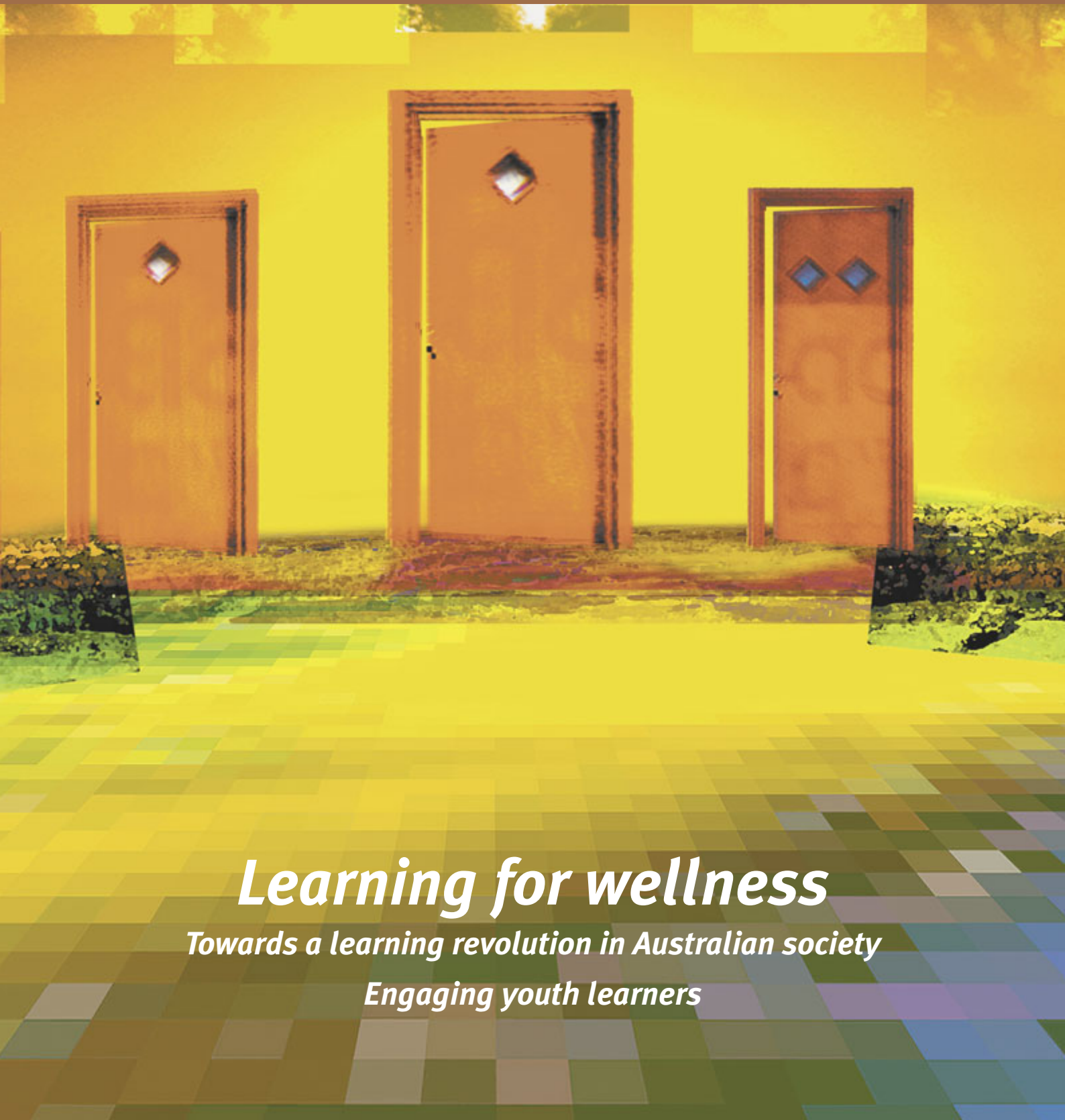


Quest

Issue 2 Winter 2005



Adult Learning
Australia Inc.



Learning for wellness

Towards a learning revolution in Australian society

Engaging youth learners



Adult Learning Australia Inc. (ALA) is the peak body for organisations and individuals involved with adult learning in Australia. ALA informs and fosters networks of adult education, advises and lobbies government; promotes policy development; represents Australia on international education bodies, co-ordinates Adult Learners' Week; and more.

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ALA also publishes the Australian Journal of Adult Learning, in April, July and November. ALA members receive this publication, hard copy or electronic as part of their membership. Non-members may subscribe for \$70. Single issues are \$25 plus postage.



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Editorial



Recently ALA sponsored an ACE Forum at which 20 of our ACE colleagues from around the country attended here in Canberra. The group was brought together to address the issue of how ACE, in all its diversity, might be defined from a research and policy perspective.

Not an easy task, and no surprise, that the group made only tentative steps despite the energy and the range of experience represented.

Why bother? One reason is that some 1.4 million Australians use ACE for a variety of reasons as their provider of choice, and yet while ever ACE as a sector remains hidden or unable to be categorised it will never achieve a strong position on any government funding or policy agenda.

However, we will continue with this endeavour. An interim report is available in the members section of the Adult Learning Australia website.

Jim Nicholls (ALA Director) outlines some of the other reasons why it is important for ALA to work with the ACE sector so that we can start to clearly identify the scope of its contribution to the national adult learning agenda given the changes now in train following the abolition of ANTA, as of June 30. The opportunity for new doors to open for ACE presents itself with the coming changes to the national skills development structure. Jim briefly outlines the new structure here in his article.

Aspects of the contribution made by ACE to the national skills shortage issue, and its role in community development, are also explored from a number of interesting perspectives in this issue.

We report on a range of learning community activities around the country, including those organisations that were successful in securing funding for their e-learning projects.

Another interesting article provides an overview of the findings of an ALA initiated project on lifelong learning entitled: 'Towards A Learning Revolution in Australian Society' and another ALA initiated project, we will report on later, looks at how the ACE sector

can develop an interface with small business around their training needs.

You will also notice an insert in this edition from TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL. They are linking up with ALA as partners in the 2005 Adult Learners' Week and Learn @Work Campaigns. With over 700 clubs throughout Australia the opportunity exists for ALA provider members to work with TOASTMASTER INTERNATIONAL Clubs to identify workplace training opportunities. Remember that many TMI's members are also engaged in workplaces, as well as wanting to know more about and engage with ALA provider members' programs.

This edition also has several research-based articles which explore the links that learning has with health and wellbeing as well as findings from Dr Sarojni Choy's research into 'engaging youth learners.' Both articles provide interesting insights into these topics.

We also feature a long serving member of ALA, Tony Ryan in this edition. Tony will be working with ALA to capture an oral history account of ALA's development over the years as part of our 50th Anniversary Celebrations in 2010.

If you would like to nominate from existing or former members of ALA who you believe have made a contribution to adult learning over the years, please contact Tony at tryan@austcolled.com.au.

Tony is also very involved with community radio, an area that still remains to be explored as a program delivery mode for adult learning opportunities in the home and at work. Tony has an article on what he is doing presently through this medium in South Australia.

Finally, with the transition of ALA funding from ANTA to DEST, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the board and members to wish our friends and colleagues in ANTA success in their new fields of endeavour. We are confident that as DEST takes responsibility for the carriage of training nationally, that the legacy left by ANTA will provide a sound framework from which DEST will build and develop its new initiatives.

Read and enjoy what your organisation is achieving through your membership and support.

Ron Anderson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

New online Community forum

An online Community forum has been launched as part of a new Project under the 2005 Australian Flexible Learning Framework. The 2005 Networks Community Forum, launched in Canberra earlier this month, enables vocational education and training professionals to take part in a range of online discussions and access industry specific e-learning networks. For further information, visit www.flexiblelearning.net.au/networks.

\$3.6 Million dollar boost for teacher training in Indigenous education

An innovative \$3.61 million Australia Government project will help train more than 14,000 teachers and school leaders and assist them in developing new skills for working with Indigenous students. The project, entitled 'What Works' is part of the Government's \$2.1 billion Indigenous education package enabling teachers and principals to participate in workshops and support activities and to work actively with parents and local communities. 'What Works' is available online at www.whatworks.edu.au.

Driving transport employment opportunities for people with a disability

With 15 per cent of the entire Australian workforce reporting a disability, Transport Distribution and Training (TDT) Australia is meeting the critical need to offer training qualifications to this group of workers and create an economically viable workforce for the future. According to Brett Robinson, Acting CEO, TDT Australia, the more diverse a workforce, the more advantages are generated for all involved. He says, "With Australia facing its worst skills shortage in 40 years, supporting a diverse workforce makes economic sense. It is also very satisfying knowing we are working on ways to improve someone's life prospects." If you are seeking information on hiring people with a disability, visit www.jobable.gov.au.

Junior Secondary school students and the world of work

Research conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) for The Smith Family as part of their 'Learning for Life' programs found more than one third of the students surveyed did not fully understand the education level required to achieve their dream job. The main findings from the research show students with an unrealistic view of future career options are more likely

to be male, report below average achievement at school, have low levels of vocational engagement and be unhappy and keen to disengage from school.

According to The Smith Family's National Manager of Strategic Research and Social Policy, Dr Rob Simons, the news isn't all bad, however. He said, "The research highlights the importance of helping students better align their study plans with their chosen field to channel enthusiasm and avoid difficulty with gaining meaningful employment when they are ready to enter the workforce." The Smith Family is currently undertaking further research into the perceptions and post school plans of older 'Learning for Life' students.

To read the full report or further information on 'Learning for Life' visit www.smithfamily.com.au.

Training increases job confidence for Indigenous learners

Nine out of ten Indigenous Australians who have undergone recent training report increased confidence because they can communicate better with people and feel better about themselves generally. The findings indicate the real benefits of vocational education and training (VET) as reported by Indigenous Australians nation wide. Other benefits for Indigenous learners undertaking VET included: becoming more involved in local communities and gaining employment or a better/different job. Mr Bill Wilson co-Chair of the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council (AITAC) said, "Indigenous Australians are turning to VET in increasing numbers in order to skill up for the workforce – a vital trend given that Australia is currently facing the worst skills shortage in forty years."

