The Australian Quality Training Framework—forthcoming ACAL forum

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) was developed by ANTA with its key objective being to provide the basis for a nationally consistent, high quality vocational education and training system. It contains Standards for Registered Training Organisations and for Accreditting Bodies. The standards contain requirements with implications for literacy and numeracy delivery and practice, as well as for vocational trainers and literacy and numeracy practitioners.

The forthcoming ACAL forum (details of date, venue and so forth overleaf) aims to discuss, explore and unpack the impacts and opportunities for literacy and numeracy practice and practitioners under the AQTF as well as to identify emergent issues for policy makers, trainers, teachers and training organisations.

The forum will feature Sharon Coates, Director, National Training Frameworks Developments, Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), as keynote speaker. She will contextualise the AQTF from the viewpoint of ANTA. In addition, a panel of speakers will outline issues arising from current project work related to the AQTF. Panel members will raise issues for discussion and debate with participants.

Round table discussions will enable forum participants to raise and address issues impacting on their own work and practices. The round table sessions will also focus on what opportunities will arise under the new AQTF. The closing session will explore topics addressed during the day as well as identify issues to be taken up by ACAL for future action.

It is strongly recommended that participants be familiar with AQTF standards 1-12 and the evidence guide which are available from the ANTA website at:

AQTF Standards
Evidence Guide
ANTA website
http://www.anta.gov.au

(ACAL forum details overleaf)

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The New South Wales Adult Literacy and Numeracy Council (NSWALNC) is hosting the HANDS ON—TEACHERS SHARING LESSONS forum. This forum is a day of experienced and entertaining teachers showing other practitioners and people involved in literacy and numeracy provision what works for them.

It will be held in the Parliament House Auditorium, Macquarie Street, Sydney, on Friday, 17 May, 2002 from 9am to 3pm. The cost is $95 for members and $125 for non-members (the Council is non-GST registered).

(NSWALNC forum contact details page 6)
A PUBLIC FORUM presented by the
AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR ADULT LITERACY

BREAKING NEW GROUND:
THE AUSTRALIAN QUALITY TRAINING FRAMEWORK
CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

DATE: 14th June 2002
TIME: 8:45am - 4:30pm
VENUE: William Angliss Centre
555 La Trobe Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
COST: $85-00 inc GST

For further information
contact:
Alex Tsakmakis
PHONE: 03 9326 8988
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WEBSITE: www.acal.edu.au

Reading Writing Hotline update
by Stephen Goldberg

The Reading Writing Hotline, a national telephone adult literacy referral service funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training and managed by TAFE NSW - Access Division is now in its eighth year of operation.

Since its inception, the Hotline has assisted over 84,000 callers with advice and referrals to one of the 1200 providers of ALBE courses listed on its database.

Most callers source the Hotline’s 1300 telephone number via television advertising. In 2001, almost half the paid television campaigns targeted regional areas.

The data collected by the Hotline in 2001 shows that the demand for adult literacy courses remains high. In 2001, 87% of callers requested a referral to an educational provider, a three percent increase since 2000.

Other data collected by the Hotline show that:
• there is a high number of callers who have never previously sought help to improve their literacy skills. In 2001, 82% of callers were in this category;
• two out of every three callers are male;
• fifty percent of callers left school at the end of year 9 or earlier;
• approximately 55% of callers are employed.

In response to the large percentage of callers who are employed and wish to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, the Hotline actively conducted promotional mailouts to employers, employer groups and Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs). As a result of these promotions, the Hotline received numerous enquiries for information on Workplace English, Language and Literacy (WELL) programs.

In 2002, the Hotline will continue to target employers in its promotions. Activities planned for the Hotline this year include:
• a three-month Community Service Announcement campaign on radio and television in every state and territory between April and June;
• paid television campaigns in most capital cities between July and October;
• an update of the Reading Writing Hotline website: www.literacyline.edu.au

TAFE NSW - Access Division staff have noted that many Hotline callers are surprised to learn of the existence of adult literacy classes. While the Hotline is able to reach many potential clients, there is also a role for providers to continue to promote their courses to their local communities.

Stephen Goldberg
Coordinator—Reading Writing Hotline,
TAFE NSW Access Division
Public liability and literacy classes
We are currently in the middle of a debate here re. public liability and subcontractors (ie, tutors/project workers who invoice their employer for their work)...we have splintered off into two arthur and martha factions...DHS seems to require that subcontractors carry $5 mil. public liability insurance. This could have some pretty serious consequences for lots of folks if the public liability insurance costs are prohibitive...

What I would like to know is what sort of arrangements others have around this issue, both from a providers point and the subcontractors point. In addition, if anyone has any names of any decent insurance broker/company (oxymoron?) please pass them on.

cheers
Toula Karayannis
Duke Street Community House
dukest@vicnet.net.au
(from an email to adult_literacy@vu.edu.au)

Frustrating acronyms
I am a volunteer tutor with migrants, and am a member of your organisation and receive your newsletter. I enjoy it's contents, although a large percentage seems to deal with bureaucratic matters.

My favourite articles to date have been 'Teach the Mother, Reach the Child' (I think that was the name) regarding Literacy teachers in Africa and the profound effect they were having - especially on the females. The other that springs to mind was the teenage recipients of Literacy classes who were coupled with elderly people, and learnt and wrote their life stories.

