Was anything done to make sure the problem wouldn’t recur?
* Did the problem cause any damage to the business or people?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

‘Guess and check’ is a useful method of solving some problems because you don’t have to disturb someone else and it is usually quicker than waiting for someone else to be free. I would only use this if I wouldn’t cause a greater problem by guessing. I am sure the boss wouldn’t appreciate it if I cost the business money or was injured. However, there was a time while I was on work placement that I used this method of problem solving. I needed to do some photocopying, but just after I started, the paper ran out. There was no more in the photocopy room and everyone who might have known where to find more was busy or out of the office. I guessed there might be more A4 paper in the other photocopy room, so went to check. There were several boxes so I brought one box back to continue my photocopying. When the office manager was free I let her know that I had ‘pinched’ some from the other room and asked what the process was for restocking our area. I was able to finish the job I had been given without bothering the other staff and in an efficient manner. So in this instance at least, the ‘guess and check’ method of problem solving was effective.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

I ran into a minor problem at work the other day when I was given a photocopying task and ran out of paper before I had finished the job. There was no one around to ask where I might find more, so I guessed there might be some in the other photocopy room. I checked and found several more boxes. I took one so that I could finish my job and replaced it the next day. This solved my problem without having to bother anyone or waste time. ‘Guess and check’ was a good method of problem solving for this kind of simple problem. I wouldn’t use it for a problem that had the potential to cause damage to anyone or the business those – better to check first!

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

I ran out of paper when I was photocopying. The boss was busy and there was no one else to ask so I just looked for some more in the other room. I guessed there would be some in there and when I checked – there was. I finished the copying and was glad I didn’t have to bother anyone and got the job done.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

I ran out of paper. I guessed there would be more in the other room. I checked. I found some. I finished my job. I was happy that I worked out the problem by myself.

1. A problem may have one right answer, but often there will be many possible solutions from which a choice must be made. How do you decide which solution to apply? Have you ever made a wrong decision? How did you know it was the wrong one? Give an example from your workplace.

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 4, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What caused the problem? Someone? Something?
* Did everyone else agree or recognise it as a problem?
* How serious was the problem?
* Could the problem have been anticipated?
* Could anything have been done to prevent the problem from arising?
* How quickly was a solution required?
* Was more than one solution possible?
* What would have happened if the problem was not solved?
* Were others part of the problem?
* Were others part of the solution?
* Did you discuss the problem with anyone?
* What are some methods of problem solving that you could use?
* Did you try one method first? Which one and why?
* How did you decide that the problem was solved?
* Was the problem likely to recur?
* Was anything done to make sure the problem wouldn’t recur?
* Did the problem cause any damage to the business or people?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

Some problems may have more than one solution. It is not always easy then to decide on the best solution. For example, while I was working in an aged care facility, I was dusting an elderly patient’s room when I accidentally knocked a china ornament off a bedside table and it broke. I was devastated and tried to think how I could resolve this problem. Some of the options were:

* quickly hide the broken ornament and mention it to no one
* quickly hide the broken ornament and purchase a replacement as soon as possible
* own up and offer to purchase a new ornament
* own up and offer to mend the ornament
* take the broken ornament to the supervisor and ask what she would suggest I do about it.

This problem was both a moral dilemma and a practical one. I knew that honesty was the best policy, but I was so embarrassed that I put the broken pieces into my bag and said nothing. When I returned the following week, the supervisor asked me if I knew anything about the missing ornament. I admitted that I had accidentally broken it and had taken it home to see if I could fix it. Being caught out was even more embarrassing than owing up and apologising would have been. I had damaged my reputation and trustworthiness. I apologised to the elderly lady and offered to buy her another ornament. To my surprise, the elderly lady was not at all concerned. She said she appreciated my apology and accepted my offer to replace her ornament. I had made a wrong decision and would solve this problem differently next time as I now realise your reputation can’t be fixed as easily as an ornament.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