For further information about the survey visit www.ncver.edu.au/students/31008.html.

Having a say

A Complaints Management System has recently been setup within Disability Services Queensland (DSQ) to ensure concerns are received and managed fairly. DSQ have also put out a video entitled, "Having a say," which introduces the complaints management system to viewers and may be used for staff training, inductions and as a forum for families and clients. For further information, visit www.disability.qld.gov.au/complaints.cfm.

A brave new world

ALA board member, Jim Nicholls, offers some thoughts on what is ahead...

We are indeed in another historical shift in the way Australia organises its national skills training and implicitly, its approach to lifelong learning.

We saw ten years ago when ANTA was established as a coalition of States and the Commonwealth, that a new vision of co-operation emerged to develop a truly national training system. Standards for quality provision and standards for industry competencies have been established. The various ANTA plans and ANTA policies, awards, publications and marketing of ideas, supported by NCVET research, has placed us as a nation far ahead of where we would have been with 10 more years of the old fractured system.

Within that industry-driven environment community education has held a sometimes tenuous respect as an alternative pathway for learning and “a first step on the ladder” for many learners who do not cope well with large systems and structures.

Some Community Education organisations have embraced the VET agenda wholeheartedly and others more cautiously. We have all learnt in the process that VET training and VET qualifications are not the total answer for all our clients. Too often clients have been forced into inflexible VET programs because of a funding imperative more than any value for the actual learning needs of the person.

We now face the problem/opportunity that a whole new national skills development structure brings. Here are a few of the implications from what DEST has released so far:

- The Ministerial Council will be VET specific as with ANTA so this will maintain focus on VET issues and VET development.
- The National Industry Skills Committee (somewhat equivalent to the ANTA board) will deliver the highest level advice. It will be employer dominated – eight places – plus one ACTU representative.
- A National Senior Officials Committee will form the backbone of carrying policy into action. It can form Action Groups on particular issues based on Ministerial Council reference. It will also have two joint meetings a year with the above NISC. Some suggested Action Groups would look at how to

engage student/participant voices and opinions and especially how to engage Indigenous and Disability students in policy development.

- The voice of provider systems and grassroots providers will be structured into a National Quality Council. It will have a wider role than that of the current National Training Quality Council and also more members – 21 – including representatives from all states.
- Capturing student data from private providers including in-house industry training and community providers has been a huge gap in measuring training effort. The report says that this data capture must not impose “significant additional cost.” Most existing VET providers would say there is very significant additional cost in AVETMISS compliance.
- Training Package will focus on flexibility, rationalisation and responsiveness. Many Community Educators would want them to include more pre-vocational opportunities for new job seekers and those currently disadvantaged in the job market. Also more recognition of the real skills involved in community participation and general learning programs. Training Packages have been narrowly tailored to those who know their career direction or already have a job.
- Noted that VET auditing needs to shift from compliance to best practice. Peer review is mentioned. The Commonwealth intends to review all State-based audit agencies in 2005 to identify where they are applying the standards inconsistently leading to recommendations for significant improvements which will be tied to State funding agreements. For those of us who have had to endure over-auditing and endless paperwork compliance this area seems to provide real hope. It may even lead to one national registration system for RTOs. Surely a more collegiate approach to quality would lead to better systems and less cost.
- There will be an outcomes based audit model and public reporting of RTO performance. The definition of “outcomes” and how they will be reported is a topic for more development. One comment suggested extending this to reporting employer performance with respect to Trainees engaged and completed.

We would urge all ALA members to take an interest in these shifts of structures and shifts of emphasis as the centre of national training policy moves back to Canberra. Together with funds for new regional private technical colleges the

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Creative communities



Many communities across Australia have already begun to incorporate e-learning into their learning programs. Now, funding has been made available for the first time, for eight communities to increase the use of, and demand for, e-learning in their local area.

The funding has been made available through E-learning Creative Community Partnerships, which is an initiative of the 2005 Australian Flexible Learning Framework (2005 Framework) in partnership with Adult Learning Australia.

The 2005 Framework provides the vocational education and training (VET) system with e-learning skills,

development opportunities, resources and support to meet today's increasingly technology-driven environment.

It is a one-year, AUD\$15 million national strategy which is collaboratively funded by the Australian Government and all States and Territories. It builds on the work of the 2000-2004 Framework, but strikes out in some new directions, including working to meeting the e-learning needs of students and communities, business and industry, Indigenous learners and people with disabilities.

The E-learning Creative Communities Partnerships Project aims to create sustainable demand for, and use of, e-learning in communities. It is providing a platform to enhance, and grow, community capacity building through effective skills development, and to reach under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

A foundation of the Project this year is to support eight selected community or regional development initiatives. Each community will develop a specific consultation and implementation plan to meet local needs. And it will be the

diversity of these communities and their outcomes that will be a major factor in the success of the Project.

ALA's Project Manager Mary Hannan said there are a lot of excellent e-learning projects being run within communities and it was hard to choose just eight.

"Because this is the first funding that's been made available to expand e-learning in communities, we were overwhelmed with applications. And that's a good sign because the standard of the projects we are funding are extremely high and it means that we can really make a difference to the e-learning needs of communities, at a grass-roots level," Mary said.

The successful community projects are:

Central West Community College in Bathurst, New South Wales; this project will target business and industry, the general community and disadvantages learners. In an effort to engage the community, the project will use a gift voucher process to encourage target groups to use e-learning.

IMPACT: Make your mark, Bundaberg, Queensland; is the name to be used by the Bundaberg Skills Centre Inc. The project will target young mothers or expectant mothers between the ages of 15 and 24, and disadvantaged young parents.

Wodonga Institute of TAFE, Wodonga, Victoria; this project will target rural men, who are aged over 45, who are unemployed or disengaged from the communities in which they live.

Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE, Leongatha, Victoria; this project will target learners wishing to undertake VET studies, students who have become disengaged with traditional school programs, disadvantaged students

including those at risk of homelessness, and unemployed adults wishing to return to the workforce.

CHARTTES Training Advisory Council, Darwin, Northern Territory; this project will target remote and Indigenous people and aims to provide practical and appropriate e-learning solutions for specific local areas.

Challenger TAFE, Peel Campus, Beaconsfield, Western Australia; this project will target local skills shortages in the Peel area.

Tasmanian Communities Online, Tasmanian Department of Education, Hobart, Tasmania; this project will target eight rural communities across Tasmania, focusing on unemployed people over the age of 45, and single parents.

Milang Old School House Community Centre, Milang, South Australia; this project will target parents and mature aged unemployed people who looking for new or upgraded skills to enhance their job prospects.

"This Project is about encouraging local communities to use resources they already have in place, to engage people in learning, through e-learning," Mary Hannan said.

"We want to encourage learning in each local community, so that in turn, the communities themselves can encourage economic and regional development," she said.

The selected communities will now begin implementing their plans and their experiences will be used to inform and engage other community and regional development initiatives on a broader scale.

There's a lot of work to be done before that but Mary is optimistic of the outcomes, "this is an exciting Project and I'm looking forward to seeing some real differences being made to individual people and their communities," she said.

An Invitation

Launch of Victorian Learning Communities Network

Friday 17 June 10.00AM – 3.00PM

Global Learning Village, Broadmeadows

Guest Speaker: Vanessa Little

General Manager Hume Global Learning Village

Contact Shanti Wong Phone: 03 9361 9306 email: shanti.wong@bmillen.com.au

Learning communities catalyst

The project has focused this year on its key priority of redesigning and restructuring the website to ensure a more relevant and user friendly resource for the national audience.

The project has two key activities which are the:

- restructure and look of the website
- collection of information and stories using new templates and formats.

A reference committee provides feedback on:

- New template (including home page, layout)
- Colours/imagery
- Format of text/content for new sections
- Key definitions
- Relevance of data to be included
- Friendliness of site in terms of language and time required to input/find data.

The Catalyst team are working hard on the new look and restructure of the website with the completion date set for the end of June. A launch of the site is planned for 5 July in conjunction with the launch of the 2005 Adult Learners' Week. Additional website developments include the confirmation of the new infrastructure, reviewing data management processes and the categorising of existing information into the new site.

A team of Advocates (50+ communities and organisations) have been recruited as a resource for, and Advocate of, the use and promotion of the website.

The role of Advocates is negotiated and recorded so as to ensure that ongoing contact can be made as part of a regular maintenance process. Advocates will each contribute information relevant to their interest areas of input (for example a case study, tools, references or links).

Adult Learning Australia and the Australian Learning Communities Network are supporting EdNA staff in the forthcoming July/August EdNA Online Workshops being held nationally, with the provision of local community venues and input into Learning Communities Catalysts training modules.

All input has value! It may be the profile of your Community, Learning Centre or Group, perhaps a link to a fabulous resource, or "Tips from the school of hard knocks," about any aspect of building interest in, developing or sustaining learning communities. Please think through all your associates and networks (from business, groups of interest and organisations) and actively encourage them to share how they are actively contributing to the Australian learning community!

A timetable for the workshops is being developed. If you are interested in hosting a workshop please contact Mary Hannan on 02 6274 9508 or email m.hannan@ala.asn.au as Mary is working with Kim Edgar from EdNA to identify possible sites and venues for these workshops.

SA	4/7/05 – 8/7/05
TAS	11/7/05 – 15/7/05
ACT	18/7/07 – 22/7/05
NSW	25/7/05 – 29/7/05
NT	1/8/05 – 5/8/05
WA	8/8/05 – 12/8/05
VIC	15/8/05 – 19/8/05

Why do some towns thrive?

New ARC-funded research conducted by a partnership of UQ Business School, the University of Queensland and the Queensland Department of Primary Industries, (DPI) has suggested some surprising answers to this question.

Eight Queensland country towns, ranging in size from 600 to 10,000, participated. Though their identities remain confidential, two of these were from the South West, two from the South East, two from Central Queensland and two from North Queensland. It is suggested that the findings have universal relevance.

