

## *Tips, trends and links to keep you on top of your training*

This series of tipsheets is distilled from my e-newsletters, to give you timeless information of value to your environmental training program.

### **In this summary:**

- ✓ the language barrier is not a safety barrier
- ✓ scary statistics
- ✓ goldmine website
- ✓ great links

### ✓ **The language barrier is not a safety (or environmental )barrier**

“English speakers completely under-estimate the pressure on non-English speakers, and the results are not trivial,” according to Chris Poole, author of a brilliant article on language barriers to effective training.

Chris says that language barriers are a serious management blind spot, and while he is talking about the health and safety risks that “smiling but uncomprehending faces” pose, his message is just as important for environmental managers.

He emphasizes that trainers are “not just reciting a script. Their job is not done until they have achieved a level of behavioural change that will significantly minimise the risks to which each trainee will be exposed, and will minimise the exposure of the company to the risk of cost and litigation. Not only do they need to impart the knowledge and awareness that will drive behavioural change in the trainees, but they need to confirm that they have done this.”

The article is worth reading all the way through – see the reference and link at the end of this newsletter. There is much in there of relevance to environmental trainers.

Many thanks to Hugh Pollock for sending this link. Hugh is the Environmental, Health & Safety Manager, Roads, for Transfield Services in New Zealand.

### ✓ **Scary stats**

40% of the workforce in New Zealand, Australia, US, UK and Europe is functionally illiterate. 40% of American, German and British adults can't read well enough to participate in today's complex knowledge economy, say Beatriz Pont and Patrick Werquin of the OECD. These people can read the newspaper but can't necessarily read technical manuals and workplace operating instructions. The authors say that literacy skills “are a cornerstone of economic success. The trouble is far too many people are without them.”

What does this mean for our training, in terms of challenges and benefits?

For trainers, this is as serious as a language barrier, and is a real drain on productivity. On the good news side, I've seen the benefits of workplace literacy programs: they deliver outstanding results in terms of staff engagement, loyalty and productivity – and of course, profitability, too.



### ✓ Goldmine website

Dō Sustainability is a new publisher specialising in short, expert ebooks that distil sustainability best practice and insights for busy professionals. I met one of the directors, Dr Nick Bellorini, while in London and am very impressed with what they are doing.

Their books address one sustainability challenge at a time and can be read in 90 minutes. They specifically target people working “in the vanguard of sustainability, who are often institutionally isolated and facing a blizzard of new information and initiatives” – sound familiar?

I highly recommend these people and their publications.

### ✓ Great links

- The language barrier is not a safety barrier. Chris Poole, 26 July 2012. An article on the SafeToWork website, viewable at <http://bit.ly/N4ZEAh>
- Pont, Beatriz and Werquin, Patrick (2000). Literacy in a thousand words. (Literacy skills are a corner stone of economic success. The trouble is far too many people are without them.) OECD Observer No. 223, October 2000. Downloadable at <http://bit.ly/px7Ghb>
- scan the excellent publication list and get on the mailing list for the Dō Sustainability newsletter at <http://www.dosustainability.com/>

You can subscribe to my free e-newsletter from my website, [www.clarefeeney.com](http://www.clarefeeney.com). I send it out three or four times a year, with cutting-edge news on training and environmental trends and updates on my speaking engagements and upcoming workshops on the topic of my book.



Clare Feeney is a sustainability strategist who helps organisations of all types grow their sustainability capability. She can help you grow jobs, increase profits and improve the environment – and have fun along the way! You can find out more at [www.clarefeeney.com](http://www.clarefeeney.com) and contact her at [clare@clarefeeney.com](mailto:clare@clarefeeney.com).