However, as I am only a volunteer, and not a trained teacher, I find it very frustrating when initials are used for groups and/or courses, and I haven't the faintest idea what they stand for. Could there be a section that lists all initials used, and their full titles? It would be very helpful, and as the list would not change very often, would not pose too much of a burden on the producers of the Newsletter.

Yours truly,
Aileen Harrison
(Point taken, Aileen. See list of literacy acronyms in this issue—Ed)

Hands On!
Teachers Sharing Lessons
language games - numeracy & mapping - thematic units - storytelling - beginning readers - computers with NSWES - and more...

For more info: Ph: 9514 3973 or Email: leslie.stein@uts.edu.au

Production by David Dickson

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PO Box 2283, Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: 03 9326 8369 Fax: 03 9326 8670
Email: acal@mira.net

Disclaimer
Material inserted with Literacy Link should not be viewed as being in any way endorsed by the Australian Council for Adult Literacy.
English is not the first language within much of Indigenous Central Australia. English reading and writing levels are often not very strong. Therefore the presentation of information, predominantly in the form of English text—which people may not be able to read, or presenting information only in spoken English—which people may not understand, has a limited effectiveness.

Considering the educational principle of moving from the ‘Known’ to the ‘Unknown’, how effective is it to present information, in cross-cultural situations, in a language (English) substantially ‘Unknown’ to many of the learners? How effective is it to record this material in a text form (writing), also substantially ‘Unknown’ to many? This approach creates two considerable barriers (of unknown language and unknown text) to effective communication, even before the ‘Unknown’ content of the health information presented, can be approached and comprehended.

Health Icons

The vast knowledge of Western medicine is bound up within its own ‘language’. This locks the knowledge away from those that cannot read or understand this ‘western medical language’. This medical knowledge is vital to the health and survival of individuals, families and whole communities. The ‘locked nature’ of medical language is a fundamental issue frustrating the sharing of health promotion.

Over the past ten years work has progressed to develop and produce an integrated, visual health document, ‘Health Icons’, that endeavours to unlock this medical knowledge for a broad range of consumers. The aim of ‘Health Icons’ is to present health knowledge in a form that can be spoken in local indigenous languages and that uses a visual recall system to remember and make use of this knowledge.

The aim is to present this information in such a manner that it is not necessary to be able to read or write, or be fluent in a language (e.g. English) other than your own. As the visual terrain is entered, the landscape of letters is left behind.

Example of visual information

‘Health Icons’ use ‘icons’ (pictures) to convey and retain major health concepts and knowledge, covering six overlapping areas of health. (Nutrition, Chronic Disease, Addiction, Sex, Mental Health, and the Environment.) There are translations in the Central Australian Aboriginal languages of Arrernte, Warlpiri, Pitjantjatjara and Ngaanyatjarra for current titles, as well as English. It is distributed in the form of videos, sand paintings, ‘visual’ books and CD ROM material, including use of emerging technologies such as the Internet.

The aim of ‘Health Icons’ then is: [i] to present health knowledge in a form that can be spoken.
in indigenous languages, [ii] to use a visual recall system to remember and make use of this knowledge. Both aims overcome the barriers of written and spoken English by not requiring them.

Such visual approaches to health promotion used within the ‘Health Icons’ series makes it suitable for:
• consumers for whom English is a second language
• consumers with low literacy
• cross-cultural situations
• ease of translating into other languages
• adaptability across regions

Returning to Letters.
During the ANTA Learnscope 2000 project ‘Beyond the Eclipse’, material from the Health Icons series was presented on computer, via CD ROM, as part of staff development workshops between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous health workers. This opened up the potential for Indigenous learners to see information in their own language, for example Ngaanyatjarra, and then with just one ‘click’, see the same information in English. Also on the CD was the written text of the English, which could also be heard. These initial presentations, via computers, contributed to the exploration of this potential innovative literacy path.

Opening Literacy Paths ‘Known to the Unknown’
Using this visual approach Indigenous learners can proceed through their own ‘known’ language, and ‘known’ visual forms. This opens the way to get on with learning the ‘Unknown’ information. Once this information has been understood, in the local indigenous language, we can then move out from this ‘Known’ material, into learning about the ‘Unknown’ spoken and written English, thereby strengthening knowledge of health concepts and English literacy skills.

The catch is in the seeing!
As you may imagine, writing in English about a visual, multi-lingual approach is a little like writing up a dance. Suffice to say, these written words here are merely the hook; the catch is in the seeing.

By way of sharing some of the content and outlining the process, a visual presentation (in English) is being prepared on CD. The draft of this CD material was presented at the ‘2nd World Congress of Colleges and Polytechnics; People and Technology... Bringing the World Together’ Melbourne, March 2002. The compilation of this CD presentation has been assist by suggestions and encouragement from Louise Wignall, Senior Project Officer, ANTA, who has emphasised the value of articulating and distributing innovative processes as well as content.

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projects, was a visit, in 1999 by Robby Weatherley, National Coordinator, Learnscope, to Alice Springs. This meeting focused on the ‘Beyond the Eclipse’ Learnscope Project. Such face to face meetings assist in critically analyzing and questioning the outcomes of these projects and the professional development benefits. Constructive, cooperative work flows out of sound relationships, which can grow out of collaborative learning approaches.

‘Known to the Unknown’
The ‘Known to the Unknown’ project grew out of this exploration with the ‘Beyond the Eclipse’ ANTA Learnscope project.