Conducted by Senior Research Fellow, Ian Plowman, a community and organisational psychologist on secondment from DPI, the research takes a psychological and biographical perspective. The research was both quantitative and qualitative, involving structured interviews, surveys and census data. Results reveal some ideas that add to or even challenge conventional thinking. For example, size, a sound economic base, or natural geographic attributes did not necessarily make a difference.

It is the people that make a difference, the attributes of those people, and the critical mass of those attributes. For example, net inflows bring diversity of ideas and experiences. The least innovative towns have net outflows, and it is the most innovative people that leave. Evolutionary

psychology explains why. The more innovative towns are also differentiated by younger average age, higher levels of education and greater frequency of overseas travel, all sources for new ideas.

Also differentiating the more innovative towns are higher proportions of home ownership, signalling a willingness to invest in that town. The least innovative town has the highest proportion of its residents renting, despite average occupancy of 30 years! Contrary to popular wisdom, the least innovative town has the highest proportion of leaders while the most innovative town has the lowest. Yet the most innovative town has a much higher level of distributed leadership and civic responsibility broadly shared. Also surprising is that the most innovative town showed the lowest inclination towards pursuit of funding.

The research report contains recommendations for communities, for Councils, and for State and Federal Governments. Many of these are implementable immediately without cost. One that is likely to generate debate is the suggestion that no person should hold any civic position, be it President of the Show Society, Secretary of the Sports Association, or local Mayor, for more than one term. Leadership is a two-edged sword. It is an act of civic responsibility; it is also an act of denying someone else the opportunity to gain civic experience. The more broadly that understanding of civic experience and responsibility is shared, the healthier and more innovative is the town.

The full report can be found on www.dpi.qld.gov.au/business/14778.html. For further information, contact: Ian Plowman 07 3870 2231 or email: ian.plowman@dpi.qld.gov.au.

A brave new world – continued from page 5

Commonwealth is demonstrating a very strong intention to shake the system up again under the theme of flexibility. There will be huge implications for industrial relations in the big TAFE systems. There will be other implications for all providers, VET and non-VET, in the way funding is managed and the balance between paperwork and provision.

Our best hope is that flexibility really means far less bureaucracy and far more respect for professional practice. If this is the case then we may well be taking another fresh step towards an open society of lifelong learners.

The full 16-page report is at: www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/anta/information.htm.

In Quest of learning



Tony Ryan

Tony Ryan will be known to many in the adult community education sector around Australia. A Fellow of the Australian College of Educators, Tony is a graduate of the University of Sydney and the University of Adelaide. Following some years of teaching in NSW, he worked

for ABC Education (Radio, TV and Publications) for over 26 years. More recently at Radio Adelaide at The University of Adelaide, his projects have included the award-winning series 'Rural Men and Aspects of Ageing,' and the youth suicide prevention initiative 'Keep Yourself Alive.' Currently Tony produces and presents 'Take Time,' on PBA FM in Adelaide, and manages both the national Archives Project for the Australian College of Educators, and 'Conversations,' oral history recordings of significant educators associated with the College.

1. What is the single most important lesson your parents ever taught you?

From my father, a social conscience and an awareness of the needs of others less fortunate than ourselves. From my mother, who battled emphysema and related illnesses throughout her 84 years, the value of the gift of life, linked to her determination to make the most of life no matter what the circumstances.

2. What were your best and worst experiences from school? Were you a good student? – Why/why not?

My best experiences? We all recall one or two teachers whose influence extended well beyond our school days. My love of English literature and language, and of classical music, came from one such teacher. My worst experiences? Possibly around the fact that I suffered badly from asthma as a child, therefore sport was not my forte.

Even though I was not really a good student, I was the first in my family to go to university (although always on a part-time basis), something way beyond the experience of any in my extended family at that time.

3. What did you always want to be? – Did you achieve this? Why/why not?

I knew what I did not want to be. As a boy in Wollongong, it was clear that working in the steelworks at Port Kembla was seen as a way to get a trade and therefore a secure

job. Why did I choose teaching? Maybe this was a way to avoid the fate of being a steelworker, but also as there were no models in our family of doctors, lawyers, or other professionals, teaching seemed to be my destiny. I've never regretted that choice, even though my work in education has not followed a standard pattern.

4. What was your first job and what did you learn from it?

My first paid work was on Saturday mornings on my uncle's fruit truck! My first real job was a two year stint teaching in a rural area, where I soon discovered the importance – to teachers and students alike – of radio and then TV in classrooms far removed from the big cities. Media and education soon became the focus of my career.

5. Complete this sentence: 'The most valuable thing I've learned this year is...'

The most valuable thing I've learned this year is the importance of the work / life balance, and the need to value the contribution that those of us in our more mature years can still make in the workplace. The skills, experience and, yes, adaptability of mid/late career workers who lose their jobs needs to be better recognised and appreciated by employers, and also by governments.

6. What new skills do you hope to acquire and how? What unfulfilled ambition have you yet to conquer?

As my computer skills continue to grow, my ambition is to self-publish my father's writings on his early life story, and to produce a multimedia CD with family photos and other documentation and audiofiles, so that the generations that follow have some good information about their ancestors. And also to make my first visit to Ireland!

7. What is one talent people might be surprised to know you have?

For me, singing in a large community choir over many years has been a remarkable and rewarding learning experience, although solos are not for me! It's a form of adult community education which deserves much greater recognition in Australia.

8. What piece of information would you most like to pass on to the next generation?

Learn all you can about handling life transitions. So many aspects of life today – including family, work, society and values – seem to be always changing. It can be hard enough to find real meaning in our lives when things run smoothly; it is how we manage those difficult life transitions that will be even more important in the next few decades.

Adult Learners' Week's 10th year

This year marks the 10th Anniversary of Adult Learners' Week (ALW) in Australia. To celebrate this milestone in the adult community education sector the ALW National Management Team and State and Territory Co-ordinators have bolstered their talents by implementing strategies to increase the awareness of the importance of participating in ALW 2005 and Learn @ Work Day (L@WD).

In a departure from previous years, the ALW 2005 campaign has a new framework for delivering the messages and themes of ALW and L@WD which has evolved from the diverse and enthusiastic inputs of both the National Team and all State and Territory Co-ordinators. The successes of the foreplanning of this dynamic group has culminated in the timely release of a national communications and media strategy, a new website design and a grand vision for the ALW 10th Anniversary National Launch.

ALW 2005 National Strategy

The ALW 2005 National Communications and Media Strategy document was released in April 2005. The timely release of this document has allowed for increased lead time for planning ALW activities, launches, award ceremonies and promotion within the wider community for all States and Territories.

The strategy is the culmination of recommendations, quantitative and qualitative research, workshops and individual submissions gleaned from reports and evaluations by organisations and individuals including ACNielsen, NCVER and key ALA/ALW managers and co-ordinators at both a national and statewide platform.

The main elements of the strategy transcend into many types of communication and media to ensure that a broad net is used to capture the interest and awareness of adult learners in our community. The strategy explores key areas of promotion and marketing including the broadcast and

print media, the national website, print and promotional materials and the national 1300 number.

Similar branding and promotional materials from the ALW 2004 campaign will feature in this year's campaign to assist the community to identify and recognise ALW as a brand. In recent years new materials and radio and TV Community Service Announcements (CSA) were developed for each annual campaign. This year we will be featuring the same radio and TV CSA which will be distributed to over 32 television networks and over 260 metro and regional radio stations. To ensure the ALW message reaches a larger sector of the community a national print advertising campaign will feature in 'The Australian' and run for three months prior to Adult Learners' Week. Consideration will be given to placement and timing of advertorials. Editorial and commentary will be sought to augment the print advertising campaign.

In highlighting the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of ALW a new product range has been developed to portray unified images and messages of this important ALW milestone. In design, past images of ALW faces were brought together in a montage of adult learners' encased by a stylised image of Australia. The innovative design was developed to invoke images that there are no boundaries across Australia when it comes to the important practise of adult and lifelong learning. The designs portray Australians coming together from all walks of life, forming a powerful image and invoking thoughts and goals of adult community education.

Included in the new product range are A3 posters, postcards, bookmarks and unique letterheads all emblazoned with the 10th Anniversary moniker. Equally as important is the tagline or message attached to the products. This year the message to our learning providers and adult learner audience in the community is simple. ALW is "a pathway to adult learning in your community and workplace." The message is a silent reminder to all that factually a majority of adult learning takes place both in the home and at work.

An exciting addition to the program for this year's campaign will be the National ALW Banner Awards. Learning providers, organisations and the wider community will be invited to participate in this competition. This will give everyone the opportunity to get together in their town or region and work on a project aimed at raising the awareness and importance of participating in ALW. Prizes will be awarded to the winner and two runners up. Information about the competition will be available from the ALW 2005 website http://www.adultlearnersweek.org/events/banner_comp.html.

continued on next page

Adult Learners' Week's 10th year

L@WD will be held on Friday 2 September 2005. This is the third year that the L@WD campaign has run and again we look toward a successful day this year. To assist with the planning and implementation of the L@WD campaign, Adult Learning Australia have employed part-time Administrative Assistant (Marketing), Mirianne Jovanoski.

L@WD was established to promote the value and importance of learning opportunities in the workplace. People who participate in lifelong learning develop skills and confidence which enables them to embrace change and seize new opportunities. They become confident, adaptable, innovative and enterprising people.

Lifelong learning is a powerful tool for building prosperous and thriving communities in which people pool their resources, skills and knowledge, to advance the community as a whole.

The L@WD campaign for this year has been in development since December 2004, realising the importance that this event has the potential to reach hundreds of thousands of people through their workplaces. As part of the strategies for L@WD the National Management Team have recently formalised a L@WD Partner Agreement with Toastmasters International (TMI). As part of the agreement, merchandise and promotional materials will be distributed amongst the three TMI districts across Australia to over 700 clubs. TMI will also act as an ambassador for ALW and L@WD to help promote the campaign and encourage other likeminded organisations to participate and get involved.

