



portraits & visions: keeping the learner in sight

• VALBEC Conference May 20, 2005 • William Angliss College •

program

VALBEC has taken the theme of "Portraits and Visions" for 2005 to focus the spotlight on learners - their life experiences, their goals and aspirations, achievements and future directions. We want to portray the diversity and challenges our learners bring to adult learning and to illustrate innovative approaches and promising classroom practices. We hope to discuss what works from various perspectives and give participants opportunities to creatively engage with ideas grounded in what is known about how adults learn and how language and literacy develop in a range of contexts.

We will continue to showcase recent research and foster debate about the future directions of the adult literacy, basic education and numeracy fields. We are delighted with our two keynote speakers, Peter Waterhouse and Cathy Kell who will provide 'broad brush portraits' of the past, present and future through their respective local and international visions of literacy and learning.

The conference program contains workshops that are varied and interactive with presenters coming from a range of sectors and backgrounds. The workshops bring together research, experience and new developments to stimulate thought and discussion. The High Impact team will once again entertain and surprise!

VALBEC aims to encourage greater participation and engagement of members in the issues and challenges facing our community of learners, teachers, co-ordinators, researchers, bureaucrats and others.

We hope to provide opportunities at our conference to inspire and stimulate thought and communication on many levels and to provide a memorable event.

Program information

(The latest conference information is available from www.valbec.org.au)

8.15 – 9.00 am	Registration : Tea/coffee & light snacks available
9.00 – 10.05 am	Welcome, Performance and Opening Keynote address.
10.10 – 11.00 am	Session A Presentations
11.00 – 11.40 am	Morning tea
11.45 – 12.35 pm	Keynote Address
12.40 – 1.20 pm	Session B Workshops
1.20 – 2.20 pm	Lunch
2.25 – 3.10 pm	Session C Workshops
3.15 – 4.00 pm	Conference review, feedback and close
4.00 – 5.00 pm	The VALBEC committee extends an invitation to participants to join us for drinks, conversation and networking at the William Angliss Centre Bar

Opening Keynote address:

'Public Portraits, Personal Visions and Professional Practice'

Peter will reflect on the portraits and visions of his career in adult, vocational and literacy education and discuss the implications for practice in the building of alternative futures.

Peter Waterhouse, Workplace Learning Initiatives

Peter is the Managing Director of Workplace Learning Initiatives Pty Ltd a company he formed with colleagues, to facilitate change in industry through teaching, consultancy and research. Peter has been an adult literacy activist, with the VALC (the precursor to VALBEC), an adult literacy teacher, coordinator, regional worker, researcher, consultant and teacher-educator. In recent years his research, with colleagues, has investigated adult and workplace literacies, generic/employability skills and adult community education (ACE) pedagogies. His Ph. D dissertation documented autobiographical case studies investigating experiential learning, literacy and reflective practice in different settings.

Session A

A101 Who's Supporting Who? - Literacy and Numeracy Support Systems for Indigenous Students

Narelle McGlusky, Indigenous Studies Product Development Unit and Lenora Thaker

The lack of literacy and numeracy skills is a significant barrier to Indigenous students accessing VET courses. The 'Survey of Aspects of Literacy' conducted in 1996 showed that approximately 44% of Indigenous Australians had low literacy levels compared to 19% of non-Indigenous Australians. This research project has identified current systems for literacy and numeracy support for teachers and Indigenous students. Students, teachers and community members have been interviewed from urban, regional and remote areas of Queensland and at both TAFE institutes and an independent RTO. The information has been used to identify and analyse systems that work and to develop a set of best practice guidelines for designing and developing effective literacy and numeracy support systems. This research project is being funded by the Adult Literacy Research Program through NCVER.

Narelle McGlusky is an instructional designer/curriculum writer with the Indigenous Studies Product Development Unit located at Tropical North Queensland TAFE in Cairns. Her research background is in history and politics. She was one of the reviewers for the NCVER Systematic Review of Indigenous Education undertaken in 2004.

Lenora Thaker is also an instructional designer/curriculum writer with the Indigenous Studies Product Development Unit. Her research background is in Indigenous studies and community development. She was one of the reviewers for the NCVER Systematic Review of Indigenous education in 2004.