With the introduction of structural education change over the past number of years, work based competencies have lead to the introduction of national standards and curriculum outcomes. Aboriginal Health Workers within the Central work to the document ‘Certificate 3 Aboriginal Primary Health Care Work Course.’ Such a certificate holds considerable English literacy challenges for many Aboriginal Health Workers.

The ‘Known to the Unknown’ project is a pilot to presenting underlying health concepts, which underpin section of this certificate. This will be presented first visually and in the Ngaanyatjarra, and then moving out into the relevant spoken and written English, thereby strengthening knowledge of health concepts and English literacy skills.

Sex Yum Whoops—Contraception

Vital to this association between individuals and organisation within the Central Lands and funding programs, such as ANTA’s Learnscope
If proof were needed that volunteers can make a vital difference in advancing literacy among a neglected segment of the Australian population, the Each-One-Teach-One (EOTO) program of The Smith Family has it. The basis of its success is one-on-one tutoring in a student's home. EOTO has been awarded The United Nations Merit Certificate for encouraging literacy.

Quietly since 1972, volunteer tutors have worked mainly with non-English speaking people, mostly migrant women confined to their homes with small children, to give them conversational skills to enable them to become part of Australian society. This 'survival English' helps them break out of their isolation, and frequently depression, to shop, to get to know neighbours, to talk to school or government officials, to get medical help and to use public transport.

Many hundreds have been helped in Sydney, where EOTO was run until this year when it was expanded into Melbourne. The EOTO has had an enthusiastic community response, especially from people wanting to be tutors. Tutors have no particular qualifications or experience, only a willingness to help others and one to two hours per week.

EOTO fits well with The Smith Family's revised Mission that says: ‘Together with caring Australians we will unlock opportunities for disadvantaged families to participate more fully in society.’

EOTO today is aimed at two main groups of non-English speaking people who cannot afford to pay for English classes. One group is people who arrived in Australia before July 1991 and who do not qualify for the government-funded Australian Migrant English Program which provides 510 hours of tuition in a classroom. The second group is those who have attended the government-funded classes but who need further tuition to make them proficient enough in English to be confident enough to use it.

Volunteer tutors are trained by The Smith Family one day a week over five weeks. They work to a paid coordinator, while administration staff are also volunteers. During their students' tuition period the tutors meet as a group every three months for mutual support, and every year there is a picnic day for everyone involved.

A tutor works with a student for six to 18 months, once a week. Once a student feels confident enough to move out into the community, they are referred to English conversation classes.

Referrals to the EOTO program are made in many ways. The Smith Family's own community services workers identify people through families who come for other kinds of assistance. Community centres, ethnic organisations, government services, neighbours, baby health centres and EOTO students refer many others.

Often, the students have come from war torn countries and many have never been to school. The boost to self esteem can be imagined when parents no longer need their children to interpret for them and they don't have to divert their children from their school work and their own spare time interests. Many students have gone on to study at TAFE or university, others have found jobs, and some have written books about...
More Than Just Talk—discussion starters

More Than Just Talk provides eleven monthly discussion starters each year, excluding January. They are delivered by email or post, or they can be downloaded from the More Than Just Talk web site—www.morethanjusttalk.com

Listed below are some of the topics:
• Asylum seekers—free sample available at www.morethanjusttalk.com
• Talking about Australia—see next page for free sample
• Funding our schools
• Gambling

Possible future topics include:
• Leadership
• Pride and Shame
• Maternity leave
• Greenhouse gas emissions

The above are available by subscription from the More Than Just Talk web site—www.morethanjusttalk.com

Civics and citizenship learning circle kits

Real Options has produced two learning circle kits within the Discovering Democracy program for the adult and community education sector. The learning circle kits are similar to the More Than Just Talk monthly discussion starters but go into greater detail. They would be of interest to senior secondary and TAFE teachers in the areas of:
• SOSE and Australian Studies
• Adult Basic Education/ pre-tertiary
• Literacy/ TESOL

The Australian Nation is about Australia and its people and covers human rights, immigration and multiculturalism, politics, leadership, globalisation, civil society, and more.

Citizens and Public Life Considers rights and responsibilities, the idea of community, opportunities for and barriers to participation in the life of our nation, and ways in which people make a difference.

Each kit contains six modules with a mix of current and historical events and issues and an eye on the future. Discussion points and activities encourage participants to draw on their experiences, personalise the material, take control of their learning and work with others to explore issues and ideas.

The kits are available FREE from:
Real Options International Pty Ltd
PO Box 221
Huskisson NSW 2540
Ph:(02) 4441 8885 Fax:(02) 4441 8886
Email: mail@realoptions.com.au

Or just download from the web site—www.morethanjusttalk.com
TALKING ABOUT AUSTRALIA

Who talks, who listens, who cares?

Introduction
This discussion starter considers a number of issues associated with what it means to be an Australian. We look at the land of the long weekend and its national day of celebration. How patriotic are you and can you tell from what you know of the national anthem? Find out in our quiz. We also review the choice of Australian of the Year and look at other Order of Australia awards. Who deserves an award from your community?

Then we look at the issue of how Australia presents itself to the rest of the world. Is our cultural cringe showing? And who should be involved in discussions about the big issues in Australia? Politicians, community leaders, church and business people? Who else? What about ordinary people? What about you?

If you are new to More Than Just Talk or have new group members you might find it useful to check out 'Getting Started'.

Australia Day 2002—did you notice?
On the 26th January 1788 Captain Arthur Phillip took possession of the colony of New South Wales for Great Britain. In 1838 Australia's first public holiday was held to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Phillip's arrival. A public holiday has been held on or around the 26th January since.

