

## Revised ACAL work plan

The challenge for organisations such as ACAL is to find a way of managing in an competent and consultative manner. ACAL has taken up this challenge over the past year by first developing a clear direction in the form of a Strategic Plan, with an associated Action Plan. We have also developed a portfolio approach to managing the workload. This portfolio approach will allow us to capitalise on the talents and strengths within the ACAL executive, and also tap into the capabilities and goodwill in the broader adult literacy field.

A team approach with designated ACAL executive members is taken to each portfolio. To gain a further depth of perspectives, skills and experience, other members of the broader community are invited onto particular portfolio teams, or to contribute to particular projects.

There are five portfolios, with associated team

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### Australian Council for Adult Literacy 25th National Conference

Hosted by the NSW Adult Literacy and Numeracy Council



## Bridging the divides

EXCLUSION / INCLUSION

Friday 1 November – Saturday 2 November 2002

Manly Pacific Park Royal Sydney

31 October – National Forum on Refugees

**CALL FOR PAPERS  
AND POSTER PRESENTATIONS**

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leaders.

**Governance and Strategy**—Judy Harwood

**Research**—Geraldine Castleton

**Policy**—Rosa McKenna

**Marketing and Public Relations** (including:  
Publications / Media / Website)—Cinthia del  
Grosso

**Professional Development**—Pat Hazell

The above structure will allow us to work, with better focus, on the developing Strategic Plan. The structure will be robust enough to work from, but malleable enough to be responsive.

In the end, ACAL is about 'Supporting a stronger more cohesive language and literacy

field in Australia'. There are ways that you can help. Some suggestions are:

- Become a member of ACAL
- Join your state based adult literacy/numeracy organisation and utilise your ACAL state representative
- Let ACAL know if you have skills/knowledge that would be useful in assisting literacy agendas, particularly in relationship to the specific portfolios
- Alert us to issues, trends, concerns, opportunities
- Attend and contribute to the ACAL forums and conferences
- Attend and be active in the ACAL annual general meeting in November
- Give us feedback

ACAL executive contacts are on the back of this publication. We would welcome your input.

Judy Harwood

## portfolio notes:

### Policy portfolio

The ACAL Policy portfolio was formed in late 2001 to assist the Council manage its understanding of policy development in areas impacting on adult language, literacy and numeracy provision and to advocate more effectively.

The group is made up of two members of the executive, Rosa McKenna and Philippa McLean and members of ACAL who have expressed an interest. These include Cheryl Wiltshire Stephanie Mitchell and Lois McManus from WA, Liz Suda and Pauline O'Maley from Vic, Lou-ann Barker from Tasmania and Irena Morgan Williams from Queensland. The group represents a number of different types of providers and a diversity of learners. We meet via teleconference discussions held monthly and through email exchanges. Membership of the group is open to all members so contact us if you would like to participate in the future.

The immediate role of the group is to monitor the impact of the relevant state/territory and Commonwealth policies and programs and to consult and develop responses to government inquiries. Provision around the country varies considerably and it is difficult to get an accurate picture about the quality of provision across the whole of Australia.

Consolidated data about adult literacy has not been collected for many years so the strategy for collecting this information is by profiling each state and territory in turn. The first state to be profiled will be Western Australia. These



profiles will be printed in *Literacy Link* over the next year. You can expect to see a draft paper on the web site in June, 2002. This exercise will inform ACAL on the strengths and weaknesses of current programs and reveal any barriers to learning for specific groups.

The group will also update the paper, *A Literate Australia*, which sets out ACAL's views on the need for a new national strategy. This paper can be found on the ACAL web site <http://www.acal.edu.au> Your feedback on the paper could be posted on the ACAL discussion list and would be much appreciated.

Some members of the group have also undertaken to monitor international developments so that ACAL can be kept abreast of new initiatives overseas. Summaries or information about these developments will be regularly updated in *Literacy Link* and on the web site.

The issue the group is currently researching is the impact of the Australian Quality Training Framework on Registered Training Organisations. The group will be responding to an ANTA project to provide supplementary resources for language, literacy and numeracy and will inform the program for the first ACAL national forum to be held in Melbourne in March.