A102 New Thinking, Better Results - the Human Givens Approach to Teaching and Learning.

Mervyn Edmunds, VCAL Coordinator, Mercy Regional College

The Human Givens approach to emotional health and clear thinking represents a major development in understanding how the brain works. While essentially a therapy model, it offers significant insights for teachers, particularly those dealing with learners lacking confidence. This presentation describes the model, explains the role of emotion in learning, and outlines the principles that can lead to better results for teachers and learners. Participants will become familiar with 'success metaphors' unique learning personas that are based on the way young people play video games without reading the instructions. Curriculum examples influenced by the new approach will be given.

Merv Edmunds is regarded as Australia's foremost practitioner using the Human Givens model in education. Merv is noted for his innovative approach to curriculum design, and his programs have received widespread attention in the UK. He is currently coordinating an integrated VCAL program based on the award-winning avec esprit curriculum project.

A103 What can research tell us about meeting the adult learning challenge in this ever-changing world – some strategic research and curriculum questions

Cheryl Wilkinson, Senior Program Officer: Adult, Community & Further Education Community & Stakeholder Relations Branch

What's new or changing in the world around us? What does that mean for the learning needs of individuals and communities? How can Government and the ACE sector work innovatively together to effectively respond to the emerging learning needs of adult Victorians? Cheryl will speak about recent developments post the Ministerial statement on ACFE and implications for strategic research and curriculum directions.

Cheryl Wilkinson has worked in education and training since 1972. Her career began teaching French, History and Politics in rural and metropolitan secondary schools. Her public sector experience in education and training includes Disadvantaged Schools program consultancy, adult education and community outreach services in TAFE Institutes, executive support officer to the Southern Western Port Regional Council of ACFE and developing equal employment opportunity strategies for the Office of Schools in the Ministry of Education. Cheryl ran her own business from 1994 to 2000 providing management consultancy services to small and large businesses in a range of industries and to Government authorities such as the Australian National Training Authority and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. She developed and managed a private training organisation and Job Network member based in the inner Melbourne area to train and place long term unemployed clients with employers across Victoria. She also was an overseas consultant to the Vanuatu Institute of Technology in the key competencies area. This experience has given her a broad perspective on public and private sectors, organisational and business development and the powerful role of education and training in creating meaningful sustainable futures for people. She was a project manager in the Strategic Workforce Development branch of the Office of Training and Tertiary Education until joining the ACFE Division in 2003.

Keynote address: "Writing Wrong: Conundrums of Literacy and Human Rights"

This presentation outlines key features in the landscape of literacy theory and practice, what has been learnt in research within the new literacy studies and what this means for practice. Each set of ideas is discussed with reference to learners, teachers and providers' experiences in South Africa and beyond.

Cathy Kell Centre for Flexible and Distance Learning University of Auckland

Cathy Kell has been involved in the field of adult literacy in South Africa for twenty years - teaching, training, researching and writing. After starting this career teaching in a shanty-town using Freirean approaches she later became interested in the New Literacy Studies and was a contributor to the Social Uses of Literacy project in South Africa. She has published widely on issues to do with literacy, development and policy. She is currently working as a learning designer at the Centre for Flexible and Distance Learning at the University of Auckland and slowly coming to terms with concepts in the field of "digital/electronic literacies".

Session B

B101 Learners Guiding Classroom Practice: A Reflective Approach to Implementing the Certificates of English Language Literacies **Sarah Deasey FE Coordinator at CNLC, Joanne Goodman Manager NMLL, Liz Skinner teacher at NMLL, Toni Sawtell, and Denise Collin teachers at CNLC**

Teachers from North Melbourne Language and Literacy and Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre will show how they developed a number of units of work based on the needs and interests of their ESL Literacy students, who are predominantly women from the Horn of Africa. Teachers used reflective journals and regular collegiate meetings to develop materials for learners, who, while having low levels of formal education, had skills and interests which provided a focus for learning. The framework and philosophy of the Cell complemented the process. Examples of materials will include "Literacy Through Sewing" with the production of a wall hanging, "Our Local Library" and "Keeping Track of Time: using Calendars and Diaries."

