

Quest

→ Balancing life, work and wellbeing



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Adult Learning
Australia Inc.

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Calendar

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 Australian international bodies and more.

ALA BOARD 2009

- Allan Arnott (NT)
- Deirdre Baker (QLD)
- Mark Brophy (VIC)
- Barry Golding (VIC)
- Margaret Kling (QLD)
- Dorothy Lucardie (VIC)
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Copy: Contributions of news, stories, reviews and photographs are welcome.

Advertising: ALA accepts advertising from appropriate vendors in quarter page, half page and full page formats as well as inserts.

For rates and dates, contact Janie McOmish or Louise Gardner or download from <http://www.ala.asn.au/pubs/advertising.pdf>

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ALA also publishes the Australian Journal of Adult Learning (AJAL) three times a year. ALA members receive these publications as part of their membership but single or extra copies are available at minimal cost.

ALA gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. It thanks the many volunteers who submit material to Quest.



Editorial



Welcome to the last hard copy edition of Quest.

I foreshadowed in the last edition that Adult Learning Australia would be transitioning to an online version during the course of 2009. A committee has been established to have a close look at design, content and other reader friendly matters. It is our hope that we can provide more than four copies a year of the new Quest.

At the May meeting of the Board it was decided that the position of Executive Director would be advertised and filled on a competitive basis. The position's advertisement is located towards the back of this edition. It is also posted on the ALA website.

Adult Learning Australia has also been advised by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations that our submission to coordinate Adult Learners' Week in 2009 has been successful. Our bid included a number of strategic partners from around the country. These partners will be announced publically soon on the ALA website.

The winning approach adopted by ALA and our partners for ALW in 2009 displays a different model from past ALW celebrations. This year our focus will be much more on providing capacity building activities for ACE/VET providers nationally with a focus on identifying strategies by providers to implement the 2008 Ministerial Declaration.

We look forward to hearing from those providers in each state who would like to host an ALW provider capacity building workshop in the first week of September.

Although the series of presentations ALA held for providers around the country about the Teaching and Learning Capital Fund for VET Investing in Community Education and Training Element has now finished, I am pleased to report that well over 300 organisations attended these sessions nationally.

On release of the final set of Guidelines by the Department, ALA was fortunate to use the services of Dr John Holm from DEGW a company specialising in designing learning spaces. John spoke to the guidelines using Elluminate as a platform. His presentation is accessible on the ALA website.

We sincerely hope that by raising awareness about possible project options that we gave you something of a 'head start' in what has proved to be a very short timeframe for submitting applications. Of course we also wish you well with your submission.

I mentioned Elluminate earlier. As many of you are aware ALA has acquired its own Virtual Elluminate Room. This can be used at no cost by members although the offer does not extend to online members.

I cannot emphasise enough the opportunity this service provides for those members wishing to build their e-communication skills and knowledge. ALA also offers free training by members of our expert team.

Finally, I would like to welcome to the ALA Board on behalf of the members, Dorothy Lucardie, a former President of ALA and someone many members would know in that earlier capacity, and many members will also know Associate Professor Barry Golding for his extensive work on, amongst other things, Men's Sheds and his role in chairing the ACFE A-Frame development committee—an excellent resource highlighted in this edition.

Ron Anderson

Acting Executive Director

Briefs

Keep up to date with what is happening in our sector

Visit the **Adult Learning Australia Blog**. Every relevant press release or news item is posted on the Blog immediately. Keep up to date by visiting the site each day. Click on ALA Blog at our website—www.ala.asn.au



E-learning

The Australian Flexible Learning Framework's 2008 E-learning Benchmarking Survey reveals that nationally, 36% of VET activity involves e-learning and over half (58%) of those teachers/trainers who participated now use e-learning in part of their training delivery. 24% have adopted web 2.0 or social networking technologies.

Informal Learning

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 74% of 25 to 64 year old people were engaged in informal learning in the 12 months prior to interview in 2006–7.

OpenID _ Digital Identities

When using Web2.0, people have to register logon and identity details with different passwords many times.

OpenID enables you to design and administer your digital identity and password to access many websites with a single logon. You decide how much of your identity you want to release and to whom.

Basically you register with an OpenID identity provider and receive a URL that is unique to you. With this you can log onto sites that support Open ID. Currently, you are 'self-asserting' who you are but as tools such as e-portfolios are increasingly used there will need to be more verification of who you are—just as happens now with banks and passports through a 'points check'.

Open ID will probably be part of the final solution.

Social Media

Social Media is the term used to describe the different types of software that make it possible for groups and individuals to assemble, and share information and ideas. It was used extensively to publicise important information during the recent Victorian bushfires to convey and make announcements to the community. This is but one example of the changes that are occurring within society and points to the need for all of us to adapt to, and make continued use of, these powerful tools.

A guide to creating learning design tools for VET

A guide to creating learning design for VET was developed by the Australian Flexible Learning Framework and is designed for learning designers in the Australian vocational education

and training (VET) sector, seeking to plan and design online learning materials. The guide provides designers with a series of model learning designs that they can use to plan learning environments. The guide cannot capture all learning and design variables but provides information that is intended to inform the learning designer on how best these can be considered and dealt with.

Power Up—Training with E-Tools

One of the 2008 E-learning Grants in NSW revolved around Indigenous learning.

'Power Up with E-Tools' is a resource that helps to bridge the gap between Indigenous people who are skilled in technology/multi media/art/film and music and who want to move into training or facilitating. It will prepare them for the work opportunities that will become available in the near future and serve as a resource that can be used for their training delivery.

This excellent resource can be viewed at <http://powerup.cdu.edu.au/index2.html>

Marketing Tips from LERN

Only publicise your Homepage—Your program may have a blog, or a You-Tube account, or private social network, or any number of other places where you can send potential customers and visitors. However the only link you should publicise is your Homepage URL. Only use it in publicity. It's the best marketing strategy.

Be your own journalist—contact your local paper and offer to send along photos of your courses, events and activities with a short blurb for publication.

The magic week is 14—If you are promoting a continuing professional education event, the magic week to do your mail out first is 14 weeks before the event. For community classes mail your brochures 5—7 weeks before the start of the classes.

Rebundling for more income—Registrations may be down but income does not have to go down. Look at rebundling courses for additional income.

On-line Press Releases—These are a great device for the search-using public—optimise press releases for Yahoo! Google News and other news search engines and sites.

Cataloguers distribute more—Catalogues generally have at least ten times the aggregate sales response to emails.