Rosa McKenna

### Research portfolio

The role of the Research portfolio on the ACAL executive is to contribute to ACAL's overall goal of supporting a strong, cohesive adult literacy field in Australia. It will work to ensure ACAL has an active role in the adult literacy research agenda in Australia. ACAL believes that research plays a vital role in supporting the adult literacy field, being an essential foundation of effective policy and program development, implementation and evaluation.

We will use the Research column as a means of  
*continued on page 16*



# Bridging the divides

EXCLUSION / INCLUSION

Friday 1 November – Saturday 2 November 2002

Manly Pacific Park Royal Sydney

In 2002, media commentary and community debate is highlighting social divides which have the potential to destabilise a wedge of discontent amongst Australians. This mood is depicted as an unforgiving one.

However, many people and community groups are challenging this mood and the 2002 ACAL Conference aims to provide an opportunity to articulate these divides, examine the issues and illustrate ways of bridging these perceived divides to bring about social inclusion.

The NSW Adult Literacy and Numeracy Council (ALNC) will host the Australian Council of Adult Literacy (ACAL) Conference.

Teachers, researchers, program managers and policy analysts working in the field of adult literacy and numeracy are invited to express an interest in either delivering a workshop session or developing a poster presentation for the Conference.

## IMPORTANT DATES

- Register online from 28th March 2002 at [www.hotelnetwork.com.au](http://www.hotelnetwork.com.au)
- Call for papers closes 10th May
- Registration forms distributed 1st July
- Early bird closes 31st July
- Registration closes 25th October
- National Forum on Refugees 31st October
- Bridging the divides: Exclusion/Inclusion commences 1st November

We are seeking presentations that address issues of social exclusion or inclusion relating to adult literacy and numeracy practices.

Proposals may include:

- Exemplifying effective literacy and numeracy practices in relation to potential divides in adult education such as cross-cultural and migration issues; e-learning and the digital divide; geographic isolation and training for employment gender age and class;
- Critiquing current state and federal government policies;
- Identifying ways of implementing policies inclusively

Formats for the presentations will include:

- individual papers
- workshops
- panels of up to 4 speakers
- poster presentations

Email proposals of no more than 200 words to [btd@hotelnetwork.com.au](mailto:btd@hotelnetwork.com.au) in rich text format or saved as Microsoft Word 97 by Friday 10th May 2002. Presenters will be notified by Friday 7th June of their inclusion in the Conference program.

Conference updates will be available at [www.hotelnetwork.com.au](http://www.hotelnetwork.com.au) or through the ACAL website at [www.acal.edu.au](http://www.acal.edu.au)

For further information contact Nick Brooke Conference Coordinator  
Email [nick@hotelnetwork.com.au](mailto:nick@hotelnetwork.com.au) • Phone 02 9411 4666 • Fax 02 9411 4243.

Bridging the divides: EXCLUSION / INCLUSION The Hotel Network PO Box 236 Roseville NSW 2069

# How useful do teachers find the NRS?

The articles on these two pages come from a recently published report called *Adult Literacy and Numeracy Practices 2001: a national snapshot*. The report documents the findings of a study by TAFE NSW - Access Division with funding from DETYA, and provides a snapshot of national adult literacy and numeracy provision showing the range and diversity of current practice and an analysis of current best practice.

These articles report on findings from some of the data provided by both managers and teachers on use of the NRS and the impact of various researchers on practice..

Thank you to DETYA (now DEST) and TAFE NSW – Access Division for their cooperation in reproducing sections from the research report for this article. The complete *National Snapshot* is available online at [www.detya.gov.au/ty/litnet/resources.htm](http://www.detya.gov.au/ty/litnet/resources.htm)

## Use of the NRS

It is now compulsory in many adult literacy and numeracy programs, such as LANT and WELL, to use the NRS. It is also aligned to many current ABE curricula such as the Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGEA), Certificate in Adult Foundation Education (CAFE) and Statement of Attainment in Adult Foundation Education (SAAFE). It was considered important therefore to ascertain how useful teachers find the NRS in reporting on learners' progress, and how easy they find it to use. The results are mixed, ranging from positive to less positive. There is a strong link between ease of use and usefulness. As is to be expected, those who are most familiar with the NRS find it easy to use. Others find it difficult to use and less useful.