When I was working at the Aged Care Hostel, I accidentally broke an ornament while I was dusting a lady’s bedside table. I felt awful, but I didn’t know what to do as I was so embarrassed. No one was around, so I quickly picked up the pieces and put them in my bag to take home to mend. If I couldn’t mend it invisibly, I thought I would be able to buy another ornament and replace it before anyone noticed. I know there were other options to solve this problem. I could have owned up and apologised straight away and offered immediately to repair or replace the ornament. I could also have discussed the options with my supervisor. However, because of my embarrassment I chose the quickest and ‘easiest’ solution – I didn’t think through the consequences. This turned out to be the wrong decision because the lady did notice her ornament was missing and when my supervisor asked me if I knew where it was, I had to admit that I had broken it. The old lady was upset and the supervisor had lost her trust in me. I belatedly apologised and offered to replace the ornament. I should have owned up immediately, apologised and asked the old lady if she would like the broken ornament replaced or fixed.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

I accidentally broke an old lady’s ornament when I was working at the aged care place. I hid it in my bag and hoped no one would notice. Of course they did and I got into big trouble. The old lady was upset and my supervisor was cross. I apologised and replaced the ornament, but I felt really bad. I wish I had thought of another solution. Maybe I should have asked my supervisor what I should do.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

I broke a lady’s china dog. I felt bad. I hid it and didn’t tell anyone. Mum found it in my bag. She was cross. She made me say sorry and give her a new one. If it happens again I will tell my supervisor.

## Skill Area 3(d) – Create and innovate

### Definition

This Skill Area is about creating, applying and recognising the value of new ideas to solve problems, improve or develop new processes, products or strategies, or deliver new benefits. It involves the capacity to challenge perceptions of how things are, and how they might be, and to recognise a potential opportunity.   
It also involves the use of formal processes to challenge and extend initial perceptions of a situation, and generate, and select from, a range of new ideas.

### Key terms and concepts

*New ideas* – refers to ideas that may never have been thought of before, or ideas that may not have been proposed in a particular context, or by a particular individual. They include hypotheses, speculations and possibilities.

*Lateral thinking* – refers to the general approach of exploring multiple possibilities rather than pursuing only one.

*Lateral thinking techniques* – are a set of systematic thinking tools that can be used to challenge initial concepts and perceptions (a necessary pre-cursor to having ‘new’ ideas) and generate large numbers of ideas in a particular situation.

*Analytical or logical techniques* – are thinking processes used to develop criteria and select ideas for practical application, or for further exploration and development. While final decisions about an idea may be made intuitively, in a work setting they often involve detailed analysis and a logical process of prioritising different options against an explicit set of criteria.

*Judgement* – refers to the mental operation in which an individual seeks to ‘make sense’ of a new idea by evaluating it against past experience to decide whether it is a ‘good’ idea or a ‘bad’ one, whether it will work or not work etc. This process is often implicit, and has the potential to rule out many new ideas before they can be explored.

*Explore* – means to traverse or range over for the purpose of discovery. Exploration of a new idea involves setting aside judgement for long enough to allow genuine consideration of its possibilities. Any new idea has the potential to suggest another way forward. Even if the idea itself is unlikely to be applicable in its entirety, it may be based on principles or have features that could be utilised in a new way. However, these are not always immediately obvious – hence the need to ‘play’ with possibilities for a time before making a decision.

*Innovation* – involves inventing a new idea, or recognising the potential of a new idea proposed by someone else, developing it further and introducing it for the first time, or for the first time in a particular context. While the term is often used to describe the full *process* of design, evaluation and implementation, the focus of this Skill Area is on the process of selecting an idea for implementation. The implementation of the idea selected is a complex process in its own right, which draws on other Skill Areas, such as planning and organising, decision making, communicating and connecting with others.

### Unpacking the questions

1. Thinking of new ways of doing things and putting that into action is being creative and innovative. Describe a situation where you helped a colleague or supervisor to implement a new way of doing something. How did you feel after doing this?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 1, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Were you given a job to do that you found an easier faster way to do?
* Who usually decides how something will be done in your workplace?
* Did you get any say in how you did something?
* If you thought of or discovered a better way of doing something, who would you talk about this with?
* Did you discuss your new idea with someone in authority?
* What might stop you from discussing a new idea with anyone?
* Could your new way of doing something affect anyone else?
* Have you had a chance to try different ways of doing something in the workplace?
* Did it take much time to trial something new before making a decision about the new idea?
* How did others react to your new idea or system or process?
* Did it help them to do their job?
* Did it make the workplace a better place?
* How did you feel about creating and putting into action something new?
* Would you be confident to try other new ideas or ways of doing things?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