Social Networking Sites are a great way to do Surveys.

E-learning thrives in community education



The strongest indication that e-learning will be paramount in the future development of education and training was given last year, with 94% of learners in vocational education and training (VET) indicating they wanted a component of e-learning in their course.

Conducted by the national training system's e-learning strategy, the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (Framework), the annual E-learning Benchmarking Survey measures the uptake, use and impact of e-learning within VET.

Released in November 2008, the survey (flexiblelearning.net.au/e-learningindicators) highlighted some impressive results for adult and community education (ACE), suggesting the sector was well on the way to adopting e-learning practices.

The uptake of e-learning in ACE is on par with schools and ahead of private registered training organisations (RTOs). ACE teachers were also extremely positive about the impact of e-learning on their teaching/training and student learning.

In fact, there are some exciting examples of e-learning being used within ACE which give learners control over the time, place and content of their learning.

Coonara Community House is a small, Melbourne-based RTO which has employed the use of wikis (an online tool for sharing information and collaborating with other learners) to deliver a Certificate III in Community Work to a learner group made up predominately of return-to-work mums.

Through their own private wiki, each learner creates an e-portfolio using technologies such as podcasts, blogs and digital storytelling to produce an electronic record of their skills and work experience. Learners benefit in a number of ways.

The use of technology builds their IT skills, making them more marketable to employers. The interactive nature of the wikis encourages a more engaging and beneficial type of learning, and enables a learner to better engage with a future employer. The e-portfolio also enables learners to apply for RPL (recognition of prior learning), using previous

experience to qualify for AQTF (Australian Quality Training Framework) recognised units of training.

For mature age Australians, the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association (ASCCA), which has clubs in every state of Australia, is supporting members to learn through a number of technologies, with the aim of making technology accessible and fun.

Some of ASCCA's members are unable to travel to a physical location for training, due to a lack of public transport or incapacitation. However, to allow them to actively participate in society, they require basic training to keep pace with new technologies. These skills help them to keep in touch with their families and community, improving their quality of life.

ASCCA is currently investigating the use of the web conferencing technology, Elluminate, to teach mature age learners computer basics in the comfort of their own home. Through Elluminate, trainers can train learners in skills such as sending an email, browsing the internet and using Skype, plus other popular computer subjects such as word processing, digital photography and genealogy. Elluminate allows trainers to interact better with their learners, tailoring training to the skill level of each learner. Training can involve demonstrating the technologies on each individual's computer screen, and learners are able to practice in a non threatening environment.

Last year, the Byron Region Community College (BRCC) used e-learning to improve the Byron Shire Council's (BSC) environmental sustainability. They worked to move the organisation from paper-based to online communication by developing employees' skills in video, audio and the uploading and sharing of information in an online environment.

As a result, BSC staff used their new skills to create an interactive online induction kit for new employees, which encouraged greater interaction in the induction process, and reduced the organisation's carbon footprint. In 2009, the BRCC has received further funding and support from the Framework to develop e-learning resources for three new units of the Business Services Training Package, designed to develop 'green skills' within organisations.

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E-LEARNING

Early reE Learnings: A journey o

Email and internet were familiar and friendly tools for me from way back. I was in the university sector when email wasn't known about in business or other community circles and I was even involved in early on-line learning discussions in the 1990s. But as for the recent raft of developments of on-line tools and E-learning I was a stranger!

Having just started as Co-ordinator Special Projects at Learning Centre Link* at Easter 2008 I was re-introduced to E-Learning at Link's State Conference in May 2008 where I met Janie McOmish and Mary Hannan from Adult Learning Australia. In May '08 I was invited by Mary (the ACE E-learning Co-ordinator) to be the WA delegate on the National ACE E-Learning Network.

Linda (another Co-ordinator and the computer whiz at Link) joined me in exploring the program, Elluminate, which was to be used for the national link-up meetings. Sound systems were an important part of the link which has not been simple with current computers. Those early trial sessions where only Linda and I had Elluminate loaded and we were experimenting, with no sound but just exploring the new possibilities using text, became a fun exercise and began to arouse the other staff to this new mystery. It was not fair that we were laughing out loud and sharing our own private jokes via this technology. We discovered that FUN was a tool to develop intrigue and invite interest.

At the ALA National Conference in Fremantle at the end of October '08 several of the Link member Centres attended the stimulating session on E-learning, providing background for those Centres and more voices to spread the word. Thinking about ways these new options might be relevant to our work took another step forward. New ambassadors at the grassroots were wanting to know more.

In terms of the National ACE E-learning Network, I was the one who was brand new but prepared to ask the basic questions. I was

