



VET lecturers and industry trainers! Have you heard about CAVSS yet?

“Literacy is a problem in VET, for every group, every year”

Many VET students have problems with the basic maths and literacy aspects of their course. It is very common for students to have problems making the connection between the basic skills they were taught at school, and how to apply those skills to vocational training and industry situations. Sometimes students’ basic skills are weak, and sometimes learning and assessment methods create difficulties for students. An example of this is where students have to use printed material to study independently and can’t keep up because texts are too difficult.

The result is that some students fail, or drop out, or start to play up, because no matter how good their practical skills are, and no matter how keen they are, they can’t keep up with the theory side of their course.

“Students’ eyes glaze over as soon as it starts to get ‘schoolie’.”

It’s hard to help students with maths and literacy. Most people have tried offering students extra tutorial sessions, or getting a literacy specialist to withdraw students from the group for one-to-one remedial help, but these methods don’t work very well. Students hate missing out on their VET course to go back to the stuff that they left school to get away from. And sometimes the remedial support offered to VET students just isn’t relevant to their goals. And often the students who need help the most won’t accept it because they have had enough of being singled out as dumb.

“Nobody puts their hand up to ask, but everybody wants to know”

The thing is that most of the students need some help in using maths, or reading or writing skills, to achieve the industry competencies they are learning. Some students might need to revise some basic skills, and most of the students need help to tie the formal skills they have (even if they are a bit rusty) to the formal and practical aspects of their training.

The Course in Applied Vocational Study Skills can really help solve these problems.

A new approach

CAVSS is a new approach to literacy and numeracy support for VET students. You might want to talk to other lecturers about CAVSS, and hear about how and why it works, and how students respond.

It is important that you have a choice about CAVSS, and a chance to give it a go and see the benefits for your students, and yourself.

What VET students say about CAVSS

“It was perfect for me.”

“(CAVSS) helps all students lift their skills”

“even when your skills are good it helps when you are having trouble”

How CAVSS works

CAVSS means collaborative teaching. It means having a maths and/or literacy teacher teach alongside you for one to four hours every week.

During those sessions, you and the CAVSS teacher take turns teaching the student group. To start, you teach the VET competencies as you usually do, and the CAVSS teacher revises and reteaches whatever maths, reading or writing skills that students need to apply to the VET competencies that you are teaching.

“At last! A real reason for doing maths!” (VET student, during a CAVSS session)

Most people feel a bit nervous first up, but once you get going, as you and the CAVSS teacher get used to working with each other, team-teaching becomes a really comfortable and dynamic way to deliver training. What you get is a few hours a week where the student-teacher ratio is halved. During that time, the students have access to two lecturers, who work together to help them make the connections between theory and practice. This makes an exciting and motivating training environment for everyone in it.

“having two teachers can be fun, which assists learning”

Students really respond to CAVSS. They respond to the actual teaching support they are getting, and to being able to get a real handle on how the theory they have learned get used in their industry.

Students also get a lot of encouragement and confidence from knowing that the two lecturers in front of them really care about their success and really want to help them achieve their goals.

What CAVSS is for

CAVSS is for making the connections between the students’ maths, reading and writing skills, and where and how to use those skills in vocational tasks. CAVSS can be delivered in VET classrooms, workshops, or live worksites. It is for every student in the group.

CAVSS is not for withdrawing students, or running extra tutorials, or having a ‘remedial’ teacher in the VET classroom to help the ‘dumb’ students. There is no need to single students out for CAVSS.

CAVSS is free for students, and is non-assessable. Students do not need to spend any extra time studying for CAVSS, or sit any exams, and CAVSS does not appear on their results.

What VET lecturers and managers say about CAVSS

“CAVSS not only meant that the two students that we thought wouldn’t make the grade actually stayed on and completed the course, but all of the behavioural problems disappeared as well.”

“students engage in reflective learning”

“success for students who would have otherwise failed”

“students’ chances for employment improved”

“improved ability to transfer skills into workplace”.

Further Information

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