But it was not until 1946 that the Commonwealth, States and Territories agreed to a national 'Australia Day' on the same day. Until the bi-centenary year of 1988, the public holiday was held on the closest Monday to 26th January.

This year Australia Day fell on a Saturday and the holiday, with long week-end, was held on the following Monday—except in New South Wales and Victoria which didn't receive the extra day holiday.

But not everyone has always celebrated Australia Day. In 1938 Aboriginal people in Sydney protested and demanded citizenship and equal status. The bi-centennial year, 1988, was also named a Year of Mourning for Aboriginal people, many of whom looked upon the year as a celebration of survival. Some people refer to the day as 'Invasion Day'. Other people feel that the 26th January is of real significance only to Sydney and the day should be changed. Some alternative dates include:

- 25th April, Anzac Day, is widely seen as being when Australia came of age in a 'baptism of fire' at Gallipoli in 1915.
- 11th November is the anniversary of a public meeting in Ballarat in 1854 which demanded citizens be involved in making laws and led to the Eureka Stockade rebellion. This is also the day on which Ned Kelly was hanged in 1880. Kelly is regarded as a folk hero by many people, although to others he was just a criminal.
- Prime Minister John Howard used to refer to Sir Donald Bradman as the greatest living Australian, so perhaps the anniversary of his birth, the 25th August (1908), or his death, the 25th February (2001), would be suitable.

Questions

- Would you change Australia day, and if so what to? Or do you feel it's more important to remain with tradition? Why? What do other people you know think about this?
- What is most important to you—celebrating Australia, or the public holiday? You might like to think about what you did last Australia Day before you answer this question.

Our national anthem
A competition for an Australian national anthem was announced by then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam in his 1973 Australia Day address. Following the competition, however, the judges concluded that none of the entries were of a sufficiently high standard. They recommended a choice be made from one of Australia's traditional, familiar songs. A referendum was held in May 1977 when Australians were asked to state a preference for a national tune out of Advance Australia Fair, Waltzing Matilda or The Song of Australia.

Advance Australia Fair was a clear winner but it took until April 1984 before it was proclaimed national anthem. It was also announced at this time that the royal anthem, God Save the Queen, would only be used in the presence of the Queen or a member of the Royal Family in Australia on an official visit.

Quiz

How many of us know the words to the National Anthem? Fill in the gaps below and, if you need to, check your answers by contacting someone who will know, such as a local school or council or visit the Australia Day Council website.

Does this say anything about Australian patriotism? Are there any downsides to patriotism? If so, what?

Advance Australia Fair

' Australians all let us ...'
' For we are ... and free'
' We've golden soil and wealth for ...'
' Our ... is girt by sea'
' Our land abounds in nature's ...'
' In history's page, let every ... Advance Australia Fair.
' In joyful ..... then let us sing, Advance Australia Fair.'

Beneath our radiant ..... Cross
We'll toil with ..... and hands
To make this ......... of ours
...... of all the lands
For those who've come ..... the ....
We've ......... plains to ..... With ...... let us all
To Advance Australia Fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia Fair.'

Australian of the Year
Since 1960 an annual award for Australian of the Year has been made. Judging is made by the board of the National Australia Day Council who use three broad criteria. The person should:

- Be an Australian citizen
- Have reached outstanding achievements
- Have made a significant contribution to the nation

Since 1960 the main categories of award winners have been:

- The arts — awarded to 8 people
- Science and/ or medicine — awarded to 8 people
- Sport — awarded to 12 people, including in 3 of the last 5 years

Since the awards began they have been presented to women on 8 occasions although in 1965 the award was presented to the musical group The Seekers, one third of who were women.

Tennis player Pat Rafter was the winner in 2002. Apart from attracting some criticism for being yet another sports person, Rafter was also criticised for his living arrangements. He has lived for some time in Bermuda to reduce his taxation liability and he is shortly to become a father but remains, at this stage, unmarried.

People who support Rafter's selection as Australian of the year point to his widely acknowledged

Australia's sons — oh, ours, sorry! Australians all, let us rejoice — ... for we are young and free ... ... we've golden soil and wealth for all ... ... our home is ...
sportsmanship and contributions he has made to environmental causes and children’s charities. They say, in 2002, his marital status and impending fatherhood are irrelevant.

Those who oppose his selection say that one of the main purposes of Australian of the Year is to offer positive role models, and that Rafter’s living arrangements make him a poor role model. Raising children brings responsibilities and he would be better seen to meet them as a married man.

• Made a contribution over and above what might be reasonably expected through paid employment; or
• Whose voluntary contribution to the community stands out from others who may have also made a valuable contribution.

More than 16,000 of these awards have been made since they were implemented by the Whitlam Government to replace Imperial honours in 1975. The awards go to a vast cross section of the Australian community, including community workers, politicians, sports people and business people. On Australia Day 2002, 487 awards were made and 169, or 35%, went to women.

Questions
• Are you aware of people in your community who have received Order of Australia awards? Your local council or Members of Parliament will have details, or you can look at the web site.
• Would you, or a group you are associated with, consider nominating someone from your community? Who would you nominate? What other criteria would you use? A nomination form is available on the web site or by free phone.

How do we present ourselves to outsiders?
In planning for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Queensland the organisers were faced with two issues they felt may have caused offence to some visitors.