The team is also in the process of developing and implementing a L@WD Incentive Program in an effort to encourage small business to either begin or continue a current workplace learning program. Each incentive payment will be \$500 and will be available to one small business in each State and Territory across Australia. Once the program has been finalised ALA members will be encouraged to nominate a small business in their region for a chance to be awarded an incentive payment.

Over the past few years we have invited prominent members of the international adult learning community to visit Australia and participate in ALW as our international guest speaker. This year our invitation was accepted by Alan Tuckett OBE.



Alan Tuckett OBE is Director of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, having worked previously for the voluntary sector in Brighton and for the ILEA. He started ALW in the UK in 1992, and supported its adoption by UNESCO, and its spread to almost 40 Countries. He is a member of the Government's Skills Alliance, a Special Professor in Continuing Education at the University of Nottingham and an Honorary Professor in the Centre for Labour Market Studies and the Institute of Lifelong Learning at Leicester University. He was Vice-Chair of the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning 1997-9, and advises UNESCO on adult learning. He was President of the International League for Social Commitment in Adult Education in 1986-7, and President of the Pre-School Learning Alliance from 1999-2003.

Alan is a member of the Adult Learning Committee of the Learning and Skills Council, of the Open University's Council and Strategy Group and of the Council of City and Guilds. He is a Board member of the Centre for Enterprise and honorary secretary for the Guidance Council.

He has honorary doctorates from the Open University, Sheffield Hallam University, University of Bradford and the University of Kent and is a Fellow of City & Guilds. He was awarded the OBE in 1995.

Alan was also instrumental in developing and launching ALW in Australia in 1995. The National Management Team is currently formalising Alan's travel itinerary which will involve attendance at ceremonies, launches, workshops, dinners and media interviews.

In addition to the promotional and marketing materials, learning provider kits will be available this year in both electronic and hard-copy formats. We will be encouraging the adult learning community to access this information which is useful for planning ALW activities and events.

We are looking forward to all of our members' involvement and the wider community to participate in the important calendar event, the Australia's adult learning community. For more information about ALW 2005 please visit our website www.adultlearnersweek.org or call our National hotline on 1300 303 212.

Fresh face for the ALW National website

As technology races ahead of us in this millennium there has been an increasing need to make information more easily accessible. The ALW 2005 National website is the centre piece of our call to action campaign in 2005.

The ALW National Management Team has in the past received an increasing amount of feedback from the events organisers, learning providers, co-ordinators and of course the wider community about the design and functionality of the ALW National website. As with all organisational websites a key design prerequisite is to produce a site that is easy to navigate and have information that is easily extracted in formats that most people will be able to understand.

Those who have already visited the ALW 2005 National website will have first noticed that it is brighter and less cluttered than in previous years. The main categories of the website have been expressed in plain english and now it is much easier to add an event than ever before. The events calendar is the key feature of the website and it is as simple as clicking on the 'add an ALW event link' on the website's front page and you are ready to enter all details of the event that you are organising or hosting.

As in past years, most ALW promotional materials, branding and logos have been available as electronic downloads. This year is no exception and we are pleased to present our community with a wider variety of materials than ever available before. All logos and branding this year will be available in many formats but most importantly will be available in the EPS format. Many ALW events organisers like to design their own unique ALW promotional materials that reflect the messages and visuals of their regions. There are simple guidelines for using our logos and branding and all materials can be accessed at <http://www.adultlearnersweek.org/media/promotion.html> and <http://www.adultlearnersweek.org/media/branding.html>.

An important feature of the website is that it provides links to the ALW events specific to the states and territories. The stylised map of Australia on the front page of the website provides a portal to all the state and territory event calendar



links and important contact information of the specific ALW co-ordinator <http://www.adultlearnersweek.org/events/states.html>.

Each year we also invite our members and colleagues to nominate their peers to become a face of ALW. This is a simple process whereby a photo and testimonial/case study of the nominee will be considered for inclusion on the national website http://www.adultlearnersweek.org/friends_faces.html. A release form for legal and privacy purposes is also included on the friends and faces page http://www.adultlearnersweek.org/docs/info_release_form.pdf. If you are interested in nominating a peer or individual to become a face of ALW please email: info@adultlearnersweek.org or phone 1300 303 212.

The ALW 2005 National website will be updated throughout the year with exciting and interesting information for both adult learners and learning providers. If you have an event that you will be holding during ALW 2005 we invite you to add this event to our online calendar. For any information or just a browse please visit www.adultlearnersweek.org.

ALW 2005 National launch

As part of the celebrations for the ALW 2005 campaign we will be holding the ALW 2005 National Launch at the National Gallery of Australia on Tuesday 5th July 2005 from 3.00pm to 5.00pm. The function will be hosted in the small theatre and an audience of 100 invited guests, adult community education representatives and other members of the community are expected to attend.

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Adult Learners' Week – continued

Traditionally the ALW National Launch has focused on the ALW campaign entirely. This year we are looking to have a joint launch in conjunction with the Learning Communities Catalyst (LCC) project managed by Mary Hannan, ALA's Assistant Executive Director.

During the launch we will be showcasing all of Adult Learning Australia's involvement in the adult community education (ACE) sector over the years and highlighting its management of ALW and LCC. The culmination of the projects under one celebration and national focus we believe will help to form a cohesiveness across the many networks of the ACE community. Included in the agenda for the afternoon will be a presentation by Peter Kearns, ALA's Visiting Research Fellow in relation to the discussion paper "towards a learning revolution in Australia." Peter will be presenting an overview of the findings from the recent consultative meetings that were held across Australia.

Invitations for the launch will be sent early June 2005 to our membership, Government MP's and Senators, ACE representatives and other adult learning community participants.

This year we are pleased to have Pru Goward as our keynote speaker at the ALW 2005 National Launch.



Journalist, broadcaster and commentator Pru Goward was appointed Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner for a five-year term from 30 July 2001.

Ms Goward has worked closely on issues of women's rights for several years, heading the Federal women's policy advisory unit, the Office of the Status of Women (OSW), from 1997 to 1999. She was appointed First Assistant Secretary of the Office, which reports directly to the office of Prime Minister and Cabinet, after working as a national affairs journalist and political commentator for 19 years.

At OSW, Ms Goward presided over the introduction of the first national program for the prevention of Domestic Violence – the largest program run by OSW with a budget of \$50 million. She also oversaw the introduction of reform to superannuation laws for divorced couples.

Ms Goward also played a pivotal role in the promotion of the Sydney 2000 Games as the Commonwealth spokesperson for the Games in the year leading up to and during the event. She was responsible for co-ordinating and promoting the Games – including promoting the Commonwealth's role, dealing with media coverage of security arrangements and a myriad of issues raised during the staging of the Games in Australia.

Ms Goward completed an Economics degree with Honours from the University of Adelaide while teaching high school in Adelaide during the 1970's. She later tutored at the University while conducting Masters Research. Over the past 10 years she has also run her own media management company, was a freelance newspaper and magazine columnist and part-time lecturer in Broadcast Journalism at the University of Canberra.

Just prior to taking up the role of Sex Discrimination Commissioner, she was National Director of the Australian Property Institute. Ms Goward is also on the boards of the John Curtin School for Medical Research and the Neuroscience Institute for Schizophrenia and Allied Disorders. She is Official Patron of the ANU Australian Football Club.

We hope to see representation from a cross-section of our membership at the launch and to celebrate with the ALA National staff during this important occasion. Light refreshments will also be served during the afternoon.

For more information about the ALW National Launch email: info@adultlearnersweek.org or phone 1300 303 212.

Peter Murphy

Events and Public Relations Manager
National Coordinator – Adult Learners Week 2005



Learning for wellness

As Australia experiences an ageing population and a potential overloading of the current health system, it is vital that investment is made now in activities that create and prolong wellness. It is vital that the non-vocational outcomes of adult learning, and prime among these are the wellness benefits of learning, are not only recognised, but actively enhanced. In this article, former ALA Research Manager, John Cross, profiles some of the recent research around the health outcomes of learning.

Education as prevention

There is clear evidence that people with lower levels of formal educational attainment have increased risk of health problems and poor health behaviours.

As a study by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians noted, “People with low levels of education are more likely to exhibit negative behaviours, such as cigarette smoking, lack of exercise and high rates of obesity. They are also unlikely to use preventive health behaviours such as pap smears and mammograms.”

The Physical Activities of Australians Survey 1999, reported that the rate of obesity decreased with increasing educational qualification and that the percentage of people indicating they undertook no physical activity decreased with increasing education qualification. They also found that the percentage of people recalling physical activity messages in the media increased with education qualification.

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Learning for wellness – continued

A study by the UK Centre for Research into the Wider Benefits of Learning was able to establish evidence to support “what appear to be robust effects of [formal] learning on obesity and depression.” This study also suggested that:

- The economic benefit in terms of reduced risks of depression of an educational intervention that enabled 10% of women who would otherwise gain no qualifications to progress to Level 1 equivalent academic qualifications... is estimated to be between £6 million and £34 million per year. This ignores all other benefits or personal and family costs associated with depression.
- If all aspects of mental health were similarly affected and the intervention raised 50% of women with no qualifications to Level 1 academic qualifications, the benefit would be between £300 million per annum and nearly £1,900 million.

While it is not clear the extent to which the *knowledge gained* from formal education, the *act of participating* in formal education, or the *doors unlocked* by having formal qualifications contribute to better health outcomes, it is undeniable that people who have achieved certain formal levels of education are on the whole more likely to have better health or, at least, less likely to suffer from certain types of ill health. Therefore, an investment in education can be said to contribute positively towards creating better health across society and reducing the likelihood of ill health.

Participation in structured learning, any structured learning, as a strategy for wellness

Could participation in any form of structured learning, regardless of subject and regardless of whether or not it leads to a qualification and all the things that qualifications may bring, will have positive health benefit?