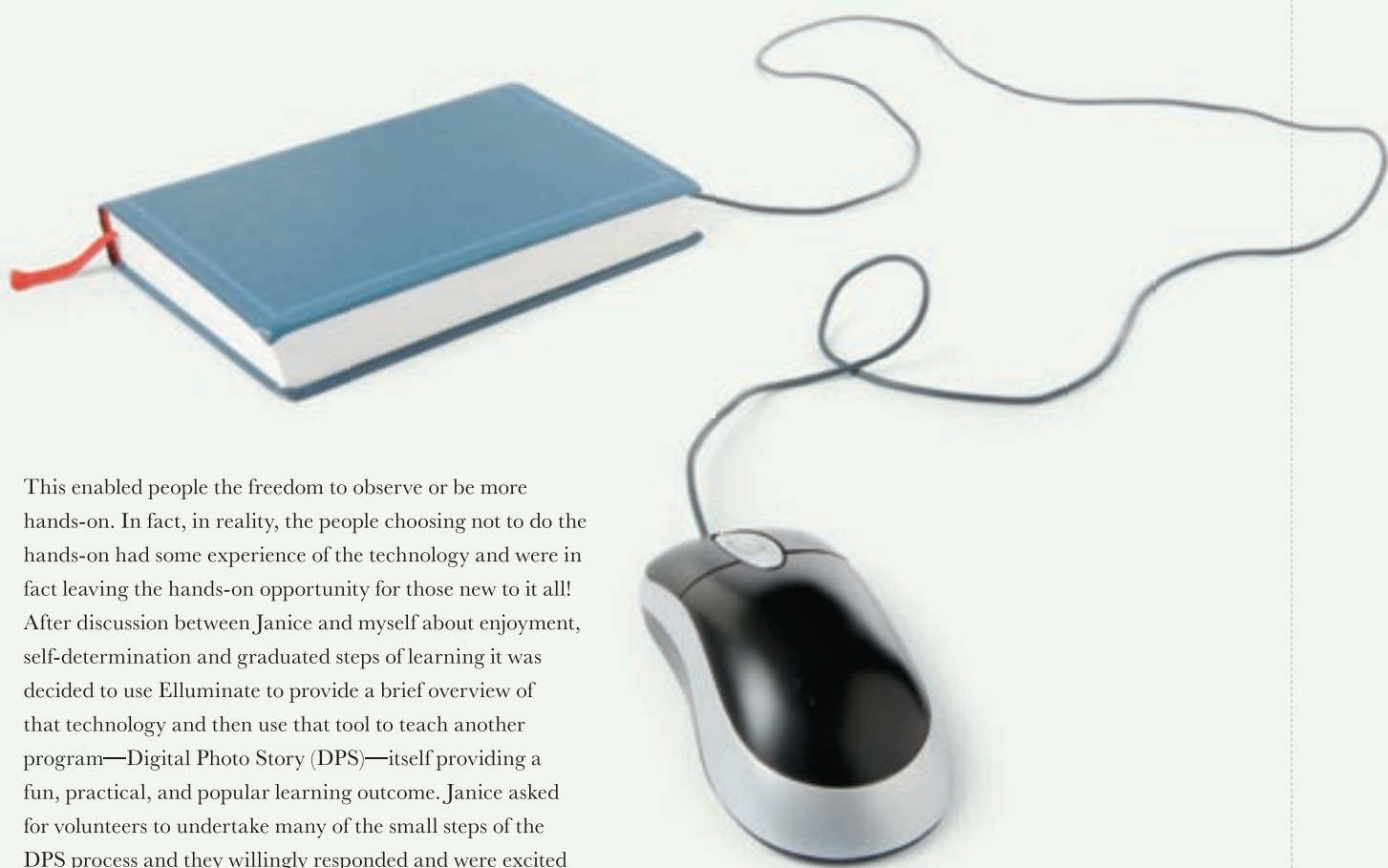
One of my key lessons shared in that presentation was to introduce the new technologies slowly, at a pace that was not mind-blowing and counter-productive.

interested in exploring possibilities for our organisation and its member Centres. After very limited sessions I was gob-smacked to be asked to participate in an on-line conference to be held in Nov 08—the 'Inspiring Innovations On-line Conference'. I literally laughed and thought Mary was joking. She was serious about my sharing from the perspective of a real novice in the conference entitled "Mainstreaming e-learning in ACE—is it an impossible dream?". One of my key lessons shared in that presentation was to introduce the new technologies slowly, at a pace that was not mind-blowing and counter-productive.

At a recent Link Regional Conference (held in Bunbury in February 2009) we undertook an E-learning session which involved Janice Calcei (E-learning Co-ordinator for WA) moderating from the Perth office of the Australian Flexible Learning Framework, linked to our Centres in Bridgetown and Bunbury. Conference delegates had moved location to Milligan Community and Resource Centre (commonly known as Milligan House) for the session. Elluminate had been loaded onto all the computers in their Computer Room and at Reception, as well as via a laptop and projector in another room for people not at an individual computer.

-learning

of re-learning to engage with E-learning



This enabled people the freedom to observe or be more hands-on. In fact, in reality, the people choosing not to do the hands-on had some experience of the technology and were in fact leaving the hands-on opportunity for those new to it all! After discussion between Janice and myself about enjoyment, self-determination and graduated steps of learning it was decided to use Elluminate to provide a brief overview of that technology and then use that tool to teach another program—Digital Photo Story (DPS)—itself providing a fun, practical, and popular learning outcome. Janice asked for volunteers to undertake many of the small steps of the DPS process and they willingly responded and were excited by their achievements. As a result of this session, two of Link member Centres now have Elluminate loaded onto their computers and they have had experience in running an on-line learning session. For the participants, they came away with new skills and knowledge, as well as raised self-confidence, encouragement and enthusiasm.

For Neighbourhood Centre Week in May 2009, Link has organised a central metro session using Photoshop. Individuals are to bring 5 images for their Centre to convert into a video. These Centre videos will then be collated into an overall Link promotional video. A fun day will provide marketing tools for individual Centres as well as the umbrella body as a whole.

Upcoming steps include an update of Link computer technologies to enable new technological opportunities; plans to trial using Elluminate for Executive Committee meetings

in place of telephone-only links that are currently used; plans to hold some practice sessions between Link and member Centres wanting to familiarise themselves and prepare for some of their training programmes to go on-line; plans for Link to develop and offer a training program on-line this year and then to have the recorded session placed on the website for future reference and training options. Centres will become aware of grants and tools available to them. Meetings have been held with Janice re informing our Centres of her regional training dates with a view to closer and more customised support and encouragement. Incremental exposure and confidence building should provide some exciting future possibilities.

**Learning Centre Link (commonly known as Link) is the state umbrella body for community, neighbourhood and learning centres throughout Western Australia and is affiliated with the national Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association (ANHCA).*

Getting into 'the cloud'

What is the 'cloud'?

Cloud computing refers to an emerging model of computing where machines in large data centres can be dynamically provisioned, configured, and reconfigured to deliver services in a scalable manner, for needs ranging from scientific research to video sharing to email. Although many users may not be familiar with the term, the reality is that most users (69 percent) are already taking advantage of cloud computing through Web-based software applications and online data storage services.

The tremendous growth of the Web over the last decade has given rise to a new class of 'web-scale' problems—challenges such as supporting thousands of concurrent e-commercial transactions or millions of search queries a day. In response, technology companies have built increasingly large data centres, which consolidate a great number of servers (hundreds, if not thousands) with associated infrastructure for storage, networking, and cooling, to handle this ever-increasing demand. Cloud computing can also serve as a means of delivering "utility computing" services, in which computing capacity is treated like any other metered, pay-as-you-go utility service. Over the years, technology companies, especially Internet companies such as Google, Amazon, eBay, or Yahoo, have acquired a tremendous amount of expertise in operating these large data centres in terms of technology development, physical infrastructure, process management, and other intangibles.

Cloud computing represents a commercialisation of these developments and many of us are using elements of it without even knowing about it—flickr, you tube, Google, Yahoo, Box.net and basecamp.

This is not to say that the 'cloud' will solve all our technology problems. There remain a number of problems in using it:

- Privacy issues remain
- What level of involvement the government is prepared to have?
- How best can one access help when things go wrong?
- What happens when a computer or the system fails?
- If we need to keep copies and backups of all we do, does that somehow negate the value of the system?
- Or is it a problem that all data lies behind your 'address' so it is necessary to maintain that one address?