## Usefulness

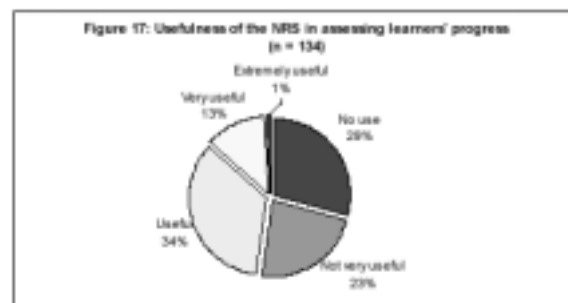
In terms of usefulness, of a total of 134 responses, 13% find the NRS very useful; 34% find it useful; 23% find it not very useful and 29% find it of no use at all. Only one respondent considered the NRS to be extremely useful in assessing learners' progress. The comments below show the range of responses, from positive:

- *NRS is a reporting tool, not for assessment purposes. Very useful as a guide to areas of skill development, constantly refer to the aspects to ensure broad skill development. It is not appropriate to use the NRS to 'assess' progress only to report on progress. [tt2]*
- *It covers a broad spectrum of the aspects of learning and personal development [tt4]*
- *Good benchmark which covers most areas required. Reasonably easy to explain to clients so they can understand their own progress [so1]*
- *As a guide to the training necessary [so4]*
- to less positive:
- *Use it all the time but find it limiting in giving a picture of student's skills-very restrictive [nt19]*
- *Time-consuming to use [qo9]*
- *It is not definite enough for English as a second language learners [va17]*
- *It has to be used for LANS - part of the con-*

*tract. That doesn't mean it's a good document though [nt22]*

One respondent, perhaps representing other opinions as well, comments that s/he

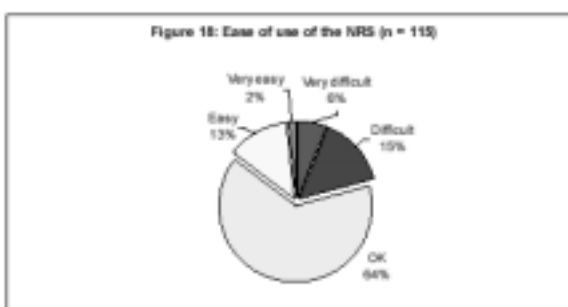
- *Needs inservicing on NRS [va5]*



## Ease of use

Respondents were also asked about how easy the NRS is to use. Of a total 115 responses, 64% find it 'OK' to use; 13% find it easy to use and 2% find it very easy to use. 15% find it difficult to use and 6% find it very difficult. Again, as one becomes more familiar with the tool, it becomes easier to use. Comments again range from positive to less positive:

- *It is easy to cross-reference criteria requirements and separate different skills and learning needs [tt4]*
- *I have been using NRS for Pre and Post training assessments for 2 years - and now use some of it easily after several moderation conferences and verification processes [qo9]*
- *Vague reference in back section. Example activities tend to place students in a range of levels at once [nt22]*
- *Actual NRS document alone is lacking,*



*however with extra background examples added it becomes easier to use over time! [so1]*

- *Practice! [ntt2]*
- *Not fully au fait with it and as a small centre do not have other to model [va5]*
- *Much of the information is repetitive. Often only one extra word distinguishes between one level and the next [ntt3]*
- *People don't fit neatly into boxes [so2]*
- *It is inconsistent and open to interpretation. [tt2]*

# Which theorists influence teaching practice?

## Impact of various authors/researchers

One of the most important features of best practice is staff whose practice is well grounded in theory. The following quote from Rob McCormack exemplifies very powerfully what theory can do and why it is important for teachers' practice:

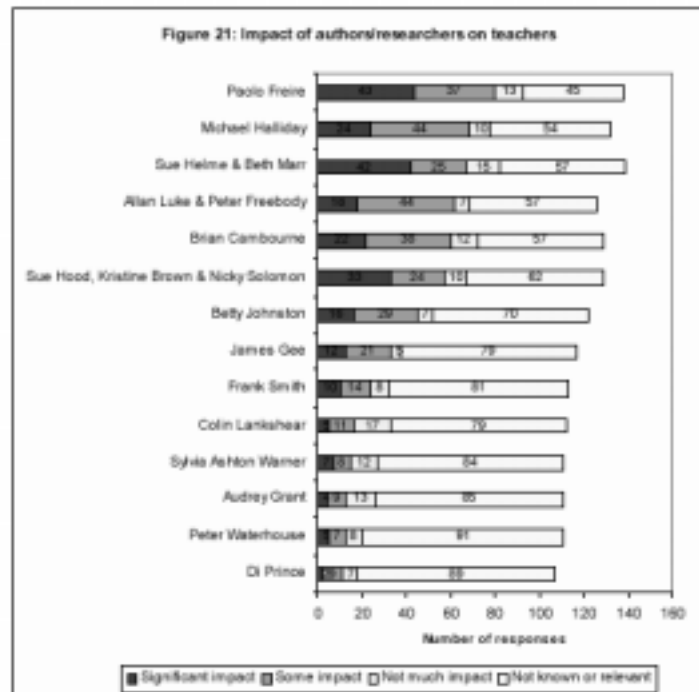
*...even though theory doesn't provide ready made answers or formulas, we can use it to shape, change and reflect on our practices and interpretations. Theory is not just for making the new familiar, nor does it just provide principles or concepts for interpreting new cases or situations. Theory can also help us to disrupt the familiar or habitual; to make things new, fresh and strange again. (McCormack 1994, p. 22)*

A list of authors/researchers who have had significant impact on the theory, and therefore the practice, of adult literacy and numeracy over the last twenty years, was given to respondents to rate in terms of the impact on their work. (A reminder to readers that this list comes from current course materials at two universities.) The list is by no means exhaustive but is indicative of various theories that have influenced practice over a number of years ranging from early reading theorists (Smith, Ashton Warner), to literacy for empowerment (Freire), to literacy as social practice (Gee, Lankshear), to functional grammar (Halliday), to teaching reading (Hood, Brown & Solomon, Freebody & Luke), to numeracy (Johnston, Helme & Marr) and to workplace literacy (Waterhouse, Prince).

The results are somewhat disturbing, as they reveal that many supposedly well known authors and researchers are unknown or have had little impact on many respondents. Many respondents ticked *Not known* to the entire list. It can be assumed that those respondents with recent post-graduate qualifications are most familiar with the list of authors. More respondents from the 'Other' category of providers were unfamiliar with these authors/researchers than those from Adult and Community Education (ACE) and Technical and Further Education (TAFE). The order in which the names appear when sorted according to *Significant* plus *Some Impact* is almost identical for both teachers and managers, with only a few changes towards the middle of the lists. (Figures 21 and 22)

Paolo Freire comes out on top of both lists, closely followed by Michael Halliday on the teachers' list and Helme and Marr on the managers' list. However Freire is unknown to as many people as he has had significant impact

on. This is consistent with the data from the previous question about beliefs about literacy and numeracy.



Freebody and Luke and Cambourne appear next on both teachers' and managers' lists, but the balance tilts to the low impact side. Teachers put Hood, Brown and Solomon 6<sup>th</sup> on their list, whereas managers put James Gee. Hood, Brown and Solomon come 7<sup>th</sup> on the managers' list. Betty Johnston comes before James Gee on the teachers' list who put him 8<sup>th</sup>. Ninth on both lists is Frank Smith, followed by Colin Lankshear. Peter Waterhouse is 11<sup>th</sup> on the managers' list but 13<sup>th</sup> on the teachers' list. Sylvia Ashton Warner comes 11<sup>th</sup> on the teachers' list and 12<sup>th</sup> on the managers'. Audrey Grant and Di Prince are both relatively unknown to the respondents and feature towards, or at, the end of both lists.

It should be noted that the number of responses to each item (ie author) varied from a low of 107 teacher responses (for Prince) to a high of 139 responses (for Helme and Marr), and a low of 40 manager responses (for Prince) to a high of 61 responses for Freire. This suggests that some respondents not familiar with a particular author did not tick that item.