A 2003 Centre for the Research into the Wider Benefits of Learning study found sufficient evidence to be able to conclude that “adult learning plays an important role in contributing to the small shifts in attitudes and behaviours that take place during mid-adulthood,” and that “participation in adult learning has positive effects on a wide spectrum of health and social outcomes.”

The authors note that, “taken together, the case study evidence and statistical evidence converge at the same conclusions; educational participation has a range of non-economic benefits that extend beyond the classroom into personal life and into the community. These results supply endorsement to government strategies to promote lifelong learning and suggest that adult learning might do better than it tends to do in the battle for education resources.”

An earlier study undertaken by the Centre for Research into the Wider Benefits of Learning, examined the role that learning plays in terms of continuity and change in adult life. This study also examined the benefits in terms of health and was able to identify a number of positive mental health outcomes. The findings from this study included that:

- Education can help directly as a therapeutic activity for people with mental health problems.
- More commonly reported was the preventative effect, where respondents talked about how education had helped them avoid, minimise or address depression.
- Learning helps people communicate more effectively with professionals, either directly, by understanding the language or indirectly, by having the confidence to express themselves and ask questions. It widens access to written information on health issues. In addition, classes provide a forum for the formal and informal exchange of health-related information.

A NIACE survey work which explored the benefits that learners themselves identified as stemming from the participation in learning discovered similar benefits:

- 87% of respondents reported benefits to their physical health. These included learners who felt less ill, managed pain more effectively and felt less tired...
- 89% of respondents felt they had experienced positive emotional or mental health benefits from their period of learning. Benefits included *feeling mentally better* changing health behaviours; distraction from dwelling on ill health or poor circumstances; and psychological displacement activity helping them deal with pains such as bereavement...

It may be argued that many of the positive health benefits stemming from participation in some form of structured adult learning may be just as easily derived from another activity, such as watching sports, playing games or going to a dinner party. This may be the case. However, the argument that adult learning offers exclusive benefits with



regards to health is not being made here. The potential value of adult learning to health is not diminished because other activities might also contribute positively to the same ends. What is being argued is that the wider benefits of participating in structured learning, especially for health, should be recognised, promoted and enhanced, because they are too often overlooked.

Adult learning providers as providers of health and wellness programs

Although not always fully acknowledged, the Australian adult and community sector already plays a considerable overt role in helping to keep Australians healthy. Among the standard programs offered by typical community education providers, one will find exercise classes (for example yoga or pilates), mental health classes (for example mediation and self-esteem classes), and nutrition as well as classes with clear health benefits, such as dancing.

In addition to these general wellness programs, many community education providers in Australia offer programs targeted at specific audiences and for specific health outcomes. Two examples can be found in Janet Chambers' 'Mental Health Promotion Storybook.' The Murray Mallee Community Education Network's 'Dealing with Dilemmas Creatively' workshop, for example,

employed creative writing classes as a strategy for addressing isolation and depression in the Mallee. Presented as part of the Hills Mallee Southern Regional Health Service's 2003 Mental Health promotion strategy, the program was developed by an community education co-ordinator and a mental health counsellor and was built upon the observation that, "writing, when used appropriately with a trained facilitator, can be a form of therapy."

The group participants responded positively to the workshop, "agreeing that it was thought-provoking, empowering and challenging and provided insight on how to approach future writing, especially when developing characters." In terms of mental health outcomes, one participant said that "this process has put me in touch with my feelings, which has really surprised me because I didn't know I was carrying this inside me after more than 50 years." She said that it really helped her to understand the impact of the way she thought of herself and the rest of her life. (pp.58–59)

In another program, again targeted at providing *learning therapy* to assist in the recovery of a specific group, The Taillem Bend Community Centre offered a:

'Musical Skills Workshops for Recovery' which involved a group of mental health survivors coming together for a 10-week period with a paid music teacher, to improvise or learn new musical and performance skills.

The program was developed in response to a "serious lack of rehabilitation and recovery maintenance options available to people who have experienced mental illness in the Murray Mallee region." The project presented an opportunity for people with mental illness to learn or improve their musical abilities.

Support workers and mental health staff have been "amazed by the recovery progress and the wellness maintained by those who join the group." "Relapses are reduced and when they occur, the impact is minimised, with members keen to return to the group. Confidence increases as skills are developed and strengthened. Socialisation, group support and concern for each other contributes greatly to members' continued wellbeing and improved life outcomes." (pp.82-83)

Adult learning principles as an enhancement for health promotions

There have been many attempts to educate the broader public on various health issues, and many have failed. The standard health promotion campaign includes advertising, posters and a television campaign. While such tools can be moderately effective in the short term – depending on how well crafted the message is – their longer term impact is limited.

Some health promotion organisations are turning to adult learning principles as a way to help establish lasting health impacts. Learning circles, for example, were used by the NSW Cervical cancer unit to convey information about the importance of women having a pap test. The Pap Test Learning Circle was developed jointly by the NSW Cervical Screening Program and Adult Learning Australia as part of a *settings approach* to health promotion. In other words facilitating informed discussion about health in a format and venue that is not only appropriate to the learner but shaped by the learners in a profound way. The learning circle methodology is a facilitated learning experience in which there is no teacher or expert. Instead knowledge and understanding is developed collaboratively through

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Learning for wellness – continued

informed discussions and small research tasks stimulated by resource materials.

While health and adult learning experts developed the resource material – a kit filled with articles, discussion starter and activities – the sessions themselves were conducted without professional health or educators present. The absence of *experts* was a deliberate – and effective – strategy for allowing open and honest discussion freed from the pressure to make *correct* statements about personal behaviour, and without the possibility of *looking stupid* in front of an authority figure.

Health venues as venues for adult learning

While adult learning venues make the ideal conduits for positive health messages and venues of health activities, health centres, especially hospitals and hospices where people may have to spend some time recovering, make ideal venues for adult learning. Most commonly the activity is related to physical recovery, but there is opportunity for activities that either help people develop hobbies and interests for, possibly, a new lifestyle, or else use adult learning as a form of distraction and therapy.

Using health venues as places for adult learning activities also provides the opportunity for people to become comfortable and familiar with the health care environment.

The Well Women's unit at the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, for example, runs, in collaboration with the Council of Adult Education classes for women from non-English speaking backgrounds to learn English in relation to obstetrics. The classes are funded by the CAE and are conducted at the hospital.

Also in Melbourne, The Mercy Hospital's Outpatient Department conducts antenatal classes that are taught as English as a Second Language program with funding from the Northern Metropolitan College of TAFE through its Migrant Women's Learning Centre. The classes use the materials, processes and experiences encountered by pregnant women as the catalyst for English language learning activities.

Taking the ideas further

It is important to recognise and value the non-vocational benefits of structured learning, especially the health benefits, and to develop opportunities to enhance, not inhibit, these. The non-vocational benefits of structured learning are important for everyone but the promotion of them is especially important for those people for whom vocational outcomes are not as relevant, such as retirees or people unable to obtain employment owing to circumstances beyond their control.

It is important too to recognise that the *participation* in structured learning, and not just the attainment of formal qualifications at the end of a course of study, is of considerable value, especially in terms of wellness.

There are four actions that may take the nexus between a structured adult learning and better health to a more profound level:

1. Promote a more holistic, positive, attitude toward health

It is vital that both educational attainment and ongoing participation in structured learning are seen as making major contributions to all the underpinnings of good health and part of a strategy of *prevention* as well as *cure*.

What adult learning providers can do:

- Make explicit in their promotional material the mental and physical health benefits from participation in learning – promote the idea that participation in learning, any form of structured learning, may help prevent illness or aid in a more rapid recovery.

2. Promote a more holistic understanding of the role that structured learning can play

As important as vocational outcomes are, to individuals and to society, the other benefits of participation in structured learning must be recognised, promoted and enhanced.

It is particularly important that the benefits of participation in structured learning be talked about, especially with regards to audiences for whom vocational outcomes hold no interest.

What adult learning providers can do:

- Use campaigns, such as Adult Learners' Week, to promote the wider benefits of participating in learning to the broader community.



3. Develop better research around the wider benefits of structured learning for all adults and around the value of preventative health strategies;

The present focus in health on disease and illness and in adult education on formal vocational qualifications has created a situation in which Australian data on good health and on participation in structured adult learning is restrictive.

There is a clear need, to expand data collection so that, for example, the non-accredited learning and the learning activities of retirees are more accurately represented.

What adult learning providers can do:

- Gather and promote stories of learners for whom participation in learning (on any subject) has led to clear and important outcomes, especially in terms of better health, social participation and family life.
- Ask data collection agencies (for example the Australian Bureau of Statistics) to collect and provide information about participation in non-accredited adult learning for all age groups.

4. Proactive bridge building

For too long health and education have been hampered by administrative silos. Learning and health are two aspects of our lives that profoundly cut across all our everyday activities. Indeed, both health and learning intersect closely and in ways that government administrative structures do not.

There is enormous potential for the worlds of adult learning and of health to collaborate more than they do at present. To learn from each other and to work together toward similar and, in many cases, shared goals.

What adult learning providers can do:

- Invite local health care professionals to visit the learning centre to become familiar with environment and the services offered there;
- Offer to assist local health care providers with strategies for more effective health promotions and communication using adult learning principles;
- Explore opportunities for conducting classes in hospitals, hospices and health centres.

Useful resources

Fiona Aldridge and Peter Lavender, *The Impact of Learning on Health*, Leicester: NIACE, 2000.

Australian Mosaic, Issue 4, Spring 03, Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA).

Janet Chambers, *Mental Health Promotion Storybook* Murray Bridge: Hills Mallee Southern Regional Health Service, November 2003.

Leon Feinstein, Cathie Hammond, Laura Woods, John Preston and John Bynner, *The Contribution of Adult Learning to Health and Social Capital*, London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, May 2003.

Leon Feinstein, *Quantitative Estimates of the Social Benefits of Learning, 2: Health (Depression and Obesity)*, London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, October 2002.

Kathryn James, *Prescribing Learning: A guide to good practice in learning and health*, Leicester: NIACE, 2001.