First, they were concerned that offering kangaroo meat on the menu may cause some offence. Guests at the meeting would be coming in close contact with kangaroos at an on-site zoo and also on the golf course. To then have kangaroo steaks on the menu could have been seen as insensitive, so kangaroo meat was removed from the menu.

Second, they were concerned that images of bikini clad women in promotional material may offend some Muslim delegates. So they ordered the removal of these images. The organisers say they try to meet visitor’s expectations. However one visitor, from a Muslim country, says that although some visitors may find these images offensive they see it all over the world.

When discussing another issue Foreign Minister Alexander Downer recently said, in relation to overseas criticism of Australia, that we make our own decisions and don’t have to worry about what the rest of the world thinks. Mr Downer said that in 1901 Australia suffered a cultural cringe and looked to the British Empire for support and guidance, but those days are past.

Questions
• What are the advantages and disadvantages of offering different food and presenting different images of our beach culture to important visitors? What, if any, dangers are there in making assumptions about what might cause offence?
• Is our response to these 2 issues, kangaroo steaks and bikini girls, an instance of a cultural cringe? If so, who is responsible? What should be done?

Participating in society
In January former Minister of Workplace Relations Minister Tony Abbott, gave a speech to the Young Liberals Federal Convention titled “Feeling Better About Australia”. In his speech Abbott claimed that some Australians, who has variously described as intellectuals, élites or belonging to the ‘chattering classes’, were not ready to criticise Australia, which he says is “…one of the free, fairest and most prosperous nations on earth”.

Abbott says that “Instead of counting our blessings and singing our praises, the doomsayers have a tendency to magnify our frailties and take our strengths for granted.” This response fuels a sense of insecurity, according to Abbott, which tends to occur around three issues—the republic, Aboriginal reconciliation and immigration.

Then Mark Latham, a federal Labour member for a western Sydney electorate, entered the discussion (The Australian, 12 February 2002). Latham’s view is that ideology and symbolic debates, particularly about those three R issues—republic, reconciliation and refugees—are irrelevant in the suburbs. And presumably he would include many regional and rural areas.

Latham says the divide in Australian society is becoming less based on economic haves and have-nots and more based on differing social values. In those areas where bread and butter issues are often overlooked questions of public decency and service delivery are most important. People aren’t interested or don’t have time for those issues that have little affect on their daily lives.

More Than Just Talk is based on a strong belief that all people—in the suburbs, the bush and the inner city, whether healthy or poor, regardless of political beliefs, and all age groups—have a right to participate in discussions and decision making about those practical and symbolic issues which impact on Australia. And we believe that many ordinary Australians do have strongly held views and do want to be involved.

Questions
• How can these large issues—the republic, reconciliation and refugees—be made more appealing to ordinary people? What does it take for people to want to be involved in these issues? And how can people be involved?

• Last year a member of council in a Tasmanian town which has had a declining population for many years suggested that, rather than holding asylum seekers in detention centres, they could be housed in their town, making use of the many empty houses while their claims for refugee status were assessed. That night he had rocks thrown on his roof and started to receive abusive phone calls. How can people come to better accept differences of opinion? What happens if people become too worried to speak out about issues or choices that are not popular?

If you want to do more about the issues raised in this discussion starter you could encourage others to discuss the issues. Perhaps write a letter to the editor of your local paper or call talk back on local radio. What do local community leaders think about these issues? You might contact some to find out.

More information
• The National Australia Day Council
http://www.nadc.com.au or phone 02 6273 8666
• Council of the Order of Australia
http://www.ita.gov.au or phone 1800 552 275
• Tony Abbott MP and Mark Latham MP

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Want to receive one of these Discussion Starters every month? Subscribe to More Than Just Talk. www.morethanjusttalk.com
Or write to us at PO Box 117 Blackburn Victoria 3130.
ABN 25 092 151 9
Exciting use of technology to encourage debate

The Adult Literacy and Numeracy Australian Research Consortium (ALNARC) is currently undertaking a broad program of research considering the role of literacy and numeracy policy, provision and research in lifelong learning and socio-economic well-being. An integral part of the project is an online discussion forum which is being convened by the Queensland Centre of ALNARC through March and April. The ALNARC Online Forum 2002 provided a great opportunity for practitioners and other literacy and numeracy stakeholders to participate in an interactive discussion group about issues in the field.

With the support of the National ALNARC Office, the Queensland Centre is coordinating the commissioning, development and on-line publication of a series of papers from researcher. Topics addressed include: adult learning; workplace, aged care and employment issues; health and environment issues, and financial issues related to social exclusion; and finally papers addressing women’s issues, youth and regional development.

The Forum has been designed to stimulate discussion in policy and research environments and among grass roots practitioners about the extent to which key policy areas integrate literacy and numeracy learning into their funding and strategic planning.

One of the challenges has been to design a site which is user-friendly and supportive for first-time participants in an on-line discussion. To that end, we have a ‘virtual’ team of web designers and facilitators, and Dr Rosie Wickert is the online discussion coordinator.

The papers are still available online at www.staff.vu.edu.au/alnarc/onlineforum. The Online Forum is a culmination to many convergent research projects and tasks undertaken by ALNARC and we thank every one of the thousand or more people who have visited the site for their interest. When we have collated the replies of participants after the Forum, responses will be fed into a ‘Think Tank’ to suggest strategic directions for policy makers.