A few respondents specified other author/researchers who had influenced their work, namely:

- Stephen Brookfield and Alan Tough [tt2]
- M. Knowles, M. Galbraith, R. Wickert, Draper,

*continued over*



# Why have an Innovative Projects Program?

by Catherine Gyngell and Louise Wignall

In the last issue an article on the evaluation report of the ANTA adult literacy Innovative Projects Program summarised the eight key recommendations of the consultants. Here Catherine Gyngell Director Adult Literacy Section, Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) and Louise Wignall, Senior Project Officer, ANTA provide a funding body perspective on these recommendations and outline some DEST and ANTA work to date and plans for the future of the program.

The ANTA Adult Literacy Innovative Projects Program accounts for approximately seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars of the two million dollars that has been allocated each year to DETYA (now DEST) for the ANTA Adult Literacy National Project.

The objectives of the project are to:

- provide support to ensure that language, literacy and numeracy are explicitly considered and integrated into the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF);
- promote models of integration of language, literacy and numeracy competencies within the VET System;
- provide assistance and support to those in the community with language, literacy and numeracy needs, and
- ensure that the latest developments in adult literacy are disseminated to the recognised

target groups around Australia.

These objectives are drawn directly from the first three objectives of the ANTA National Strategy, namely:

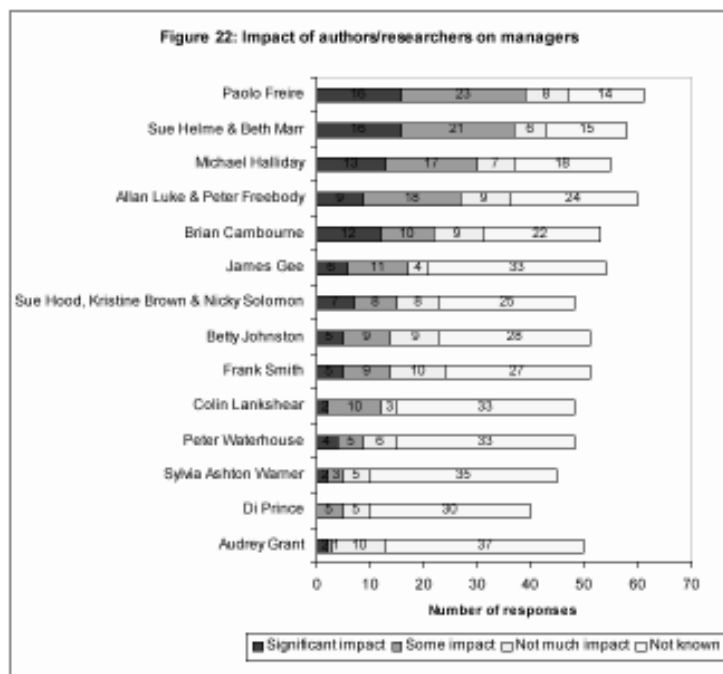
- equipping Australians for the world of work;
- enhancing mobility in the labour market; and
- achieving equitable outcomes in vocational education and training.

The project funds amongst other things the Reading and Writing Hotline, the ACAL forums, *Literacy Link* and a range of targeted research and resource development. By funding a mixture of research, resources and PD in the VET and community sectors, this National Project assists Australians as workers, citizens and learners to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

## Who influences teaching practice?

(cont)

*Pierre Walker (defining literacy), M. Baynham (defining literacy), D. Dymock, B. Brennan, Rogers, Malicky, Norman, J. Mace, Scheeres, Gonczi, Hagar, Morley-Warner (re competencies), R. Burns, Merriam [tt4]*



- Lev Vygotsky [so1]
- Chris Walton, Gunther Hesse, Helen Watson, Beth Graham [ntt2]
- John Downing, Ehri, Bryant & Bradley, Vernon Feitelson, Andrew Ellis and the work of modern cognitive psychologists on how adults learn and the nature of reading. Also my own research published and unpublished. Frank Smith's work has been substantially criticised by research, but remains plausible [vo2]
- Cope & Kalantzis [va24]
- Maher [nt22]
- lots of books on how the brain works, specific learning disabilities (dyslexia) and ADD, and teaching literacy to adults eg Thom Hartmann, Hollowell [nt43]
- Piaget [nt45]
- Pat Hazell [nt47]

And finally, one respondent took the opportunity to comment that

- *A particular student I worked with taught me a lot about teaching. Some of my colleagues [va18]*
- Given the relatively low impact of most of these well known authors and researchers, one is left to wonder about the theoretical underpinnings of many teaching programs. Teachers and managers appear to take a pragmatic approach to their program delivery and do not seem to be operating from a strong theoretical basis.