Sharyn Lymer, Richard Percival, *The Impact of Learning in Australian Health Costs*, scoping study for Adult Learning Australia, August 2004 (unpublished).

NSW Cervical Screening Program, *Bodies Matter: The Pap Test Kit evaluation Report*, Sydney: NSW Health, undated.

For Richer, for Poorer, in Sickness and in Health: the Socio-Economic Determinants of health, Sydney: The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, 1999, 3rd Edition.

Cate Russell, *Ginger's Story: Five minibiographies from U3AOnline participants*, U3Aonline, 2004.

Tom Schuller, Angela Brassett-Grundy, Andy Green, Cathie Hammond, John Preston, *Learning, Continuity and Change in Adult Life*, London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, June 2002.

Richard Wilkinson and Michael Marmot, *Social Determinants of Health: The Solid Facts*, Copenhagen: World Health Organisation, 2003.

ACE Forum

Two decades later, the struggle to identify a national definition for ACE continues – but with indications of success this time

Gleeson Consulting was engaged by ALA to co-ordinate and facilitate a two day forum in Canberra in April 2005 to bring together stakeholders in Adult and Community Education from every Australian State and Territory.

The objective of the Forum was to formulate a definition of Adult and Community Education which would serve to promote ACE to the Federal Government and researchers. The Forum also aimed to explore strategies which would lead to increased recognition of ACE as well as recognition of its value to individuals, communities and the nation as a whole.

Since 1980, at least two attempts have been made to formulate an agreed national definition of ACE, however, it is understood that both failed, for various reasons.

The participants at this national Forum represented a cross section of ACE stakeholders with all States and Territories being represented.

There were representatives of peak bodies, managers of grass root providers, some small, some large, some currently working in paid positions, others in a voluntary capacity, some had been in the sector many years, while others were relative newcomers. There was an almost balanced representation of genders and a wide range of ages, experiences and backgrounds.

While the group of 20 had many things in common, the most critical of these was a passion and commitment to having ACE recognised for its true worth.

To ensure that this was not an exercise of insular navel gazing (which the ACE sector is sometimes known for) a handful of resource people were included in the Forum to provide some balance and objectivity. They included respected researchers, Dr Kaye Bowman and Alison Anelzark from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) in Adelaide and Dr John McIntyre, formerly from the University of Technology, Sydney.

A full report, including participants and resource people is available on the ALA website in the 'for members' section. You are invited to comment and help build a national definition of ACE.



Dr Kaye Bowman speaking at the ACE Forum held in Canberra recently.



Conference participants at the ACE Forum.

Skills shortage

Addressing the nation's skills shortage



Darren Smith, looking back while moving forward with e-learning.

Darren Smith and his colleagues at Adelaide's Schefenacker Vision Systems are part of a new breed of adult students – helping fill the gap in Australia's skills shortage through e-learning. They're one of the nation's first groups of manufacturing industry employees to study formal vocational education and training (VET) qualifications totally in the workplace – rather than in a classroom.

The 2005 Australian Flexible Learning Framework (2005 Framework) is at the forefront of developing e-learning products and training practices to meet the growing needs of the nation's training providers and workforce. Adult learners like Darren are part of a quickly growing number of students benefiting from e-learning opportunities. Currently there are approximately 1.72 million students participating in VET programs compared with about 726,000 enrolled in university.

Darren, 37 and a father of two young children, is now more than half-way to becoming a formally qualified engineer with Schefenacker Vision Systems, a leading automobile components manufacturer. He already has both a Diploma of Engineering and an Advanced Diploma of Engineering under his belt. While balancing work and family life, Darren has fast-tracked achieving his career goals via the flexibility of e-learning.

"Apart from what the training has done for my career, it was just a really appealing option – the company was going to pay for it, it was going to happen during work time, plus it was the exact qualification I always wanted to do sometime later on," he said. "I'm pretty happy with the way things have turned out."

As well as receiving three hours a week of face-to-face training, Darren has contact with his trainer 24 hours a day, seven days a week through e-mail.

Dr Ross Bensley Schefenacker's Corporate Development Manager is confident the training model will be emulated in other States and Territories and by other industries.

"The beauty of the model is that it is very generalised - the whole model is flexible because it isn't tied to the classroom, to traditional modes of instruction, or to a particular industry," he said.

CEO of Manufacturing Skills Australia, Mr Bob Paton, supports Schefenacker's move to help its manufacturing staff acquire new skills, saying that training for workers within manufacturing has evolved.

"We've come from the dark old ages where the tradespeople were the manufacturers into recognising that they are production workers who have different skill sets and skill needs to tradespeople," Mr Paton said.

Redressing the skills shortage in Australia will not happen overnight, but the success of e-learning training programs in collaboration with businesses like Schefenacker Vision Systems will go a long way to ensuring industry and student needs are met as the problem is tackled.

For information on how the 2005 Framework is leading the way in e-learning visit: www.flexiblelearning.net.au or career options, visit www.myfuture.edu.au.

Learning revolution

Towards a learning revolution in Australian society

During March and April, the Executive Director of Adult Learning Australia, Ron Anderson, and I visited all States for consultations on the ALA project on future directions for lifelong learning in Australia which had been initiated last December with the release of a discussion paper entitled, 'Towards a Learning Revolution.'

What we found may be summed up as *glimmers of light* surrounded by considerable gloom. While we learnt of splendid initiatives in all States where creative initiatives have been implemented that extend learning opportunities for Australians throughout life, there was also a very general recognition that lifelong learning is poorly understood in Australia, and is seldom seen as a policy priority.

While leading OECD countries have adopted a contemporary view of lifelong learning which incorporates formal, non-formal, and informal modes of learning in many contexts, it was found that this concept was not widely understood, with lifelong learning often seen as only accessing the formal education system.

This misconception is out of line with the modern concept of lifelong learning adopted by OECD, the European Union, and leading OECD countries, and has served as a barrier to the development of contemporary 21st century arrangements to encourage and support learning throughout life in many contexts. This misconception has resulted in insufficient attention and priority being given to non-formal and informal learning, and has also resulted in the continued Cinderella status of adult and community education in Australia.

On the other hand, we learnt about initiatives where imaginative innovations are leading to widening learning opportunities for Australians throughout life. These included local initiatives such as the Hume Global Learning Village, Yarra Ranges Learning Communities, and the Ravenswood Community Garden in Launceston, a spectrum of U3A developments, initiatives taken by Brisbane City Council, and initiatives in Marion and Salisbury in South Australia.

A feature of these initiatives is the growing interest of local government in learning community strategies, as in the examples cited above, and a growing recognition that community learning partnerships can underpin and support the social, cultural, and economic objectives of councils. It is expected that this interest will continue to grow, and will be a major influence in the extension of learning opportunities throughout life for all Australians.

A further significant aspect of these local initiatives was the recognition of the key role that libraries can play as community learning centres and hubs of community building and innovation. While this is common practice overseas in countries such as the United Kingdom, projects such as the Hume Global Learning Village are pointing the way to a broader community role for libraries. It is likely that other community facilities, such as museums and art galleries will also take on a broader community learning role, while, in a real sense, the whole community can be regarded as a resource for learning.

In addition to local initiatives, a particular feature of what was observed lay in the comprehensive action taken by some States to extend learning opportunities throughout life. One excellent example of comprehensive and coherent policies to support learning throughout life was observed in Tasmania where several reports on lifelong learning have set the parameters for a new approach, with follow up action in such areas as the establishment of a new Learning and Skill Authority to achieve greater coherence in policies to extend learning in the State. A similar body exists in Victoria in the role of the Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission.

Drivers towards new approaches

There was a broad recognition in the consultations that the drivers identified in the project discussion paper will require new ideas and strategies in response to a rapidly changing world. These drivers were globalisation, knowledge economy, demographic change with the ageing of the population and workforce, changes in work and labour markets, the impact of technology, and changes in communities.

In some consultations further important drivers were also suggested. These included the impact on increased diversity in society (both in Australia and internationally), shifts in lifestyles, and the impact of various big picture global issues such as the environment and sustainability.

What are others doing?

In researching this project, ALA's Visiting Research Fellow examined what a number of leading OECD countries, such as Germany, the UK, Canada, and the Nordic countries are doing to provide learning throughout life, as well as European Union policy. Comment on these developments, which are tending to set international benchmarks for good practice, will be in the final report on the project.

Key Pillars for Building Australia as an Inclusive Learning Society

The development of this project has led to a focus on five key themes for building Australia as an inclusive learning society. These are:

- empowering individuals as motivated and capable lifelong learners;
- sustaining and transforming communities through learning;
- using technology to extend learning environments and transform the way we learn;
- developing the workplace as a key learning environment to underpin economic objectives;
- extending and connecting partnerships and networks to build Australia as an inclusive learning society.

The consultations found wide agreement that all these lines of action were important in building Australia as an inclusive learning society. It was recognised that connecting these lines of development in holistic strategies would create synergies and lead to value added outcomes that progressed social, cultural, and economic objectives. A number of transversal connections, such as the role of government, were suggested during the consultations.

In order to progress thinking on the roles of these key pathways to a learning society, each one was posted on the ALA website during March and April with a set of questions for responses as a further step in the 'National Conversation for Lifelong Learning' being fostered through this project.

A list of key themes emerging from the consultations was also posted on the ALA website for comment.



Where to from here?

The report of this project will be released in Canberra at the launch of Adult Learners' Week on 5 July, and will then be available on the ALA website. It is hoped that it will encourage wide discussion across Australia on what can be done to widen learning opportunities throughout life for all Australians, and to build Australia as an inclusive learning society, able to adapt to changing conditions and seize new opportunities.

This project has confirmed that a world of radical change requires new ideas, new ways of thinking and collaborating, and a rich web of partnerships. There is both opportunity and threat in this situation, and a challenge for adult and community education to redefine its role and contribution in progressing Australia as an inclusive and successful learning society.

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Take time – Tony Ryan

A lifelong learning initiative on community radio

Introduction

The UK Centre for Research into the Wider Benefits of Learning indicate from their research that where most adult learning takes place is in the home and the workplace. This article provides some ideas for developing learning in the home.