Equally how many people realise that when they sign up for 'gmail':

You acknowledge and agree that Google (or Google's licensors) own all legal right, title and interest in and to the Services, including any intellectual property rights which subsist in the Services (whether those rights happen to be registered or not, and wherever in the world those rights may exist). You further acknowledge that the Services may contain information which is designated confidential by Google and that you shall not disclose such information without Google's prior written consent.

The beginning of this article is taken from Jaeger P.T, Lin J, Grimes, J.M. and Simmons, S.N. "Where is the cloud? Geography, economics, environment, and jurisdiction in cloud computing FM. Volume 14, Number 5—4 May 2009.

The problems relating to the use of Cloud come from an informative 'inclusive session "Technology Solutions" led by Allen (Gunner) Gunn at the Connecting Up 09 Conference held in Sydney on 11 and 12 May 2009.

Broadband for Seniors



Over 450 applicants across every Australian state and territory have already applied to set up Broadband for Seniors Kiosks. Applicants represent a variety of sites including bowling clubs, Neighbourhood Houses, retirement villages, public libraries and Adult and Community Education Centres. The Broadband for Seniors is part of the wider Australian Government initiative 'Making Ends Meet-Plan for Older Australians, People with Disabilities and Carers'.

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) selected NEC Australia Pty Ltd and its consortium members: Adult Learning Australia (ALA), The Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association (ASCCA) and the University of the Third Age Online (U3A Online) to deliver the Broadband for Seniors initiative nationally.



A typical kiosk.

This initiative aims to meet the needs of older Australians wishing to be trained in the use of the Internet by the creation of approximately 2 000 seniors' Internet kiosks, hosted by community organisations that support seniors. Kiosk sites will be introduced using a phased approach and selected locations identified on the basis of demonstrated need and willingness to provide a free service to their local community.

Each kiosk consists of a self-install kit of two NEC P6000 series All-in One PCs with 2GB RAM and high resolution screen,



Greg Peart, ALA President, Ron Anderson, ALA Executive Director (Acting) and David Cooke, NEC Group Manager, Broadcast and Media, signing the 'Broadband for Seniors' contract.

a keyboard and mouse for each PC, two computer tables, two user chairs and one tutor chair, plus a wireless modem for the broadband connection.

Volunteer tutors are critical to the kiosk's success and NEC's partner ASCCA will be providing easy-to-follow training notes and guides to assist in maximising enjoyment for the volunteer and student alike. An online training course for seniors will also be available which is being developed by U3A Online.

With community support these kiosks will increase the availability of internet services to seniors, and this will in turn increase seniors' confidence with the Internet and improve their access to information, and increase community participation and social inclusion.

Adult Learning Australia is playing a key role in this project and if you are interested in learning more contact Mary Hannan on 02 6215 9502 or go to the Broadband for Seniors website at www.necseniors.net.au. It is a great opportunity to part of this worthwhile initiative to support the needs of older Australians wishing to be trained in the use of the Internet.

the A-Frame

The A-Frame for non-accredited education programs was developed

The Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board has developed a quality framework, called the A-Frame, to support the development and delivery of pre-accredited programs in ACE. It helps ACE teachers and course managers design, document and quality assure pre-accredited delivery.

The A-Frame caters for ACE providers delivering non-accredited learning; it includes very small organisations. The practical advantage of the A-Frame is that it helps teachers, learners and providers think through what will be learned, the reason for learning it and how teaching and learning should be structured and undertaken. Other important considerations are the form of acknowledgement that will be given to learners regarding their learning achievements and the pathways and future options that flow from these achievements. It encourages reflection on the outcomes for learners and promotes continuous improvement.

The A-Frame provides a consistent but flexible format for considering and documenting a learner's goals and outcomes as well as procedures for recording and monitoring student feedback.

Australian Standard Non-formal learning— Guidelines for learning services providers (Standards Australia)²

The Standard aims to ensure learning services practitioners and professionals engaged in the delivery of non-formal learning are able to define, modify and change practice to improve quality, effectiveness and learning productivity.

It is not intended to be used as the basis for registration or certification of individual learning services providers or organisations.

The Standard offers guidelines for quality and professional performance and practice. It adopts a competency-based approach, that is, it identifies the competence of LSPs to enable successful transfer and application of learning to the workplace. The process and the quality of the outcome depends on first determining the skills and competencies necessary to perform work consistently and to measurable standards. It then looks at designing and planning the learning process to impart knowledge and develop those necessary skills and competencies.

The Standard endeavours to provide guidelines to help LSPs meet the challenges of working in an environment characterised by increasing diversity in its client base, increasing sophistication in client expectations, changes in products and the expansion of options for learning. It acknowledges the ever increasing competition and demand caused by the globalisation of the labour market.

This is an extract of new research commissioned by ALA.

An environmental scan of research related to implementing the 2008 Ministerial Declaration on ACE by Dr Kaye Bowman will be released in full later this year.

This section discusses the work published by the Victorian ACFE Board June 2006 and available at www.acfe.vic.gov.au and www.cae.edu.au