Jean Searle and Marya McDonald

The Online Forum—a virtual dinner party

It has been interesting and I must admit challenging to participate in the ALNARC online forum and while it is not over as I write this brief note, it is good to stop and reflect on the new ways in which practitioners and administrators (I count myself in both camps) can join in the discussion and debate of policy related issues. It is often difficult to make that leap from the practical operational everyday to the broader frameworks and the future direction of literacy numeracy policy within training and other contexts.

The forum has provided me with an accessible and immediate way to engage my mind at this more strategic level. It was great to have the forum over a whole month. My first visits to the site were tentative and my responses to papers were affected by not knowing my place in such a debate. Watching responses and particularly getting a flow going with the reading of each new paper gave me some confidence and after a week or so I felt able to dip in. What started as reticence in responding at the opening of the forum ended with real zeal and I’ll be sorry when it’s over. I recommend to anyone who is visiting online forums (and sitting in the back seat) to get in and have a go. The world doesn’t end when your imperfect sentences go up on the web and it great to be part of a global discussions on subjects that matter. Perhaps this is what a virtual dinner party would be like.

The papers have been diverse and interesting covering everything from finance and environmental literacy through to the nitty of workplace literacy and the gritty of unemployment. It has been eye opening for me to learn of how literacy is constructed outside our specialist area and something I feel I need to explore long after the forum closes. For me the most exciting thing was the foray into the big social picture. In particular it is frightening to think of the negative and problematic social and economic direction we could be accepting if we don’t take up the policy challenge in the crucial area of training and skills development and also situate that within sustainable social policy. I feel that many people are like me in that they have been attracted to the area of literacy because of its strong social and economic justice agenda. The online forum has sharpened that focus for me and rekindled that initial hope for a better world through social and political reform.

Helen Foley

For further information on the Forum contact:
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Hazel Davidson and Dorothy Court:  
The Great South Land, NCELTR at Macquarie Univ., 2001, ISBN 1 86408 693 9, RRP $12.95

Hazel Davidson and Dorothy Court:  
The Great South Land,  
Photocopiable Worksheets,  
NCELTR at Macquarie Univ., 2001,  
ISBN 1 86408 699 8, RRP $24.95

Hazel Davidson and Dorothy Court:  
The Great South Land, audio tape,  
NCELTR at Macquarie Univ., 2001,  
RRP $19.95

Available now through book shops.

The direct sales contact is:  
uamar@ulukan@mq.edu.au
Case study:  
Industry training skills and CAVSS in action  

Gordon Bates is a Course in Applied Vocational Study Skills (CAVSS) lecturer who works in the Building and Construction section of the West Coast College of TAFE in Perth, WA. He is currently working with Scott Kay, a Vocational Education and Training (VET) lecturer, with a group of Pre-Apprenticeship (Plastering) students. Gordon and Scott have found that the CAVSS team-teaching model has resulted in dynamic, effective lessons and important insights.

'I find CAVSS a very exciting way to teach literacy. You have to be creative, and you have to fit in with, and support, whatever the VET lecturers do and whatever approaches they take. This is half the fun of CAVSS. The other half is how the students respond when you get it right.

Recently I was working with one of the plastering lecturers and some pre-apprenticeship students. These pre-apprenticeship students need quite a lot of support, including a lot of basic maths. The VET lecturer, Scott, and I had planned to do some work on how to go about setting out and calculating a quote.

We started by taking turns to talk about aspects of organising information for a quote, getting ideas from the students about the factors that needed to be incorporated. Then Scott went into a story. He started telling the students some horror stories about the process of quoting. He was impressing on them how important it was to be careful and accurate in quotes, and how if you weren’t the mistake would cost you money. Scott told them about how he had lost a considerable amount of money quoting from a plan for a plastering job, because although the plan gave him the perimeter of each room, it did not identify that the walls had been built taller than usual. He had given a firm quote for the job, it had been accepted, and he lost money because the job ended up costing him significantly more than he had quoted.

As Scott told the story, in a lot of detail, I got busy on the whiteboard, drawing up a list of factors, setting up the calculations that had to be done in each case. He kept on story telling, and the students were really interested in what was going on. The students are always interested in hearing the real stuff about aspects of the industry. When Scott had finished the story, I went through the processes I had written up on the board, and went over some of the key factors to keep in mind with the class. Then we asked the students to break into groups, and they went outside to work on their quotes while we moved around from one group to the next discussing some of the details, and checking over maths processes.

As the students came back in, Scott suggested, in the ‘is it OK with you?’ way that we suggest things to each other, that we get the students to present their final quotes first, without any costing information, and see what the reactions were. I agreed, and it was on for young and old.

The students took the competitive aspect of the exercise very seriously. They demanded to know how others had come up with very different costings, and queried where other groups had omitted essential equipment, or made incorrect calculations, and even worked out how much money would have been lost because of the errors. Each group had to justify their costings, and there was a lot of discussion about the psychology of quotes, and how the lowest quote was not always the one that got the job. They got experience in ‘selling’ themselves and their industry skills and knowledge, and some very useful practice in applying their spoken language skills in a very industry-specific way.

It was a great lesson. Scott and I were both on a bit of a high afterwards. The students had been very focussed on the issues that Scott had been warning them about, as well as the organisational and mathematical processes that I had been covering. It had been interesting, informative, fun and very, very relevant.

It also left me a lot more aware of the differences between industry training and school teaching, and how these differences could get
in the way of CAVSS and VET lecturers working together.