I was working for a roof carpenter in my last placement, which is a really dangerous job as you are constantly working at heights. The people I worked with were more confident and practiced at climbing ladders with materials and tools and assembling roofing structures on the roof, but I found it quite scary. One afternoon I asked if I might try assembling roof joists on the ground before getting onto the roof. I was a bit nervous about making a suggestion for change as I was the least experienced and I didn’t want the others to ridicule me or think I was a bit of an upstart. I was really pleased when they said they thought that was a really good idea. That gave me the confidence to make up a prototype of the joist shapes we would need. This made making others very easy, as we just copied the angles from my prototype. Working on the ground and in the shade meant there was less room for error and the working environment was safer and more comfortable. My supervisor was very impressed because the job was completed efficiently and safely. I felt really good as he praised my idea and said I was contributing well to the team.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

As all my work was up to date at one point during the day, I took the initiative to do something productive and help save time for the following week. In the Building and Construction industry you need to prepare roof joists before getting onto the roof. I knew we had a tricky section of a house to do so I made up a prototype of the joist shapes we would need. This made making others very easy, as we just copied the angles from my prototype. My supervisor was very impressed and I felt really good as he praised my initiative and said I was contributing well to the team.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

I found an easier way to put roof joists together. I asked if it was OK to make them on the ground then take them up onto the roof as it was very windy and I was a bit scared about working on the roof. My boss said that was a great idea. I was glad I asked as I felt safer and didn’t have to worry about falling off the roof.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

I had to pick up all the plastic wrapping and put it in the bin. The bin was far away. I got tired taking all the rubbish to the bin so I thought of a good idea. I dragged the bin over to where everyone was working so I didn’t have to walk so far.

1. The term ‘thinking outside the box’ is often used to describe people who come up with new ideas or new places/ways to apply an old idea. This is also called lateral thinking. Have you ever proposed a small change to a process, product or service within your own role in the workplace? Explain.

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 2, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Were you given a job to do that you found an easier faster way to do?
* Who usually decides how something will be done in your workplace?
* Did you get any say in how you did something?
* If you thought of or discovered a better way of doing something, who would you talk about this with?
* Where do ideas come from?
* Did you discuss your new idea with someone in authority?
* What might stop you from discussing a new idea with anyone?
* Could your new way of doing something affect anyone else?
* Have you had a chance to try different ways of doing something in the workplace?
* Did it take much time to trial something new before making a decision about the new idea?
* How did others react to your new idea or system or process?
* Did it help them to do their job?
* Did it make the workplace a better place?
* How did you feel about creating and putting into action something new?
* Would you be confident to try other new ideas or ways of doing things?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

I have never thought of myself as a creative person. I can’t paint or dance or sing, but by the end of my last work placement, my supervisor had changed my mind about that. He said being creative was just finding new and better ways of doing things. I was always thinking of ways to save time and effort while I worked at Caravan and Camping – mostly to make things easier for me, but the spin off was that some of my ideas caught on. One idea was to open one sleeping bag fully and place it on display next to the rolled up sleeping bags. I was usually the one who had to repack sleeping bags that customers had pulled out to check on size and warmth. After I had done this at least five times in one morning, I got frustrated enough to put my suggestion to my supervisor. He was grateful to me for thinking ‘outside the square’ and I am sure I was more productive as a result. I was able to spend more time on more important jobs. We did this to many of the other items in the store, which made the shop more interesting and enticing.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

While I was working at Caravan and Camping, I got sick of repacking sleeping bags after customers had pulled them out of their covers to have a better look at them. This took up time that I could have been doing more important tasks and it made a mess of the floor space. I suggested to my supervisor that we pull one of the sleeping bags out and put it on show near the packaged ones. He said it was a good idea and left me to do it. I had a great time working out where and how it would be best displayed. This worked really well and one of the other guys did the same thing for water containers in another part of the store. We both agreed that it looked great, saved us time and was appreciated by the customers. It also kept the stock clean and packaged for buyers. Sometimes I think it takes someone new to look at things differently. I am glad the idea worked because it has given me the confidence to suggest my other ideas.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

I hated the job of putting sleeping bags back into their covers, so I asked if I could leave one out for people to look at. My boss said that’s a good idea. I picked one and hung it over the rail near the sleeping bags. That saved me lots of time and I could get on with my other jobs.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

My good idea: pull one sleeping bag out for people to see so I don’t have to keep packing them away.