1. Published by the Victorian ACFE Board June 2006 and available at www.acfe.vic.gov.au and www.cae.edu.au

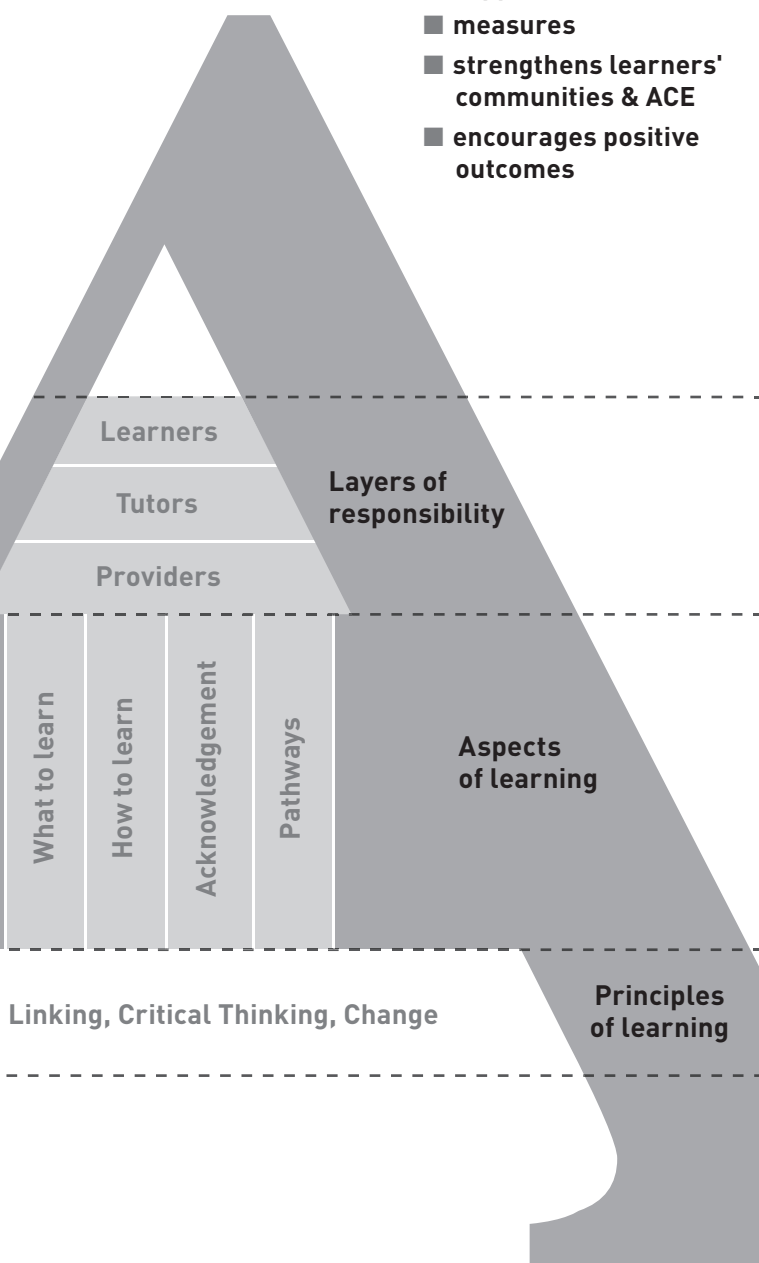
2. Published 15 May 2009 as the Handbook HB 329. for sale by SAI Global Web: <http://infostore.saiglobal.com/store> Email sales@saiglobal.com.

e

by ACFE in Victoria¹

A-frame

- guides
- supports
- measures
- strengthens learners' communities & ACE
- encourages positive outcomes



E-learning thrives in community education

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The Framework also researched the ACE sector in its commissioned E-learning for the mature aged worker report, which produced three case studies of e-learning in practice. These can be found in the E-learning for the Mature Age Worker: Case Studies document at flexiblelearning.net.au/research

With such a rich source of e-learning programs being investigated and implemented in ACE, there is a need for the sector to communicate their learnings to each other and more widely within education and training.

The Framework will soon release an enhanced website, flexiblelearning.net.au, which will allow practitioners to learn from each other, share ideas, and ensure they aren't continuing to reinvent the e-learning wheel.

Through the use of blogs, shared networks, communities of practice and the ability for anyone to upload relevant e-learning material to the site, the Framework aims to provide a one-stop hub for people working in e-learning.

Practitioners can also sign-up for the Framework's e-newsletter, Flex e-News, for a monthly update of news and trends in e-learning (flexiblelearning.net.au/flexenews). E-learning Coordinators are available in each state and territory to provide localised support in using and implementing e-learning (flexiblelearning.net.au/e-learningcoordinators). Janie McOmish, the Assistant Director of ALA, is the National ACE E-learning Coordinator.

One advantage of being an ALA member is that it has its own Elluminate room. Its use is available to individual and organisational members. To make a booking contact the national office.

keeping informal learning informal

By Sian Halliday Wynes

Should everything in life should be formally measured? Sometimes we do things because it is for the situation and the individual rather than for the system. Although the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) objectives and focus on measurement are relevant for many policy areas, perhaps measurement of informal learning is not always necessary. Could the attempt to measure the impact of informal learning threaten its very appeal to those it benefits most?

Informal learning occurs in the workplace, in the home and during leisure time; it happens outside of the formal education system or structured training, and does not lead to a qualification (Richardson, 2004). Conlon (2003) believes that it tends to be the outcome of incidental learning through everyday experience. It is also, in some cases and at various times in people's lives, the only learning they are doing.

There is no single definition of informal learning, however, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005) has made a clear distinction between informal learning and learning that occurs in more prescribed settings, and offers the following definitions:

- formal learning: learning through a program of instruction in an educational institution, adult training centre or in the workplace which is generally recognised in a qualification or a certificate.
- non-formal learning: learning through a program that it is not usually evaluated and does not lead to certification.
- informal learning: learning resulting from daily work-related, family or leisure activities.

The task of categorising informal learning is complicated by the wide-ranging methods of informal learning, which include: reading journals or articles, participating in workplace mentoring schemes, learning through casual conversation, engaging in on-the-job training and learning through trial and error, and a myriad of other everyday activities.

There can be good reasons for people wanting to acquire skills and build on knowledge informally. It could be more efficient—in terms of both time and money—than enrolling in a formal course. For others, education, training and assessment conjure up negative memories of school. For them, an informal approach may be more productive, precisely because there are no tests or accreditation processes to encounter.

Informal learning can be a hook for re-engaging disengaged learners¹ with education and training and lead to building sustainable skills. This is the experience of many successful community education programs (Harris, Simons and Maher, forthcoming).

Informal learning has also been found to be beneficial to new migrants and refugees in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. Miralles et al, (2008) have investigated the informal learning that occurs in multicultural organisations, when informal networks and comfortable learning spaces are created to help people with refugee or non-English speaking backgrounds connect with the wider Australian community. Community-based organisations provide migrants and refugees with the practical tools for modern living. Informal learning has been identified as an important component of cultural integration.

Informal learning can also be used to engage people with learning in the developing world, where it is sometimes the only option for an individual or a community to gain knowledge and skills. King (1982), whose studies looked at countries such as Yemen and Senegal, has suggested that in the absence of formal training, skills are often acquired

1. People with minimal school education, poor literacy and numeracy skills and low self esteem and who lack confidence in their ability to learn in formal settings are often disengaged from learning. Disengaged learners may have useful skills, but are unable to articulate them and build on them.

through familial relationships and participation in 'petty production'. For example, someone selling goods in the marketplace becomes numerate by learning from their peer-groups and from experience.