Industry training is very different from delivering the CGEA, or teaching in schools. VET lecturers do not just teach students industry knowledge and industry skills. They spend a lot of time teaching students aspects of the industry culture, everything from technical terms, and industry slang, to the technical and industrial histories of the industry. They teach students about the realities of the industry, what kind of behaviours are acceptable and what you will get the sack for. All these things contribute to a student's ability to interact in a way that is suitable for the industry culture. It makes sense. They want students to be able to fit in with the expectations of other people in the industry so students can get work, and be successful.

When you have been professionally trained as a teacher, and are only used to an academic approach to teaching, it's easy miss recognising when different, but very effective, types of teaching are taking place. When Scott started story telling, it would have been easy to assume that the story was a bit of a break from instruction. In fact when Scott was telling stories, he was teaching the students about industry culture at a number of different levels. He was integrating industry culture training with industry skills training, and with CAVSS, he and I added another level of integration with literacy and numeracy skills support.

References to money, and the financial implications of making mistakes is another common theme among the VET lecturers, certainly in the Building and Construction Trades area. This could be a problem when literacy teachers assume that VET students have similar goals and aspirations to non-VET students. The thing that some literacy lecturers may not realise is that most VET students are extremely focussed on working in the industry.

For many VET students, the most likely type of employment they will go into after completing their Apprenticeships is self-employment. The issue of managing money, and learning the realities of small business management, as well as the theory, is crucial. The point of 'learning a trade' is to do business and make money. VET is training and education applied to employment goals. This might be quite unfamiliar to some literacy teachers. Some teachers might regard those references as impolite, crass, and even unprofessional.

When Scott mentioned having the students offer up their quotes as if it were a real competitive process, my first instinct was to be concerned about having students’ work analysed in such a competitive manner. But, competition and being able to operate competitively and quote competitively are the skills that will keep those students employed.

I learn a lot teaching CAVSS, from the lecturers and the students. The experience continues to make me more aware of how different industry cultures operate, and the role that language, what we say and how we say it, plays. What seems so normal that I don’t even see it any more, stands out like a sore thumb in a different cultural environment.

As Scott explained, many VET students have had enough of schools. They were the often the students who did not excel at 'academic' subjects, and whose skills and talents were not generally valued by schools and school teachers. He described how many students become very uncomfortable having to sit at desks and do anything that seems like school work. But they are very keen to learn industry skills in a ways that reflect industry activities. CAVSS works well in that way. It means that you can teach students the 'academic' skills that they need, but because it happens while students are measuring ingredients for a plaster mix, or calculating the costs of a building job, they see the skills as relevant, and are able to apply them to industry contexts. The fact that CAVSS happens in an industry training environment helps to create a boundary for any literacy or numeracy teacher who might otherwise start talking and teaching a ‘foreign’ (academic) culture.'

The Western Australian Department of Training is currently involved in an ANTA-funded project to disseminate information about CAVSS nationally and, where there is demand, to assist other states to implement the course. For more information about CAVSS, contact Margaret McHugh, Principal Consultant, Literacy, at the Western Australian Department of Training on 08 9235 6075