Did it work? Yes/No

How pleased was your boss? \* \*\* \*\*\* \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

How pleased were the customers? \* \*\* \*\*\* \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

How pleased were you? \* \*\* \*\*\* \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

1. If you thought of a new way of doing something in your workplace, who would you talk to about this idea?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 3, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* Would you discuss a new idea with another student?
* Would you talk about the idea with your parents?
* Would you discuss your idea with your workplace supervisor?
* Would you think about it first?
* When would you talk to someone about your idea?
* Is timing important when discussing a new way of doing things?
* When wouldn’t it be a good idea to discuss changes?
* Who might be upset with new suggestions?
* How would you feel if they didn’t accept your idea?
* How would you feel if they did accept your idea?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

While I was on work placement at Smithy’s Co-op in the small town near my uncle’s farm, I noticed that it looked as though it had been a long time since the window display had been changed. I have a bit of a flair for design and, over my time at the store, I thought of lots of different ideas for how to jazz up the window and make the business more inviting for customers. I didn’t want to offend anyone by saying so, but I thought the cobwebs, dead flies and faded shirt on the dummy in the window did nothing for the business.   
I mentioned my thoughts to one of the younger staff members that I felt comfortable with and asked her who she suggested I speak to about it. She was able to tell me that the store manager had mentioned several times that it was a job that needed doing, but no one had got around to doing it. That gave me the confidence to offer to re-decorate the display window when I next saw the store manager. He was really pleased and gave me an afternoon off other duties to do it. I had the best time and all the staff and customers commented on how great it looked.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

I worked at a little country co-op for my last work placement. The staff were so friendly, but the shop looked a bit ‘tired’ and in need of a face-lift. I couldn’t help noticing the dead flies and cobwebs in the shop window and really wanted to get in and re-decorate it. I didn’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings, so before I asked the store manager if I could create a new display, I asked one of the ladies I had become friendly with if she thought it would be OK to ask the boss if I could jazz it up a bit. She said he had been asking everyone if they wanted to redo the front window, but everyone was too busy. So I approached the store manager and asked if I could do it. He was really pleased and thanked me for my initiative and creativity.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

I worked in a little store that had a terrible window display. It was dusty and old. I asked one of the ladies who I knew better than the others if she thought I should ask the boss if I could update it. She said ‘sure’. I was a bit nervous, but he said to go right ahead. I got rid of the cobwebs and dead flies and now the window looks fantastic. All the customers noticed and said it made them want to come into the shop.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

The shop window used to look like this: (Insert photograph or drawing)

I asked \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ if I could decorate it.

He said \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The shop window now looks like this: (Insert photograph or drawing)

Customers look like this: (Images of happy, worried, angry etc.)

I look like this: (Images or a photograph of student showing real feelings about his/her achievement)

1. How adaptable are you? Would you be open to supporting new ideas, techniques or processes that mean you will have to change what you are used to doing? How would this make you feel? What strategies could be put in place in your workplace to help workers adjust to new ideas or processes?

**Leading questions**

To answer Question 4, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What is another word for ‘adaptable’? (*Flexible, open to change, adjustable, pliant, compliant, malleable, versatile, resilient, conformable, easy-going, obliging, cooperative, amenable, variable, convertible, alterable, modifiable, adjustable, changeable, accommodating*)
* How easy do you find it to learn new skills?
* Have you had to learn new ways of doing something because of a change in the work environment, management, processes or equipment?
* Have you had to change the way you do things because of someone else’s new idea? Your idea?
* Have you ever had to adjust to different managers or supervisors?
* Did you have to adapt to new technologies or tools in the workplace?
* How difficult did you find this?
* Did you have any input into the changes?
* Will the changes make your job easier/faster or more difficult/time consuming?
* How does this influence your adaptability?
* What makes it easier to adapt to new or different things? (time, instruction, if you have had input)
* What makes it harder?
* Do some people find it easier to adapt than others? Why?
* What are some ways of reacting to change? (anger, depression, self-doubt, jubilation, joy, enthusiasm)