Sarah Deasey and Joanne Goodman have both worked in adult literacy teaching and co-ordination over a long period while balancing family and voluntary community life. The teachers from the two centres have varied teaching backgrounds but share a broad base of skills, creativity and commitment to their work.

B102 Telling Stories: A Writing Experience for ALBE Students **Debbie Soccio, Victoria University and Tony Bonnici**

In most cases, we use the term "digital storytelling" to call attention to a balance between an historically grounded, human-centered appreciation of good storytelling skills and a sophisticated grasp of the creative potential of a new set of digital tools. Most of us realize that a good story tends to work no matter what the medium. But, when working with ALBE students (including young people), digital storytelling enhances the development of basic literacy skills and embeds the use of technology within a meaningful and relevant learning experience. Digital technology is an unparalleled medium for encouraging a person's initial foray into storytelling and narrative literacy. This workshop will provide practitioners with a demonstration of how easy it is to develop a digital story in the classroom. It is also an opportunity to showcase some of the stories which have been created by students with a range of literacy skills.

Debbie Soccio has been working in the adult literacy field for 14 years. She currently manages the Access Program at Footscray Nicholson Street Campus, Victoria University. Her particular interests are in the field of developing blended learning programs for students who choose to study flexibly. In 2004, Debbie was a successful applicant to the Australian Flexible Learning Leaders Program. Tony Bonnici has been working within the Access Program, at VU for 4 years. Prior to this Tony worked at the ABC as a trainer. Tony's interests include supporting students as they master new technologies.

In 2005, the Access Program has introduced digital storytelling to the students. There is keen support to blend the work being undertaken in a creative writing course with this digital storytelling class.

B103 Capturing their Lives - Captivating the Learner - using image and text capture from mobile phones (moblogging) in literacy teaching and learning **Anne Paterson and Julie Esson, TAFE NSW Access and General Education Curriculum Centre**

Adult learning works best when it is based on meaningful and familiar foundations. Moblogging or photoblogging allows learners to capture images of themselves in their everyday lives, add descriptive text and display these instantly on their own web page. The technique can be used by individuals or groups to explore themes and topics to create individual or group web pages instantly. The immediate production of material is motivating and rewarding for learners. The practice builds skills in literacy and ICT literacy at the same time.

Anne Paterson has been exploring the use of mobile and wireless technology in the delivery of general and adult basic education. Anne has been involved in the development of a number of innovative resources and practices in using the technology for the purpose of engaging

learners and embracing the culture shift in the way learners, particularly young learners communicate and network.

Julie Esson is an experienced Adult Basic Education practitioner. Julie has been the moderator of TAFE NSW online chat group for ABE teachers for the past four years and has provided literacy teachers with up to the minute information regarding new practices and resources available for teaching the target group. Julie has led project teams and developed a number of innovative teaching and learning resources for use by Adult Basic Education Teachers and has provided professional development across NSW regarding a number of these including a small trial using SMS to communicate with students

B104 Rhetoric 101, Part 1: the theory Rob McCormack, Victoria University

Language education existed long before contemporary schooling. Remembering this can give us a bigger perspective on current issues and debates. This session will describe the theories of language and language pedagogy developed by ancient European rhetoric to conceptualize secondary education and undergraduate education from ancient Greece until the end of the 18th century. During this epoch, language education was the heart of education because science and maths had not yet used to represent everyday matters. The session will expound the principles and concepts of rhetoric as a civic practice and language pedagogy as well as noting some of the historical figures shaping its story.

Rob McCormack has recently been exploring the relevance of ancient rhetoric as a source of inspiration and practices for second chance ALBE.

B105 Module Load Completion Rates and ACFE Courses: How can I learn to live with MLCRs?

Venny Smolich, Victoria University of Technology

Adult, Community and Further Education courses generally tend to have lower Module Load Completion Rates when compared with non-ACFE courses. Why is this the case? What are the factors that have an influence on students not completing modules in ACFE courses?