Susan Bates
Project Officer, WA Department of Training
08 9791 5712

Students are taught ‘about the realities of the industry, what kind of behaviours are acceptable and what you will get the sack for.'
### List of acronyms for literacy teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AAA</th>
<th>Affirmative Action Agency</th>
<th>ARAP</th>
<th>Assessing and Registering Authority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAACE</td>
<td>Australian Association of Adult and Community Education</td>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>Australian Research Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>AALP</td>
<td>ANTA Adult Literacy Program</td>
<td>ARF</td>
<td>Australian Recognition Framework (now AQTF)</td>
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<td>ABE</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education</td>
<td>ARIS</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education Resource &amp; Information Service</td>
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<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
<td>ASCO</td>
<td>Australian Standard Classification of Occupations</td>
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<td>ACACA</td>
<td>Australian Curriculum Assessment and Certification Authorities</td>
<td>ASCPRI</td>
<td>See SCC</td>
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<td>ACAL</td>
<td>Australian Council for Adult Literacy</td>
<td>ASH</td>
<td>Australian Standards Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Area Consultative Committee</td>
<td>ATB</td>
<td>Automotive Training Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCLAIM</td>
<td>Australian Advisory Council on Languages &amp; Multicultural Education</td>
<td>ATP</td>
<td>Australian Training Products Ltd (formerly ACTRAC Products Ltd)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>Adult and Community Education</td>
<td>ATS</td>
<td>Australian Traineeship System</td>
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<td>ACER</td>
<td>Australian Council for Educational Research</td>
<td>ATSB</td>
<td>Australian Training Board System</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACFE</td>
<td>Adult, Community &amp; Further Education</td>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Australian Vocational Certificate</td>
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<td>ACFEB</td>
<td>Adult, Community &amp; Further Education Board</td>
<td>AVCTS</td>
<td>Australian Vocational Certificate Training System</td>
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<td>ACFED</td>
<td>Adult, Community &amp; Further Education Division</td>
<td>AVTS</td>
<td>Australian Vocational Training System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACIBC</td>
<td>Australian Council of Independent Business Colleges</td>
<td>AWA</td>
<td>Australian Workplace Agreements</td>
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<td>ACPET</td>
<td>Australian Council of Private Education and Training</td>
<td>BACE</td>
<td>Board of Adult Community Education</td>
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<td>ACT Council for Adult Literacy</td>
<td>BVET</td>
<td>Board of Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td>Australian Committee on Training Curriculum</td>
<td>CAE</td>
<td>Council of Adult Education</td>
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<td>Australian Committee on Vocational Education &amp; Training Statistics</td>
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<td>Community Adult Education Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>AEC</td>
<td>Australian Education Council</td>
<td>CBA</td>
<td>Competency Based Assessment</td>
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<td>AEMP</td>
<td>Advanced English for Migrants Program</td>
<td>CBP</td>
<td>Community Based Provider</td>
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<td>AEON</td>
<td>Adult Education Organisers’ Network</td>
<td>CBT</td>
<td>Competency Based Training</td>
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<td>AESIP</td>
<td>Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program</td>
<td>CES</td>
<td>Commonwealth Employment Service</td>
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<td>AITD</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Training and Development</td>
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<td>ALA</td>
<td>Adult Learning Australia (formerly AAACE) - Australian Association for Adult &amp; Community Education</td>
<td>CIALN</td>
<td>Certificate of Initial Adult Literacy and Numeracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALBE</td>
<td>Adult Literacy and Basic Education</td>
<td>CIWC</td>
<td>Community Information Workers’ Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLI</td>
<td>Australian Language and Literacy Policy</td>
<td>COTT</td>
<td>Centre for Ordinary Old Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMEP</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Program</td>
<td>COS</td>
<td>Certificate of Occupational Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMES</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Service (NSW)</td>
<td>COTTS</td>
<td>Committee on TAFE and Training Statistics</td>
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<td>MES</td>
<td>Adult Multicultural Education Service</td>
<td>CSB</td>
<td>Competency Standard Body</td>
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<td>ANHLC</td>
<td>Association of Neighbourhood Houses &amp; Learning Centres</td>
<td>CSWE</td>
<td>Certificate in Spoken &amp; Written English</td>
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<td>ANSTO</td>
<td>Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation</td>
<td>DEET</td>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANTA</td>
<td>Australian National Training Authority</td>
<td>DEETYA</td>
<td>Department of Education, Employment, Training &amp; Youth Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>APL</td>
<td>ACTRAC Products Limited (now ATP)</td>
<td>DEST</td>
<td>Department of Education, Science and Training</td>
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<td>AQF</td>
<td>Australian Qualifications Framework</td>
<td>DETYA</td>
<td>Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (formerly DEETYA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQTF</td>
<td>Australian Quality Training Framework</td>
<td>DSO</td>
<td>Disability Support Officer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Australian Qualifications Framework</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Department of Social Security (now Centrelink)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(formerly ARF)</td>
<td>EAA</td>
<td>Employment Assistance Australia</td>
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Our guest speaker today is the Executive Director of COOT...
ECC Ethnic Communities Council
ECCA Evening and Community College Association
EdNA Education Network Australia
EEO Equal Employment Opportunity
ELLS English Language and Literacy Services
ELT Entry Level Training
ENTER Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank
ERIC Educational Resources Information Center
ESFC Employment and Skills Formation Council
ESL English as a Second Language
FLAG Flexible Learning Advisory Group (formerly EVAG)
FOI Freedom of Information
FOS Field of Study (DEETYA program category)
GAE General Adult Education (ACFE program category)
HEFA Higher Education Advisory Committee
IAS Institute of Advanced Studies
IR Industrial Relations
IT Information Technology
ITAB Industry Training Advisory Board
ITB Industry Training Board
JAC Job & Course Explorer (computer program)
JILL Jobs Illustrated (computer program)
JITEC Joint Industry Training and Education Council
LAECG Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
LESC Learning Employment Skills Commission
LLEN Local Learning & Employment Network
LLN Language, literacy & numeracy
LOTE Languages other than English
MCEETYA Ministerial Council of Employment, Education, Training & Youth Affairs
MSQS Migrant Skills and Qualifications Services
NAC New Apprenticeship Centre
NACSR National Advisory Committee on Overseas Skills Recognition
NALLS National Aboriginal Language & Literacy Service
NBEET National Board of Employment and Training System
NBEETYA National Board of Employment, Education, Training & Youth Affairs
NVETS National Vocational Education and Training System
OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHS Occupational Health & Safety
OTEN Open Training and Education Network
OTFE Office of Training & Further Education (see OPCETE)
OTS Open Training Services
OZJAC Australian Courses and Careers Database
PES Public Employment Service
PSETA Public Service Education & Training Australia
RANCH Regional Association of Neighbourhood & Community Houses
RPL Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO Registered Training Organisation
SAGCAL South Australian Council of Adult Literacy
SCC Standards and Curriculum Council
STA State/Territory Training Authorities
STB State Training Board (now LESC)
TAFE Technical & Further Education Institutes
TDCA Training & Development Council of Australia
TER Tertiary Entrance Rank
TESOL Teaching English as a Second Language
TESOL Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TUTA Trade Union Training Authority
U3A University of Third Age
UAI Universities Admission Index
VALBEC Victorian Adult Literacy & Basic Education Council
VATME Victorian Association of TESOL & Multicultural Education Inc
VEAC Vocational Education and Assessment Centre
VEET Vocational Education Employment and Training
VET Vocational Education & Training Accreditation Board
VTB Vocational Training Board
WBE Workplace Basic Education
WELL Workplace Education Language & Literacy
YMC Youth Ministers Council
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Email proposals of no more than 200 words to
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For further information contact Nick Brooke, Conference Coordinator
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