The evaluation report by Nexus Strategic Solutions of the Innovative Projects section of the national project was commissioned by DETYA in 2000 as part of the project's quality assurance and evaluation strategy.

The ANTA Adult Literacy National Project (managed by DEST) has been successful in drawing a two million dollar allocation from ANTA National Project funding since 1997. The allocation of these funds is contested and allotted on an annual basis and is highly competitive. There is no guarantee of funds for literacy on a continuing basis.

Since the completion of the Nexus evaluation in March 2001 ANTA and DEST have implemented many of the recommendations of the report and used it to inform planning for the 2001 program.

The value of the Innovative Grants Programs within the larger National Project is undisputed. It is of concern to the funding and management bodies, as it was to the evaluators, that the end products from these grants are of variable quality. In part this variation is due to the diverse nature of projects funded and the variation in experience of recipients. The concern about quality needs to be tempered by a concern that too rigid an approach would result in only large mainstream organisations accessing the funding. True innovation carries a degree of risk.

In order to address the concern of the consultants that in some cases in the past: "the final product was not of sufficient quality to warrant the investment required to distribute it or the product did not in some way conform with national standards or guidelines and hence it was unsuitable to be distributed" a quality assurance role has been set up and Louise Wignall has been working with 2001 Innovative Grant recipients to offer assistance in the preparation of their final product and dissemination strategy.

This has involved a dialogue about what the purpose of the funds is, what constitutes a 'final product' and how to communicate the key messages to the right audience.

It also ensures that constructive feedback about quality and other issues has occurred during the development of the project and will work against the concept of an 'unsuitable outcome'.

From 2001, Innovative Grant applicants and recipients have been able to access an expanded set of guidelines to assist them in planning their project and to develop a communication strategy. This is based on the consultant's report and the trial of 2001 consultation and advice.

The project application forms now include a definition of innovation that focuses on three areas, thus providing a framework for applicants to assess their ideas for potential projects:

The suggestion from the evaluation report that projects fall broadly into three groups has been accepted. They are:

- Customising a product or process for a particular new client group or a different context;
- Developing a collaborative process that results in a different product or process;
- Developing and/or trialing a completely new process or product.

In addition, applicants will be made aware of key strategies that may inform their formulation of a project idea. However it is not the intention of this program to be overly prescriptive. The overuse of categories and linkages to strategies could be seen as inhibiting innovation rather than encouraging it.

It is also the belief of the funding and management bodies that knowledge of national and State and Territory strategies that could inform the development of a proposal is the professional responsibility of the applicant. In many cases it is the capacity of the proposal to articulate a case from a particular need or context that gives it a winning edge.

Both the DEST and ANTA websites contain a plethora of recently released strategies, policies and professional development publications. At the very least potential applicants would be advised to make themselves familiar not only with current national policy but also with the latest State Training Authority initiatives before applying for Innovative funding.

The revised application form assists the National Consultative Committee—a nine person expert committee with membership drawn from across Australia to assess each application. The Committee is chaired by DEST and members include academic experts, representatives from State Training Agencies, ANTA and ACAL, industry representatives and individuals working in adult literacy.

Applications are now assessed not only on their ability to articulate their innovative qualities, outline a clear methodology and work plan and demonstrate their value for money but also on the inclusion of a communication and dissemination strategy.

In the past, final products, whether they were research reports or teaching resources, were sent for lodging with the ARIS collection in Victoria. As the world wide web has emerged as a dissemination tool, information about

current projects and some final resources have been available to download from the DEST Litnet site.

This site does not have the technical capacity to hold unlimited pages of resources from now into the future. Although an upgrade of the site is planned for this year the question remains as to the best method of dissemination and communication about final products. Several effective databases exist that could be more effectively used such as the NCVET VocEd database, the National Training Information Service (NTIS) and the EDNA website.

Due to the diversity of audiences for this material, no one format or site of distribution will suffice, therefore, it is part of the new requirements that each project clearly delineate the most appropriate format for their 'final product' based on the intended audience and consequently the most appropriate form of dissemination.