Background

The use of radio as an educational tool goes back to when broadcasting to schools were first explored in the UK, and also in most Australian capital cities, in the mid-1920s. Many readers may remember radio in the classrooms of yesteryear before being gradually replaced by the medium of educational television in the early 1960s.

For most Australians, radio is still an important part of our daily lives. Although the medium of radio has already celebrated its 100th birthday, it is still very relevant alongside new technologies such as the internet. Such a partnership could provide a useful model for educational broadcasting across all stages and sectors of education, as well as building closer links between the education sectors and the community radio sector locally, statewide and even across Australia, in the context of lifelong learning.

All readers will be aware of the richness of resources available through national broadcasters in Australia, and also in English-speaking countries such as the UK, USA and Canada. Similarly in Australia, outlets such as Radio Adelaide at the University of Adelaide have a well established commitment to lifelong learning projects. And with access to the internet, these resources can now have a permanence online which was just not possible even five years ago.

But what can a small local community radio station do in this context? This article details work being done by one such station – PBA FM in the Adelaide suburb of Salisbury – to include a lifelong learning initiative into its broadcast schedule.

Stage 1: Beginnings

Since February 2005, PBA FM in Adelaide has been broadcasting a weekly half hour program called 'Take Time,' at 9am Fridays. As with most radio programs, 'Take Time' is seen as being informative and indeed educational in its own right, but value-adding as the internet opens new options for learning.

Program content is chosen with local audiences in mind. While PBA FM can be heard across most of metropolitan Adelaide, many of the items are chosen to build local identification by reflecting community interests in suburbs to the north and north-east of Adelaide, and across the CBD. Other material is of course not location-specific, such as interviews on Sri Lanka after the tsunami, problem gambling, and starting a new business.

Programs to date have included interviews (live in the studio or recorded) on *men's health*, *new books/films*, *the environment*, *children and internet safety*, *a fun visit to the Tram Museum at St Kilda in Adelaide*, *a project to assist parents' return to work*, *a tour of the new State Library*, and *a special Good Friday program on the Lutheran Archives and the history of the Lutheran Church in SA*.

The website

Although each and every 'Take Time' program is the central element of the project, the availability of a website to provide additional information and resources is seen as crucial to this lifelong learning initiative. For a monthly summary of program content to date, go to the 'Take Time' website – www.pbafm.org.au and check out the Archives section. A content index is being finalised at the time of writing, so that schools and adult education centres can access selected past programs, through audio online and/or fact sheets.

Now available online, and for selected programs, there are some 'Fact Sheets' (for example, see 8 April, on the Blackham Environment and Conservation Centre, and for 22 April prior to Anzac Day, there is a Fact Sheet on Peter Sculthorpe's 1963 work 'Small Town').

Also available are selected interviews in MP3 format as *audio on demand*. For example, see the 6 May item on Children and Families in Transition, the 13 May item on problem gambling, and the 25 February extended interview on Sri Lanka following the tsunami.

One complete 30 minute program is online as an MP3 file, the Good Friday program recorded in the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide – see 25 March. A local secondary school – Trinity College at Gawler – contributed to the production of an environmental education item (8 April), with four senior students assisting in the editing process, and producing the 45 second on-air promo.

Progress to date

In this first stage of development and after only three months, progress is pleasing. The website is now in place, through a link from PBA FM's homepage www.pbafm.org.au. The website was designed by a young man in Belfast Northern Ireland, and is currently supported and updated by the Australian College of Educators in Canberra – this is greatly appreciated.

Early publicity initiatives are now building audiences for 'Take Time,' there has already been some consistently good feedback. There is now daily publicity on air, as studio reads and/or records promos for each program, plus a generic recorded promo in the station's computer system for regular use. There is growing awareness in local education and other organisations, and offers to publicise the series are coming in. And finally, there is strong support from the PBA FM Management Committee and the Station Manager.

Stage 2: Funded initiatives

The initial four or five month period on air is being supported by PBA FM through the generous provision of airtime, resources, publicity etc. In this second stage of development, the aim is to attract funding for 'Take Time,' for specific audio/internet lifelong learning projects which can then be incorporated into a series with firm publicity and online learning strategies, and the availability of an established and growing weekly audience.

'Take Time' is primarily seen as an initiative for PBA FM listeners, wherever they are located in metropolitan Adelaide. However, with project funding, specific initiatives would be developed for wider audiences across South Australia and nationally.

For instance, funding applications for five, ten or twenty short programs on planning and starting a small business, or on an aspect of health and wellbeing, or on finding a job or coping with mid-career loss of work, would include provision for the production of online Fact Sheets or Study Guides; also for the production of CDs, either for sale on a not-for-profit basis or/and for distribution to any other community radio station in SA wishing to schedule the series, as well as the inclusion of some or all of the programs online as MP3 audiofiles.

Many of the audiofiles now online could provide educators, in schools and/or in adult education, with a springboard or discussion starter – for example, the gambling interview broadcast on Friday 13 May, or the Sri Lanka item broadcast on 25 February.

Target audiences would range from schools, through community learning centres, to individuals at home who, for one reason or another, are unable to attend TAFE or adult community education centres. See the reference below for an excellent UK paper on lifelong learning through broadcasting.

Of the 20+ community stations in SA, possibly up to 12–15 would choose to schedule projects such as these – note that such decisions are taken by the local station, and networking (such as is done by the ABC) is really not possible in the community radio sector.

Finally, funded projects could also be developed for distribution through the Community Radio Satellite in Sydney, for scheduling across Australia by interested stations. Although some initiatives (for example on legal matters where laws may differ markedly from state to state) may best be kept within one state; other content areas may well be of interest nationally.

To get an idea of the extent of the community radio sector and stations on a state by state basis, go to www.cbonline.org.au. There are some hundreds of community stations around Australia, although by no means all of these would access lifelong learning radio/audio projects because of their station formats (eg classical music, rock etc) and/or target audiences. Advice is that a recent 30 minute 'Take Time' program was recorded for later transmission by up to 33 stations nationally.

Summary

Although not new, the model being developed at Salisbury is timely, and may well have application in other states. Readers anywhere in Australia are invited to check the 'Take Time' website on www.pbafm.org.au and provide the production team in Adelaide with feedback on the early programs, audiofiles and fact sheets, as the basis for further development.

Reference

A safe place to learn: a guide to good practice in broadcasting for lifelong learning (UK),
<http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/safe/safe01.htm>.\

Tony Ryan

– PRODUCER/PRESENTER, TAKE TIME
PBA FM, SALISBURY SA

Engaging youth learners

Dr Sarojni Choy

Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Much has been said and written about pedagogy, andragogy and adult learning principles to customise and improve learning in the post secondary education sector. Knowles' (1990) principles for adult learning remain the key set of guiding philosophy that underpins delivery to learners in the post secondary sector, hence all learners are classed as adults. Knowles' (1990) principles adhere to a set of assumptions which is supposed to be tested before one decides whether the approach should be pedagogical, andragogical or a combination of both.

A uniform approach to delivery in the post secondary sector using the principles of adult learning is known to have marginalised most youth and some adult learners. A study by Choy (2000) confirmed a discrepancy between youth (aged 15-24 years) and adult learners, implying that adult learning principles are unsuitable for most youth learners. The findings highlighted the influence of learners' priorities, their motivation, and learning attributes on how they learn and the importance of learning and completing the learning task. What became apparent from the findings was the significance of the elements in learners' lifeworlds and how these created role conflicts between those as learner, earner and family/community member. Each of these roles provided their own sets of learning opportunities, some showing more immediate relevance and applications than others, hence maintaining a higher priority over formal learning. These findings could easily apply to adult learners who are balancing multiple roles outside the formal learning framework. Hence, the need to test the assumptions behind adult learning principles is paramount.

The study of youth learners by Choy (2000) drew three broad conclusions:

- Most youth use a predominantly surface approach to learning largely due to time constraints, overwhelming volume of content, and assessment requirements that reward outcomes achieved through a surface approach.
- *Marton & Saljo (1976) described the surface approach to learning as the assimilation of knowledge without changing its format, mainly through memorising. Their research showed that the surface approach to learning was common among traditional students because they liked to economise their efforts. The motive behind using a surface approach is generally extrinsic – to avoid failure without working*

too hard. The learning strategy focuses on selected details to reproduce accurately. According to Biggs (1988), surface learners usually look for 'clues' to identify specific sections that would be assessed.

The qualitative study with youth alluded to four principal reasons for a surface approach to learning:

- Youth perceived deficiencies in their skills and abilities to undertake self-directed learning.
- Youth believed that the educational institutions pushed them towards surface learning on two fronts – firstly, the sheer volume of what they were expected to learn and, secondly, the assessment practices in their view mainly emphasised and rewarded surface learning.
- Youth indicated a high respect for their teachers' professional knowledge and experience and therefore felt that the teachers were better positioned to be in charge of, and responsible for, their learning. However, there were two strong qualifications – the learning must be relevant and the subject content must be made explicit.
- They saw that society values credentialism and therefore the most important goal was to pass assignments and examinations and obtain their formal qualification.

These four points gave a strong incentive to follow surface learning strategies to economise time and effort.

Most youth are at Stage 2 of their learning orientation on an orthogonal scale.

Youth showed a preference for both, pedagogical as well as andragogical approaches to learning. Given the finding that most youth use a predominantly surface approach to learning, a preference for high andragogy and high pedagogy was surprising. One would expect that surface learning would equate with low andragogy and high pedagogy (that is a preference for highly structured learning). During the focus groups, however, youth learners reported a preference for the *feel good* or social aspects only of andragogy – for example, being able to address the teacher by her or his first name. They were not keen on taking responsibility for what should be learned, how it should be learned or even how it should be assessed. This ambivalence towards responsibility and an acceptance of the *feel good* aspects of andragogy resonate well with a preference for surface learning.

Most youth seem to appreciate a relational level of understanding rather than abstract thinking.