The United National Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) claims that informal and non-formal education is a necessary means to achieve "learning for all" (UNESCO, 2007) and suggests the need to ensure that we understand how informal learning can be harnessed to maximum effect. A research project in Thailand (www.voced.edu.au/td/tnc_86.564-18k) undertook this task and uncovered a process of informal learning acquired by active community participation, experience and practice, which had far-reaching and positive effects on the standard of living of a whole village. In the context of equitable development, informal learning is not just a pathway into more formal avenues of learning and work; it can also be a real, positive and reliable learning experience in its own right.

Informal learning is common in many contemporary workplaces. It has been suggested that up to 75% of workplace learning occurs informally (Connor, 2002; Richardson, 2004). It is usually seen as getting on with the job. Often there is no need to recognise everyday processes, which work well as means of developing expertise and judgement. However, there are times when it is important to identify informal learning, for example, if such learning is resulting in bad work practices and needs to be undone, often by instituting formal training. We also have to consider that the regulatory environment might need certification of skills or a worker may want to document their skills in order to seek promotion, higher wages or to move jobs. This requires the individual to articulate what knowledge and abilities they have gained from that experience.

People with little primary education, whose literacy and numeracy may be limited, or whose confidence in their ability to learn in an educational setting has been dented, can find it difficult to articulate the life experience and skills they possess in a way that facilitates a pathway back to training. For them less formal approaches to skills development can be a more effective pathway back to education and training or to building sustainable jobs.

There are instances where it might be useful to measure informal learning such as when learners seek recognition for prior learning (RPL). In Australia and overseas, governments and educators are committed to making RPL a viable option for learners (Hargreaves 2006; Misko, Beddie & Smith 2006). Expansion of RPL places emphasis on flexible teaching and sophisticated, robust assessment practices, where the focus is less on the definitions of types of learning and more on the results of learning (Smith & Blake 2005). For this reason, many OECD countries are exploring how best to recognise informal learning. Governments around the world are tackling the difficult task of measuring the extent to which informal learning is indicative of its role in helping vocational systems, employers and individuals cope with workforce trends: demand for skilled labour, increasing mobility within and across borders, and

recognition of the workplace as a learning environment. As a result, governments are working on innovative ways to capture informal learning and simplify the recognition process.

It is important that government policy does not overlook the contribution that informal learning makes to the achievement of individual objectives, and consequently, to the community as a whole. Informal learning should be identified as a valid and positive learning experience.

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Building equitable and sustainable

New resurgence of adult education in Asia and the Pacific

The new millennium has brought about a renewed appreciation of adult education and learning as central to addressing the critical development challenges the region now faces. The rapid pace of change, the rise of the knowledge economy and learning society in a globalised world and massive environmental degradation all highlight the importance of ensuring all adults have access to quality adult learning and education opportunities.

Adult learning is a core part of lifelong learning, and contributes enormously to the creativity, innovation and new ideas necessary for building equitable and sustainable societies. It is central to advancing individual and community wellbeing, social justice, gender equality, improving productivity and propelling economic growth.

We reaffirm the multiple pathways of adult learning and education and their role in expanding human capabilities, freedom and choice. Adult learning and education is emerging with new urgency in Asia and the Pacific in light of a range of continuing social problems such as poverty, unemployment, marginalisation, and migration, which are best addressed with a holistic framework for education that promotes social transformation, peace and a rights-based approach to education.

The diversity and challenges of the Asia and the Pacific Region

Countries in Asia and the Pacific are rich in cultural and linguistic heritage. The region is home to four billion people or 60 percent of the world's population, although it has

29 percent of the land area. Differences and disparities are more prominent features than the common geographical space that the countries share. Asia has five of the E-9 (high population developing) countries of the world—Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. Among them, they account for half of the world's population and three quarters of the illiterate adult population of the world.

In view of the importance of mother tongue in the learning process, providing literacy and adult education in the Asia and Pacific region is further complicated by the diversity of languages, with over 2 200 languages in the region (with over half in the Pacific).

The region is also the home of newly emerging democracies but also has many countries affected by political instability, conflict and violence. Ten countries in East Asia and the Pacific and four in South Asia have the Least Developed Country status, with a high level of poverty and dependence on external assistance.

Life and livelihood of large numbers of people in the island nations of the Pacific, the Maldives and the coastal areas of Asia are under threat from the rise of the sea level due to global warming. Environmental degradation is seriously affecting people in all countries.

In addition to these sub-regional characteristics, other major common development challenges in the region include:

- a) reducing poverty, with the largest concentration in the world of people in extreme poverty in South Asia, and the majority of the world's two billion living on 2 dollars or less;
- b) strengthening inclusive and participatory democratic processes based on peace, justice and human rights, and
- c) promoting equitable and sustainable development.

Sustainable societies in Asia and the Pacific

Adult learning and education is emerging with new urgency in Asia and the Pacific in light of a range of continuing social problems such as poverty, unemployment, marginalisation, and migration

Adult education advances and constraints in the Region and Sub-regions

Progress in adult literacy has been the fastest in Asia and the Pacific among all regions of the world. Many of the countries in the region are beginning to develop systematic approaches to adult learning and education guided by a policy framework. Nonetheless the need to ensure access—especially for women—to quality literacy and adult learning is still great and requires urgent action, with innovative and integrated policies and strategies.

Some countries in Asia and the Pacific such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and Singapore, have achieved close to universal primary and secondary education and beyond. They are giving priority to vocational and technical upgrading of the work-force at the post-secondary level. They now need to consolidate and deepen the gains and place adult learning and non-formal education firmly within a progressively comprehensive framework of lifelong learning.

The South Asia sub-region has the highest concentration in the world of adult and youth illiterates, especially among

women and marginalised groups. It is characterized by high population growth, large numbers of non-enrolled children and dropouts/pushouts from primary school add to already existing huge numbers of illiterates.

Progress has been constrained because many countries do not have clear adult education/learning policies and strategic implementation plans. Organisational structures and professional bases are weak which hinders quality in ALE. There is limited or no involvement of higher education institutions in ALE. In many countries less than 1% of the education budget is allocated to adult education including literacy programmes. Urban areas have greater access to formal schooling, higher-quality education and non-formal education programmes, with the exception of urban slums where the poor are concentrated.

In Southeast Asia migration and displacement of population, language diversity, issues of deforestation, structural shifts in the economy from farming to industry and services, and rapidly changing labour markets are some of the factors shaping social and individual needs for learning and upgrading skills. There is a need to ensure that resources are

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Learning Works Update

APRIL–JUNE 2009

As part of their recent visit to selected cities to provide a briefing to adult educators on the federal government's Investing in Community Education and Training program, ALA's Ron Anderson and Janie McOmish were able to include a visit to the PBA FM studios in Adelaide to record interviews for Learning Works.