MLCRs are becoming more and more important as a measure of successful delivery of a course. How can we improve the completion rates of ACFE courses without compromising the integrity of courses? What strategies have been shown to be successful?

ACFE courses have a broad range of outcomes which are not restricted to crude measures such as MLCRs. How can we account for the full range of ACFE course outcomes?

Venny Smolich is currently the Program Manager of Women's Programs at Victoria University. She has taught in ACFE programs for many years.

More recently she has had to try and reconcile her observations of what her students consider to be a successful outcome with crude measures of success such as Module Load Completion Rates.

B106 Finding Training Resources for the ACE Industry

Robyn Francis, Australian Training Products

For new and experienced trainers: This practical, hands-on workshop shows how trainers and facilitators in the ACE sector can navigate their way through the labyrinth of organisations and websites where they can find training resources and materials, freely available and for sale. It will demonstrate websites where there are search engines for information discovery, as well as those where providers can find learning objects and materials which are available for customising. There will include materials available through the national distributor, Australian Training Products, but the workshop will also demonstrate where other free resources and information can be obtained. There will also be a demonstration of relevant flexible learning Toolboxes.

Robyn Francis has been the General Manager of Australian Training Products, formerly known as ACTRAC Products Ltd, since 1995. Before that she was the Executive Officer of the Transport and Storage Industry Training Board, moving into an industry training and planning role after more than 15 years of experience in the Adult Literacy and Basic Education field as a teacher, facilitator and coordinator. In her current role she is responsible for the development and management of business strategy for the marketing and distribution of national materials and has first hand experience of the VET sector, challenges in developing flexible materials which support the ever-changing national developments in Training Packages and implementation of the AQTF.

Session C

C101 Contradicting the stereotype Crina Virgona and Peter Waterhouse, Workplace Learning Initiatives

This presentation is the outcome of an NCVET Adult Literacy research project where researchers explored the life stories of 10 people who have been successful in life and work but who have carried with them significant literacy difficulties. 10 digital stories were put together to tell the experience of each individual and a written report draws conclusions to inform educators and employers of the findings. The conclusions make a plea for learning that is not literacy based and for broader understandings of intelligence and ways of knowing.

Dr. Peter Waterhouse is the Managing Director of Workplace Learning Initiatives Pty Ltd, a specialist company which co-ordinates industry based education, consultancy and research. Peter has made a strong contribution to

vocational education as both a practitioner and a researcher. Recent research for NCVET includes projects looking at the changing nature of work, generic skills, the use and value of qualifications and casualisation and the transfer of learning. Dr. Crina Virgona has a background in adult literacy and language pedagogy. After some years in teacher education, she became involved in workplace education and has accumulated 20 years' experience with AMES and Workplace Learning Initiatives in accredited training and workplace change programs. She has worked alongside Peter Waterhouse in NCVET research projects into generic skills and has been principal researcher in two workplace literacy research projects.

C102 Keeping Learners in Sight Using Accredited General Studies and Further Education Curriculum

Liz Davidson, Victoria University and Lynne Fitzpatrick

This workshop is an opportunity for practitioners to meet the General Studies & Further Education Curriculum Maintenance Manager (CMM) team, and find out about Victorian crown copyright curriculum for a range of learners with English language, literacy and numeracy needs. We will present information on: what's current; what's under development; what's coming up in the near future; what the processes are. The workshop will use a case study approach to explore 'real' pathways for learners, into employment, other vocational courses, and the community. Participants will also explore the wider possibilities to develop learners' English language, literacy and numeracy skills offered by Training Packages and vocational education and training.

Between them Liz and Lynne have over 50 years of experience working in a range of adult English language, literacy and numeracy programs, projects and policy developments. Liz has most recently been working on curriculum development (the ESL Framework is an example) as well as CMM activities. Lynne is currently working on the reaccreditation of the Certificate I in Transition Education and Certificate I in Work Education

C103 Approaches to Providing Literacy Support to Students in Aged Care Programs

Kerrin Pryor, UYCH Learning Centre
Upper Yarra Community House has developed a literacy support indicator tool and provides regular study (literacy) support sessions throughout their Aged Care Certificate III course. As part of an ACFE/TAFE Knowledge Management project, research was undertaken to explore the perceived benefits/costs of literacy support and provider approaches to literacy support for students in aged care programs. Students and coordinators were interviewed. It was found that there are benefits for industry, students and tutors.