Like adults, youth seek and value the relevance of learning tasks and their immediate application in a practical sense. A direct link between what is learnt and immediate applications enables them to contextualise the content and develop lasting meaning structures. However, youth don't necessarily have sufficient knowledge base for immediate application of everything they learn.

Youth learners and adult learning principles

The findings about youth learners were analysed against Knowles' (1990) six principles for adult learning:

1. The need to know

Adults like to relate their learning program to their lives. They prefer active forms of learning to be able to contextualise the content for their own meaning structures. The reasons for learning something and the consequence of not learning are important for them.

Youth appear to have limited opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in real life contexts largely because they are still in the process of acquiring these. The immediate consequence for not learning for them is mainly failure in their program of learning, whereas for adults failure could have other repercussions in their work and life contexts. Most youth have the opportunity to repeat their learning courses, whereas for adults this may not be so convenient due to time, costs and life commitments.

2. The learners' self-concept

Adults have self-concepts of self-responsibility. They see themselves as individuals who have the capacity to make decisions for themselves and not being led or manipulated by others – perhaps a reflection of their social maturity. Although many demonstrate self-responsibility and are self-directing and independent in various aspects of life, some who undertake further education after a break from formal learning experiences tend to be dependent learners (Knowles, 1990). Knowles (1990) acknowledged this and urged adult educators to create learning experiences that would assist individuals to move from a dependent to a self-directed learner.

Many youth are still in the process of establishing self-concepts of self-responsibility while pursuing tertiary education.

3. The role of learners' experience

Adults have a range of life experiences that impact on their learning. These experiences are used to express their self-identity and are valuable learning resources. In contrast, the life experiences of youth are comparatively limited not only by their age, but also their experiences in activities other than formal learning. They may not have the level of maturity that adults have gained through life experiences.

4. Readiness to learn

For adults, readiness to learn emerges from the need to learn. It is mostly voluntary.

Youth have less choice in terms of not learning. That is, if they don't learn, their pathways are restricted. Before they take up full time jobs and other responsibilities typical in adulthood, they are required to learn and gain a qualification in or acquire competencies for a chosen vocation. Learning for youth could be seen as a priority as opposed to a voluntary activity.

5. Orientation to learning

Adults' orientation to learning is towards real-life situations. They are motivated to learn because they are able to realise the worth/value of learning in terms of enhancing their abilities to address issues and problems in their daily lives.

Youth have an orientation towards assessment and grades. They explained that they would place more value on self-directed learning, critical thinking and reflective thinking if these became a significant part of assessment.

6. Motivation

While most adults are intrinsically motivated to learn, some are extrinsically motivated. In an era with rapid changes across all aspects of life, with on-going creation of new knowledge and ever growing access to information, learning has become significantly important for adults (Heimstra, 1994). The demand for acquiring information and learning new skills is a key driver to success, hence learning has now become a lifelong process. The urge to succeed and survive in itself is an intrinsic motivating factor for adults.

The findings of this study show that the key motivating factor for youth is to gain a qualification that will enable them to secure a job. That is, youth are generally extrinsically motivated.

The above analysis of the study data against the principles for adult learning highlights some limitations in facilitating

continued on next page

Engaging youth learners – continued

youth learning. The following principles for youth learning are meant to provide broad guidelines to structure learning environments and design practices to enhance facilitation of youth learning. These are presented under two major areas – principles for delivery and principles for skilling for higher learning.

Principles for delivery

1. Enhance equilibrium in lifeworld

Learning programs designed for youth should consider a range of factors from their lifeworld that interact with and impact on youths' learning. Formal learning is one of the means for maintaining and enhancing equilibrium within youths' lifeworld. Integration of relevant experiences outside the formal learning environments could be processed through recognition of prior learning processes.

2. Relevance and application

Relevance and immediate application of what is to be learned needs to be made explicit to youth in terms of the vocational outcomes and assessment requirements.

3. Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards

The rewards of formal learning need to meet the intrinsic and extrinsic goals of youth and be cumulative to maintain their interest and motivation.

Principles for higher learning

5. Orientation to learning

Facilitation of youth learning should be based principally on pedagogical practices, although aspects of andragogy introduced gradually. A directive, but highly supportive approach by a motivator and guide is suggested. However, youth could be encouraged to take a more active role in the teaching and learning process and assume increasing responsibilities. Negotiated learning contracts with active learning situations are recommended.

6. Learner responsibilities

Youth should be taught to gradually assume responsibility for their learning. The roles and responsibilities of learners should be made explicit and they should be assisted in acquiring skills and attributes for these.

7. Assessment

Self-directed learning, critical thinking and reflective thinking tasks should form an integral part of assessment tasks to encourage youth to develop skills and attributes for these to support lifelong learning.

8. Self-concept

Workshops to create self-awareness of capabilities and to build self-confidence in learning should be organised for those who need this type of assistance.

Youth experience their world as a relatively complex phenomenon. While they would like to be more engaged and be characterised as adult learners, youth see themselves as being forced somewhat into credentialism and surface learning. They hear the espousal of self-directed learning ideals, but the few opportunities that they have been given are marginalised by time limitations and lack of recognition. They are also perplexed that institutions do not formally value learning they undertake beyond the curriculum prescriptions.

The above suggested eight principles for youth learners are the first steps to enhancing the engagement of youth learners in the post secondary sector.



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Mark all contributions to the attention of The Editor, Quest, Adult Learning Australia, GPO 260 CANBERRA ACT 2601, email: info@ala.asn.au. Contributions are welcome anytime although to assist in the co-ordination, deadlines are the last Fridays of January, April, July and October.

Calendar

United Nations Literacy Decade 2003–2012

4–13 July 2005

Leading Lifelong Learning International Education Conference 2005

The Leading Lifelong Learning Education Conference is a major ten day event focusing on the internationally recognised curriculum, pedagogical and assessment aspects of Tasmania's education transformation being driven by its Essential Learnings Framework. A special four day package (4-7 July 2005) has been designed specifically for national and international delegates. The conference will be held at the Grand Chancellor Hotel, Hobart.

For further information, visit www.leadinglifelonglearning.education.tas.gov.au or email: leadinglifelonglearning@education.tas.gov.au.

22–26 August

A Courageous Conversation about Sustainability

Between August 22 and 26 the Gondwana Centre, a non-profit ecological adult learning centre in South East Queensland, is hosting a five day multidisciplinary dialogue forum called 'Sustainable Futures and Resilient Communities: Courageous Conversation Between Policy, Industry and Community' at Binna Burra on the edge of Lamington National Park – Wangerriburra Country. It will involve key policy makers, government representatives, industry players, activists and emerging leaders.

Places in the program are limited but still available. For further information contact Sally MacKinnon at the Gondwana Centre, Ph: (07) 5533 3646; email: safehaven@austarnet.com.au or visit the Gondwana Centre's website: www.gondwanacentre.org.au.

23–25 September 2005

Making Meaning: Creating Connections that Value Diversity

The 29th National Conference of the Australian Association of Special Education (AASE) is to be held at the Brisbane Convention Centre, South Bank. AASE is a broad-based non-categorical association concerned with all who have special education needs. International Guest speaker Professor Robert Stodden will explore current educational improvement initiatives and their impact upon students with diverse learning and behavioural needs. Other speakers include Associate Professor, Bob Conway.

The conference aims to be open and inclusive to both participants and presenters. Parents, teachers, specialists and paraprofessionals are all welcome.

For further information visit, www.aase.edu.au or contact Michele Aniftos at: ies@tpg.com.au.

27 September 2005

Online Learning and Teaching Conference 2005

The theme of this one day conference, 'Beyond Delivery,' looks at ways in which educators can move beyond the use of the online environment for delivery of content and access to information, to using it in ways which will encourage active, collaborative, authentic and engaging learning experiences for learners. Sub-themes include: Blended learning environments; Uses of collaborative tools; Learning designs for more active and collaborative learning; Technology futures and more. The conference will be held at the Queensland University of Technology.

For further information visit <https://olt.qut.edu.au/udf/olt2005>, or email Allison Brown at: am.brown@qut.edu.au.

9–11 November 2005

Breaking Down Boundaries – the Biennial Forum of the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia

This fully-refereed conference considers the international experience in open, distance and flexible education. The forum will be of interest to all managers and teachers in distance and flexible education, including the provision of educational programs in transnational settings. The conference will be held at the Hilton Hotel, Adelaide. For further information, visit www.unisa.edu.au/odlaforum, phone (08) 8302 1250 or email: bruce.king@unisa.edu.au.

24–27 November 2005

Adult Learning Australia (ALA) – 45th Annual Conference

ALA's 45th annual conference will be held on 24–27 November at Rydges, Capitol Hill Canberra. The theme of the conference will be 'LEARNERS @ WORK: New Directions and Connections: ACE as a catalyst.' More details will be available over the next month on the ALA website, www.ala.asn.au/. Expressions of interest regarding papers will be called for. Papers can be refereed.

Call for submission of abstracts for Papers

Submissions close 29th July 2005

The 45th Annual National Conference 2005

LEARNERS @ WORK: New Directions and Connections

ACE AS A CATALYST

The 2005 Learners @ Work Conference will explore adult learning connections with work as part of *Working at Learning* or *Learning for Work*.

The matrix below shows suggested sub-themes and dimensions the conference planning committee would like presenters to consider exploring. The matrix is offered as a guide, other sub-themes or dimensions related to 'working at learning' or 'learning for work' will be considered.

	DIMENSIONS				
	Economics	Government Policy	Access and Equity	Personal Development Outcomes	Models for Provision in E-Learning
SUBTHEMES					
Purposes					
Outcomes					
Participants					
Technology					
Partnerships					

**Rydges Capital Hill, Canberra Ave (Cnr National Circuit), Canberra
25th and 26th November 2005**

A Spectacular Closing Dinner at the National Museum of Australia will conclude the formal conference proceedings.

The conference will include a presentation to the National ALA Award winners to be presented by Dr Brendan Nelson or his representative.

Watch the website www.ala.asn.au for updates on keynote speakers, registration details, accommodation options and other information as it becomes available.