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

I actually like change and consider myself very adaptable, but when I am in the workplace, I’m so busy learning new things that I don’t like it when processes are changed just as I am getting used to them. It is especially hard to adapt to changes when they are just sprung on you and you don’t have any understanding of why. I find it is also easier to be flexible and obliging if I have had some input or been part of the decision making process. At my last work placement I turned up one day and there was a new process for scheduling clients’ appointments. The salon had introduced a new software program for bookings. I answered the phone and went to write the appointment in the appointment book as usual only to discover there wasn’t one. No one had thought to update me and I was embarrassed to have to take the client’s name and preferred appointment date and time and say that I would call them back to confirm the appointment. I asked one of the girls to show me how to make bookings on the new system. I was pleased to find that it was much easier and quicker than the old system, so I adjusted quickly. I think it important to ensure everyone is instructed in the use of any new technology or system and to give them time to practice or get used to a new way of doing things. It is also easier to adjust to change if there are not too many changes imposed at the same time.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

I don’t think I am very adaptable at all. It takes me a long time to learn new things, and I get a lot of satisfaction from doing things the right way. Lots of things change in the workplace and because I am not there to be part of the decision making or understand the reason for the changes, I find it a bit distressing when suddenly something I felt confident in doing is changed. I was very comfortable taking client bookings in the salon where I did my last placement until they moved to an electronic booking system. I arrived at work one day and the bookings diary had disappeared! I didn’t notice until I was trying to schedule an appointment. I was embarrassed and had to call the lady back. I think everyone should be told about new systems and given time to practice or have someone assist them the first few times. I did get used to the new appointment system and found it much easier so I eventually became more confident to take bookings.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

I like to try out new ways of doing things. I get bored by doing the same thing the same way forever. I also like to get the job done quickly so am often challenging myself to find a better way. I would say I am very adaptable. This gets me into trouble sometimes, but is a buzz when I do a great job because of one of my great ideas.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy) (Recorded by social trainer)

I hate change. I have to practise and practise to learn how to do things in the workplace. I don’t like it when I have to learn how to do it another way because it takes me a long time. I like to follow instructions in picture form, so it would be helpful if I could learn a new way of doing things with this aid.

## Skill Area 3(e) – Work in a digital world

### Definition

This Skill Area refers to the capacity to connect to other people, information and contexts for work-related purposes using digital systems and technology. It involves understanding concepts and language associated with the digital world and the capacity to understand and work with emerging/accepted etiquette and risks associated with online environments. It also involves identifying how digital technology and digitally based systems can extend, enhance or make possible specific aspects of a role or task, and create new opportunities.

### Key terms and concepts

*Digital world* – refers to the global environment in which digital technology enables multiple connections between people, rapid access to and transfer of information, the visualisation and analysis of data, the ability to connect with others, sharing information, collaborating and build relationships that are not limited by time and location.

*Digital technologies* – include any products or combination of products that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit or receive information electronically in a digital form (e.g. devices, applications, software)*.*

*Network* – in information technology contexts, network refers to a series of points or [node](http://searchnetworking.techtarget.com/definition/node)s interconnected by communication paths. Networks can interconnect with other networks and contain sub-networks   
(e.g. the internet and local intranets).

*Social networking* – the use of interconnected internet communities that help people make and maintain contacts, particularly with people they would have been unlikely to meet otherwise (e.g. Facebook).

*Electronic paper trail* – the electronically stored written evidence of someone’s activities.

*Etiquette* – social conventions about accepted behaviours in the digital world.

*Netiquette* – a set of online conventions that has been formalised and adopted by a number of online services.

### Unpacking the questions

1. A digital world refers to the global environment in which digital technology enables:

* rapid access to, and transfer of, information
* multiple connections between people
* the visualisation and analysis of data
* the ability to connect with others to share information, collaborate and build relationships that are not limited by time and location.