Ron Anderson reminded listeners that back in 2002, State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers responsible for Employment, Training and Youth Affairs endorsed a landmark document, the Ministerial Declaration on the important role of adult community education, often referred to as ACE or the ACE sector.

A landmark document back then in 2002, Ron Anderson noted that the earlier declaration was reviewed in 2008, resulting in an even stronger statement about the importance of ACE in supporting COAG's focus on skills and workforce development.



Adult Learning Australia's Janie McOmish and Ron Anderson, in the PBA FM studios in Adelaide, with Learning Works' producer/presenter Tony Ryan.

Interviewed for two separate contributions to Learning Works, Janie McOmish first spoke about the implementation of the Broadband for Seniors project in which ALA is having a key role. She then spoke about work done by ALA with Learning Circles on Falls Prevention, with support from the ACT Government.

These radio interviews with Ron Anderson and Janie McOmish are now on the Learning Works website as podcasts, www.learningworksradio.com or they can be accessed through a link on ALA's homepage—www.ala.asn.au

Another recent visitor to Adelaide was new ALA Board member, Associate Professor Barry Golding, from the University of Ballarat. Again for Learning Works, Barry recorded two radio interviews, both of which are scheduled for broadcast in June.

As part of the ongoing research into men's sheds and older men's learning, Barry first spoke about his current visit to South Australia, and to the many centres he had visited in just three days—Ceduna on the far west coast of South Australia, and in the southern regions of metropolitan Adelaide, centres in Aldinga, Hackham West, Port Noarlunga and Christies Beach—and provided an update on the ongoing research into older men's learning.

The second interview provided Associate Professor Golding with an opportunity to look at the Learning to be Drier project, on adult learning through changes in water availability in four Southern Murray Darling Basin communities. According to Golding, "While the particular research interest is in the situated learning experiences of water users, stakeholders and managers as they adapt to a drier environment, the broader interest and expertise is about adults learning in community settings."

These two interviews with Barry Golding are scheduled to go onto the Learning Works website by mid-June, www.learningworksradio.com and they will also be accessible through a link on ALA's homepage—www.ala.asn.au

Finally, Quest readers may be interested in a mini-series of five short programs on Building Better Boards—not a comprehensive review, but rather an audio introduction to ensuring that management committees and boards in the not-for-profit sector are organised, efficient and knowledgeable. A great discussion resource for people thinking of joining a management committee or taking on the role of treasurer, or for those wishing to re-vitalise an organisation's board. Details are on the Learning Works' website.



Tony Ryan
PBA FM Adelaide
Email: learningworks@pbafm.org.au
Mobile: 0408 883 334
Website: www.learningworksradio.com

PODCASTS

The following audio resources may be of interest to readers of Quest. Go to the Learning Works' website—www.learningworksradio.com then to either the Online Resources section, or the Archives section, for links to all of the above programs. Most podcasts are added later in the week of broadcast:

- Broadband for Seniors (broadcast 25 May)
- Building Better Boards (Five programs broadcast from 04 May)
- Conversational English at Sunnybrook (broadcast 20 April)
- Dance and Markets and Adult Learning—Phoenix Carteret (broadcast 23 March)
- Declaration on Adult Community Education, 2008 (broadcast 18 May)
- Economic Value of the ACE Sector—Dr Veronica Volkov (13 April)
- Falls Prevention for older people (broadcast 11 May)
- Learning to live drier—Associate Professor Barry Golding (broadcast 1 June)
- Mental Health First Aid—recorded at Hackham West (broadcast 5 January)
- Older Men's Learning—Men's Sheds (broadcast 15 June)
- The aftermath of tragedy—neighbourhood houses in Victoria (broadcast 2 March)
- The Debt Trap in Hard Times (broadcast 2 February)
- A Good Read, the regular book reviews by staff from the Salisbury Library Service
- Cinema reviews, catch up on some current films, or DVDs - by John J McGowan

All are downloadable into your Centre's computers as mp3 audiofiles, for use as group discussion starters, or by individual learners with headphones, or into your iPod. If your centre makes any innovative use of Learning Works resources, or you have a great story for Learning Works, please tell us about it!

Asia and the Pacific

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provided to support the entire system, including training of adult education personnel, monitoring and evaluation.

Central and East Asian sub-regions have relatively high literacy rates, but face new challenges such as changing employment markets and workplace environments which demand the improvement of literacy skills and the renewal of occupational skills. However affordable opportunities for enhancing skills are limited. An increasing trend of labour migration has given rise to the demand for re-adjustment of work skills and language skills. As globalization and the knowledge economy put a premium on continuing upgrading of knowledge and general adult and non-formal education. Despite these demands, little efforts are being made to promote ALE.

The proportion of older retired or semi-retired people is increasing in East and Central Asia, and to a lesser degree in other countries. Lifelong learning for the older age-group to prepare them for new areas of work including social and community services and leisurely pursuits is assuming new significance. This is of course a more urgent concern in developed nations such as Australia, Japan, The Republic of Korea, and New Zealand.

Overall in the region, and in particular in the Pacific countries, adult education, including literacy and learning in mother-tongue, deserves greater priority, recognising the diversity of cultures and the geographical dispersal of island states. There are issues related to capacity, funding, sustainability and dependency on aid for the smaller states. Recognition of the importance of culture-specific responses is a special concern in meeting lifelong learning aspirations. Improving educational design and learning content, drawing on indigenous knowledge and values and ensuring survival of cultural identity in the global economy are particular challenges. April – June 2009



Adult Learning
Australia Inc.

Chief Executive Officer

Chief Executive Officer

ALA seeks a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with flair, initiative and outstanding skills to lead a small team based in Canberra. The CEO will apply outstanding qualities in organisational and project management, policy development, communication, advocacy and business development to fulfil ALA's vision, mission, values and policies. With strong relationships with government and other stakeholders the CEO will raise the awareness of adult education in Australia.

For further information, please refer to our website at www.ala.asn.au

The CEO reports to the ALA President and the Board, and is guided by ALA's Governance Handbook which is based upon the Carver model.