However providers generally see literacy as workplace reading and writing skills, where students indicated the sessions gave them a more holistic sense of literacy skills that included learning to learn skills. Therefore, literacy support needs to be placed within two discourses, the classroom/learning discourse which students emphasise and the discourse of the workplace which coordinators emphasise. Other issues that rose from the research are embedding or adding on literacy support, initial identification of those requiring literacy support, developing the learning identity, the cost of providing literacy support procedures and maintaining AQTF and Training package requirements and tutor responsibility for developing literacy in students.

Kerrin Pryor has been teaching adult literacy for over 15 years now and loves this work, continually inspired by her students. She works at Upper Yarra Community House Learning Centre in Yarra Junction, an outer east semi-rural town in the beautiful Upper Yarra region. She is the Coordinator of Education & Training there and tutors in literacy, communication and return to study skills. She has a degree in psychology and sociology and is currently undertaking a Post Graduate Diploma in Education specialising in literacy studies.

C104 Assessing Reading Difficulties and Writing Fiction for Adolescents

Marcia Hiatt and Suria Naidoo, Holmesglen TAFE

Part 1, Students in the Work Education Department at Holmesglen, range in age from 14 to 26. They are from diverse backgrounds and have varying academic levels. Most, however, have been unable to continue or complete secondary school, as a result of their continual frustration in not having their learning needs met. The learning difficulties of our students cover a wide range, including Downs Syndrome, Autism, ADHD and social and emotional challenges.

Upon enrolment, students are assessed according to their reading, writing, comprehension and oral competencies. This then, gives us a holistic view of the student's literacy needs and enables us to develop an individualised program for that student. We are then able to support and promote development in their learning skills especially those required for the workforce.

Over a period of one to three years, we are able to monitor student progress. In most cases have been fortunate enough to see the student grow in confidence and self efficacy, and many have gone onto further education or gained employment. We would like to share our program (and successes) with other Literacy practitioners.

Part 2, The Writing and Publishing of Fiction for Adolescents with Reading Difficulties

In May 1990, Australia hosted the Right to Read Conference in Melbourne. This was part of the proceedings of the International Literacy Year. Participants included lecturers, publishers, teachers, librarians, and special educators. The aim of this conference was to highlight and bring together knowledge about reading materials, which are suitable and available to people with reading difficulties.

The conference was followed by the 'Easy-to-read' Seminar in 1993, again with participants from a broad range of interested parties in those with reading difficulties. This seminar was ostensibly to encourage the publishing and distribution of easy-to-read materials.

In spite of the encouragement and recognition for the need for easy-to-read books, there have been very few new publications since. It seems of paramount importance to return to that discussion of fourteen years ago, on the need for books that are accessible, relevant, written in clear, natural and easily understood language, to a part of society which has little or no access to recreational texts – namely adolescents with a learning difficulty.

While some have argued against the publishing of 'special' fiction, it is our stance that reading is not a privilege, it is a right for all.

C105 Moving Out Through Song

Lisa Kendall and Tina Lan, Kew Neighbourhood House

This workshop will look at our experience of setting up a multicultural choir at Kew Neighbourhood House. Singing has been used to extend language skills and cultural understanding in the classroom and to bring our language students together with others in our broader community. In this workshop you will learn songs from other cultures and songs for personal and classroom use.

People will remember Lisa from the choir performance at the 2003 VALBEC conference. Lisa and Tina have continued their work in teaching and singing and have witnessed the benefits, both in well-being and language and cultural understandings and enrichment. This session is guaranteed to lift your spirits!

C106 NCVER research priorities and directions for 2005

Joanne Hargreaves, Senior Project Officer, Research Management, National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd

In this session Joanne will take participants through the current and proposed NCVER research projects and priorities with opportunities for input and discussion. Keeping the focus on the learner is the challenge.

The latest conference information is available from www.valbec.org.au