Are all personnel within your workplace equally confident in their use of digital technologies? Explain

### Leading questions

To answer Question 1, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* How do people in your workplace communicate with each other when they are in the same work space?
* How do they communicate when they are not in a face-to-face situation?
* How do they communicate with their customers/clients that are not in the workplace?
* How would they have communicated with their customers or clients in times past?
* What advantages does the current method have?
* Does it have any disadvantages?
* What kinds of information are shared in a business or organisation?
* How is this information shared? Electronically in a digital form (e.g. devices, applications, software)?
* What products are used to send or receive information electronically in a digital form (e.g. devices, applications, software)?
* Is any of this information improved through pictures, graphs, charts, photographs, diagrams or maps?
* What products or combination of products in your workplace will store and retrieve information   
  (e.g. iPhone, iPad, laptop computer, desktop computer, photocopier, telephone)?
* Are computers used in your workplace?
* Did you use specialist software programs, such as electronic diaries or drawing tools or accounting systems?
* What skills are needed to use digital technologies?
* How are these skills developed?
* Does everyone have the knowledge and skills needed to make the most of the digital technologies?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

I worked on my uncle’s farm for two weeks during the July school holidays. I didn’t realise how important digital technologies were in the agricultural environment. We used mobile phones (when we were in range) to communicate. When we were not in speaking distance and if the signal cut out, we could rely on the CB radio which was in every farm vehicle as well as the homestead and sheds. We could also communicate with our neighbours using this technology, which was essential in case of fire or emergency.

One of the jobs I helped with was weaning the lambs from the ewes. Digital scales were placed in the drafting race and the weight of each animal digitally recorded to be retrieved at a later date for analysis and comparison with previous year’s data. This was previously a two-man job as the weights had to be recorded by hand – a tedious and time-consuming task, without the ability to create graphs. My uncle explained that the farm would not operate without access to market information, weather reports, crop updates, agronomic data and such. For this it was essential to have a computer with access to the internet for global information and a decent download speed. Paddock records and cropping data were stored in digital form and my uncle showed me how this information was used to assist with decision making and improve productivity. He said his father found these newer technologies difficult, but with the help of his son, was learning to use and appreciate the advantages these devices and software programs. He had even learned to use an iPad and could tell you what the weather forecast was at any given time!

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

Two weeks on my uncle’s wheat and sheep farm opened my eyes to the importance of digital technologies in this industry. We used mobile phones to communicate with each other and with off-farm businesses, such as to order spare parts and arrange deliveries while away from the farm office. CB radios were also an important means of communication and were in every vehicle and the main shed and house. They were needed to communicate with the neighbouring farmers and in case of fires especially. There were digital scales that recorded data about the sheep that could be used at a later date to assist in decision-making. There were digital devices in the cropping machinery that received data and information about seeding rates and paddock data that would be used to plan the most efficient cropping plan in future years. A connection to the internet was vital for gaining information about the weather, prices and other agricultural information.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

On the farm we used mobile phones, iPads, digital scales, the internet and CB radios. The farmer was always cross because the internet download speed was very slow and he needed to get information about growing crops and farming sheep. The tractor had a computer in it to control how much seed and fertiliser to spread for the different paddocks. The farmer’s father wasn’t very good with the digital technology because it was all new to him but he understood how valuable these things are for making the best decisions in farming.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

I worked with Uncle Mark who is a farmer. He used… (pictures of mobile phones, computer, iPad, CB radio… etc. [generic or from photographs taken during the work placement]). I used… (more pictures…). Uncle Mark’s father used… (more pictures – possibly not so many devices or machines).

1. Digital technologies include any products that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit or receive information electronically in a digital form, e.g. devices, applications and software. Describe a technological or digital tool used in your workplace. How does this tool improve the way in which you or others complete their work?

### Leading questions

To answer Question 2, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* How do people in your workplace communicate with each other when they are in the same work space?
* How do they communicate when they are not in a face-to-face situation?
* How do they communicate with their customers/clients that are not in the workplace?
* How would they have communicated with their customers or clients in times past?
* What advantages does the current method have?
* Does it have any disadvantages?
* What kinds of information are shared in a business or organisation?
* How is this information shared? Electronically in a digital form (e.g. devices, applications, software)?
* What products are used to send or receive information electronically in a digital form (e.g. devices, applications, software)?
* Is any of this information improved through pictures, graphs, charts, photographs, diagrams or maps?
* What products or combination of products in your workplace will store and retrieve information   
  (e.g. iPhone, iPad, laptop computer, desktop computer, photocopier, telephone)?
* Are computers used in your workplace?
* Did you use specialist software programs, such as electronic diaries or drawing tools or accounting systems?
* What skills are needed to use digital technologies?
* How are these skills developed?
* Does everyone have the knowledge and skills needed to make the most of the digital technologies?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