Duties & Responsibilities

Consistent with the ALA Governance Handbook and the ALA Strategic Plan:

- 1) Maintain the National Office by:
 - Operating the National Office, including maintaining up to date IT and business systems;
 - Providing secretariat support and professional services to the Board;
 - Developing, implementing and reporting on an annual Business Plan;
 - Managing the staff of the National Office to deliver on the Business Plan, including team development, performance management and workplace relations;
 - Managing ALA finances and budget in compliance with FMA applicable financial management guidelines and audit requirements;
 - Managing grant application, funding, dispersal, reporting and record keeping; and
 - Supporting communication between ALA Board and ALA members and stakeholders.

- 2) Provide an advocacy role, particularly with government in terms of policy advice and direction.
- 3) Establish and manage relationships with funding bodies, government and non-government agencies, industry, community and professional bodies, and adult learning and educational organisations.
- 4) Maintain and develop high quality member services.
- 5) Manage ALA business and research initiatives.

Develop policy, tender and grant application documentation.

Please note that the successful applicant will be required to travel interstate on a regular basis.

Selection Criteria

Demonstrated high-level leadership and management skills, including the capacity for strategic thinking, entrepreneurial skills and policy development.

Highly developed organisational and business planning skills, including the capacity to manage human and financial resources to achieve desired outcomes.

Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, including the capacity to negotiate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders, and represent the organisation in a professional manner.

Well-developed knowledge and understanding of Australian government operations and political processes, and the ability to establish and sustain effective working relations with relevant government agencies.

Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the adult and community education sector and its role within the national education and training framework.

Demonstrated high-level experience in the management and/or governance of community-based, not-for-profit organisations, including the ability to work within the Carver Governance Model.

Adult Learning Australia (ALA) is the national peak body representing organisations and individuals involved in the provision of adult learning in all states and territories.

ALA membership reflects the extraordinary diversity of adult and community learning, representing providers from all sectors, including community workers, librarians, tutors, trainers, volunteers and students.

ALA's vision is that Adult Learning providers will be recognised, valued and supported.

ALA's mission is to

- advocate for Adult Learning providers nationally
- connect Adult Learning providers across Australia
- lead in the provision of information to support professional practice in adult learning

Remuneration Package

The remuneration package of \$109000 per annum, includes salary, superannuation and provision of a motor vehicle or travel allowance. This package is negotiable, and will be assessed annually as part of a performance review of the CEO position. A three year contract will be offered to the successful candidate in the first instance.

Applications

Written applications must address the selection criteria as outlined, and include curriculum vitae and the name and

contact numbers of two (2) referees. Applications should be forwarded in confidence to the:

President

Adult Learning Australia
GPO Box 826, CIT Southside Campus
Canberra ACT 2601
president@ala.asn.au

Applications must be submitted by 5:00pm Friday 31 July 2009

Interested persons seeking more information about the role can contact the President of Adult Learning Australia, Mr Greg Peart, on 0418 593 637.

ALA New Members in 2009

Organisational

ADRA Community Centre
Logan Central QLD 4114

Eastwork Employment Inc.
Cheltenham VIC 3192

Domore
Sneddon VIC 3011

**Kensington
Neighbourhood House**
Kensington VIC 3031

LCSA
Glebe NSW 2037

MADEC
Mildura VIC 3502

People Performance
Albion QLD 4010

U3A Online Inc.
Winston Hills NSW 2153

Willson Training
Moonah TAS 7009

Wontulp-Bi-Buya College
North Cairns QLD 4870

Individual

Andrew Ballam
Karrinyup WA 6018

Neroli Colvin
Leichhardt NSW 2040

Pam Eade
Ashmore QLD 4214

Ruth Phillips
Eaton WA 6232

Jaye Toole
Unanderra NSW 2526

Sharon Fitzgerald
Goulburn NSW 2580

Wayne Hewitt
Tyabb VIC 3913

Vicki Houston
Euroa VIC 3666

Geri Pancini
Footscray VIC 3011

Sinety Lance
Mackellar ACT 2617

Dorothy Lucardie
Ballarat VIC 3350

Ken Mcarthur
Papua New Guinea

Gerald Onsando
Yeronga QLD 4104

Denece Sippo
Bairnsdale VIC 3873

Tanya Tedesco
South Yunderup WA 6208

Gail Warner
Caringbah NSW 2229

Online Subscriber Members

Mr Oktay Akbas
Turkey

Rick SwiNdell
Hawthorne QLD 4171

Leah Seymour
Clayfield QLD 4011

Calendar

United Nations Literacy Decade 2003–2012, United Nations Decade for Sustainable Development 2005–2014, International Year of Languages 2008

7–10 July 2009

QUESTnet Conference “Leveraging our Investment”

Gold Coast

Go to <http://www.questnet.net.au/questnet2009/index.html>

8–10 July 2009

“No Frills” NCVER Conference

University of Ballarat, Vic

11 July 2009

Sydney U3A ‘s 21st Birthday Celebration

29–30 July 2009

Associations Forum National Conference

Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre

2 August 2009

National Tree Day

18–19 August 2009

11th ASCCA Conference

Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

Contact office@ascca.org.au

25–27 August 2009

2009 Equity and Diversity Officers’ Conference

Canberra

Go to www.liquidlearning.com.au for details

9–10 September 2009

‘Brainfood’ Statewide Program Conference

Ballarat

Go to <http://www.narrecic.net.au/brainfood.htm>

18–19 September 2009

ALARA Australian Conference 2009—Living Differently:

Action Researching our way through the Ecological and

Economic Meltdown

Melbourne, VIC

For information go to info@oases.edu.au or

<http://www.alara.net.au/OrganisingConference>

28–30 September 2009

WISE – World Innovation Summit for Education

Details are available from www.wise-qatar.org or the

Qatar Foundation www.qf.edu.qa

30 September–3 October 2009

Women in Computing

Arizona

www.gracehopper.org

1–3 October 2009

“From Strength to Strength” ACAL Conference

Fremantle

<http://www.waalc.org.au/09conf/> to register

16 October 2009

VET E-portfolio Showcase

Melbourne

Information at <http://tiny.cc/VFXzg>

11–17 October 2009

ANTI-POVERTY WEEK

17–18 November 2009

Making Links 2009

Uni of Melbourne

www.makinglinks.org.au

25–27 November 2009

3rd National Enabling Educators Conference

Open Access College, University of Southern Queensland (USQ)

Go to <http://usq.edu.au/eec> for details

2–4 December 2009

15th ONLINE EDUCA BERLIN 2009

Berlin

www.online-educa.com

29 April–1 May 2010

Link Biennial State Conference Taking the next step

Tradewinds Hotel, Fremantle