The packing shed of an orange orchard might seem like an unlikely place to find digital technologies, but I soon found out how important such a tool was to the grower whose orchard I spent a couple of weeks at for my last work placement. I learned that getting perfectly ripe fruit to the market place first meant the produce would fetch the highest prices. Therefore, the quicker the orchardist could get his oranges from the tree to market, the better. A conveyor belt system controlled by a computer was set up to speed up this task, originally carried out by several people by hand. The conveyor belt contained a camera, digital scales, cleaner and sorting arms that assisted the workers in grading and packing oranges for market. It was controlled by a computer which could be programmed to weigh and sort other types of fruit and vegetables as well. This data can be used to compare this year’s produce with other years. The computer was able to print out graphs and tables and other graphic images that were of use to the grower in making decisions about what to plant the next year. It certainly made my job of sorting easier and as the grower didn’t need to employ as many people, growing oranges was more profitable for him.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

A technological tool used in my workplace was a conveyer belt system that helps process and sort oranges. It contained a camera, weighing scales, cleaner and sorting arms that assisted the workers in grading and packing oranges for market. It was controlled by a computer which could be programmed to weigh and sort other types of fruit and vegetables as well. It meant we could get through a lot more oranges in a shift compared to if we had to sort the oranges by hand. It also recorded the weight and size of the fruit. This data can be used to compare this year’s produce with other years.

It does make you concentrate and work fast because there are plenty of oranges coming through, but I believe it makes the work a lot easier and more efficient. The good thing about this machine is that it can be modified to sort and grade avocados, tomatoes and mangoes, which makes it very versatile. People who think of and invent these machines are amazing.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

One of the coolest digital devices I have seen was a computer-controlled machine we used in the packing shed to weigh and sort oranges ready to send to market. It was a conveyer belt that had a camera and scales in it and a sorting arm to make our job easier. Sorting oranges and other fruit and vegetable used to be done by hand and lots of workers were needed. It was also a very boring job, so the digital scales and sorting arm have meant we get the boxes of oranges packed much more quickly.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

Label and annotate a photograph of the conveyor belt system used in the orange packing shed. Tell your teacher how it worked. Did it help you to pack oranges easily?

1. Do you have a range of basic digital technology skills? How could you improve your skills in this area?

### Leading questions

To answer Question 3, a student could ask herself, or be asked:

* What are digital technology skills?
* Do you have any?
* Can you operate a computer?
* Can you use a keyboard?
* What programs can you use on the computer?
* Can you use a landline telephone, mobile telephone, CB radio?
* Can you use a photocopier
* Can you send and receive text messages? Do you understand ‘text language’ e.g. lol, thx,
* Can you communicate through Facebook? Other social media?
* Where did you learn these skills? School, friends, work, TAFE, university, provider of the technology, instruction manuals, online, by trial and error?
* How could you develop them once you have left school?

### Sample answers

**Answer 1** (High level of literacy)

Digital technologies have been created and applied to work for many reasons: to make the work easier, to reach more people more quickly, to improve productivity, to make the workplace safer, to assist in the decision-making process or to help solve problems. I feel that I am quite lucky because many of the skills that are needed to take advantage of these digital technologies are taught in school – even from a very early age. I have grown up with computers, mobile phones, iPads, iPods and all sorts of digital devices. Many of the games I played as a child were on digital devices, so I find them fun. I am also young and can absorb new information quickly, so I am easily able to accommodate the rapid changes and updates to such technologies. I think that older people may find digital technologies a little confusing and the rate of change a bit hard to keep up with. They also haven’t necessarily had as much experience of using a range of digital devices. Every student is now taught in school to use a keyboard, and most have well developed keyboarding skills by the time they enter the workforce. Every student I know has a mobile phone and usually takes full advantage of the features – apps, social media, camera etc. Even texting is a skill most young people take for granted and might be surprised to know that is a skill that can be used in the workplace. People can develop their digital technology skills by learning from friends, workmates, TAFE, university, the technology provider, instruction manuals, online information, by trial and error or YouTube videos.

**Answer 2** (Reasonable level of literacy)

I have quite well developed digital technology skills because I have grown up with iPhones, iPads, computers, computer games and other digital devices. My keyboarding skills are probably better than my handwriting skills as I use them more often. I can touch type and send text messages using the abbreviated language of texts, I can take photographs on my iPhone and manipulate them. I can send and receive emails and create documents and save them and retrieve them when required. Digital technology does not scare me like I know it does to generally older people. I know the advantages of using technology – usually easier and faster and often more accurate. Through my use of social media, my networks have expanded and I can access whatever information I need immediately. I learned the basics at school, but it is through practice and trial and error that my skills have developed. If I don’t know how to do something, I could ask friends, colleagues, do a course at TAFE or a university unit, find a YouTube video or online instructions or just have a go.

**Answer 3** (Low level of literacy)

I am really good at using digital technology because I use it all the time. I learned how to use a computer and the software programs at school. I use a mobile phone, I play computer games and I can type fairly quickly. If I don’t know how to do something, I just have a go and work it out. I sometimes ask my friends to show me or I could do a TAFE course to learn more skills.

**Answer 4** (Very low level of literacy)

I can use a computer to …

I can use a mobile phone to …

I can use a …

The student can demonstrate to a teacher some of these skills, and the teacher can either write down what skills have been demonstrated or make a short video of the demonstration.

1. New technologies bring with them the need for new work health and safety measures. Choose one of the digital technologies used in your workplace and outline the safety protocols for use of this tool.

### Leading questions

To answer Question 4, a student could ask him/herself, or be asked:

* What new technologies have you seen in your workplace?
* Did they look dangerous?
* What kind of injuries or accidents might be caused by these technologies?
* Were you taught how to use the device or digital technology safely?
* Was there an instruction manual?
* Did you read it?
* Were there any warnings on or near the device?

### Sample answers

### Answer 1 (High level of literacy)

One of the most common digital devices used everywhere, including in work places, is the mobile phone. It is small, lightweight, has no cord to trip over, is not usually plugged into electricity, and has no sharp edges or cutting components, so how could this innocent device possibly cause injury or affect the well-being of a worker? Well, there is much evidence to show that mobile phones have caused accidents and have been responsible for causing much unhappiness through bullying behavior and violation of another person’s right to privacy. For this reason, safety protocols have been developed for use of this tool, including:

* Keep the mobile phone at least 5–25 mm from the body to avoid the risk of being exposed to levels of radiation that are deemed unsafe. (Research is showing that cell phone radiation can damage the nervous, reproductive and immune systems.)
* Reduce exposure to the mobile phone, especially for children who are more vulnerable.
* Carry your phone away from your body: Your phone only has to be 1.5 cm away from your body to ensure radiation levels are below maximum levels. This isn’t achieved if your phone is in your pocket or against your ear. Carry your phone in your bag and use headphones when talking on the phone for optimum mobile phone safety.
* Use a landline whenever possible: landlines are starting to become obsolete but think about how often you use your mobile in your office.
* Always use a protective case for optimum mobile phone safety.
* Use an anti-radiation iPhone case.
* Do not use a mobile phone while driving and allow calls to go to message bank.
* Use a mobile phone in the workplace only for work related matters.

### Answer 2 (Reasonable level of literacy)

Believe it or not, there are safety protocols to consider when using a mobile phone. Here are some of the dangers that I can think of and some recommendations for protocols that would reduce the risks:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Work Health and Safety risks** | **Work Health and Safety protocols to reduce risks** |
| Exposure to higher than recommended levels of radiation | Minimise use of mobile and, whenever possible, carry the phone away from your body and use headphones. |
| Using a mobile phone while driving may result in an accident | Ban the use of a mobile phone while driving and allow calls to go to message bank. |
| Becoming distracted | Use the mobile phone only for work purposes. |
| Bullying behaviour | Respect everyone’s right to privacy. |
| Time wasting | Place mobile phones in bags on arrival, unless required for work |

### Answer 3 (Low level of literacy)

Mobile phones can lead to accidents in the workplace if you are not paying attention. You should never drive while you are on the phone. You should use your phone only if it is needed while you are at work – otherwise leave it in your bag.

### Answer 4 (Very low level of literacy)

Mobile Phone Safety Tips

* Leave your phone in your bag when you are at work
* Check your phone only at lunch time.