For example, a model training program piloted with a specific group may result in three products: a set of teaching and learning resources to support a set of competencies; an article in the local media about the success of the program; and a short report about the administrative and funding arrangements for the sustainability of the program within a State Training Authority funded model. Each of these 'products' has a different purpose and audience and requires a multifaceted communication strategy.

Many projects already utilise the ACAL conference to promote their project. Also for the past three years ACAL has run a series of forums on various issues. These forums involve participants across many sectors and have proved to be an effective way of examining and promoting awareness of relevant issues. Two fora are planned for 2002.

*Literacy Link* may also consider focusing on an

innovative project of interest in each edition as this publication is the main national publication for the field.

So that information can be disseminated via existing networks, ANTA and DEST will target relevant national publications and networks to ensure that coverage of relevant events and resources are included. An email list is being compiled and will include the editors/coordinators of Australian Training, ANTA FastFacts, the ITAB Workplace Communication Network, National ITABs and key National and State Adult Literacy and VET organisations.

The evaluation report from Nexus proved to be a valuable opportunity for the literacy field to comment on aspects of their practice. DEST and ANTA believe that by:

- Continuing to include the grants as a component of the Adult Literacy National Project Work and Finance plan (see Recommendation 1);
  - Establishing and maintaining quality control mechanisms (see Recommendation 2);
  - Clarifying Program goals and guidelines (see Recommendations 3, 5 and 6);
  - Defining innovation (see Recommendation 4);
  - Clarifying linkages to national strategies (see Recommendation 8); and
  - Improving and supporting dissemination and promotion (see Recommendation 7);
- the Innovative Projects will remain a key aspect of adult literacy activity in Australia.



**Literacy Link** (ISSN 0158-3026) is the newsletter of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy, a voluntary organisation set up in 1976 to support the development of adult literacy, numeracy and basic education in Australia.

ACAL promotes co-operation among interested organisations and individuals, both government and non-government, by undertaking and encouraging appropriate study, research and action.

**Literacy Link** is distributed free to ACAL members. Articles are available on-line on the ACAL Homepage: <http://www.acal.edu.au>  
The email address is:  
[acal-discussion@edna.edu.au](mailto:acal-discussion@edna.edu.au)

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# ACAL coming attractions 2002

ACAL is hosting two national forums as well as assisting the NSW Adult Literacy and Numeracy Council to host the 2002 National Conference.

## First forum

The first forum, tentatively titled *Literacy and the Australian Quality Training Framework: Impacts and Opportunities*, will be held in Melbourne on Friday May 24th at a venue yet to be decided..

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) was developed by ANTA and contains Standards for Registered Training Organisations and for Accrediting Bodies. The standards have deep implications for literacy practitioners. The forum will explore the impacts and opportunities arising from the AQTF as well as identifying emergent issues for policy makers, trainers, teachers and training organisations. A keynote speaker will contextualise the AQTF from ANTA's

viewpoint. More information and registration details will be in the next issue of *Literacy Link*.

## Second forum

The second forum will be held in Sydney on the day before the national conference and at the same venue. The forum will focus on refugees, the discourse around them, and the language used by politicians and media to construct refugees in the public consciousness.

## National Conference

The national conference will be held from the evening of Thursday October 31st until November 2nd at the Manly Pacific Park Royal Hotel in Sydney. The theme of the conference will focus on diversity and literacy.

Jim Thompson  
ACAL WA representative

## Youth at risk —an emerging field

The NYLP Network (National Youth Literacy Providers) is an Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) Project designed to meet the needs of providers working with young, disadvantaged learners. The recent influx of young people into the adult literacy field, community education programs and youth specific programs has created a new, uncharted area of provision.

People wishing to join the network can email Cate Thompson  
cthompson@swin.edu.au  
phone (03) 9214 5577

## Call for Expressions of interest to conduct workshops

It is essential that each of the planned conference include both national and local issues. We invite practitioners and workers in the field of youth at risk and literacy provision to conduct workshops at their local state conference.

Workshops will run for 90 minutes. Topics include: curriculum and resource development; managing student behaviour; practical and relevant lesson ideas and resources; working with drug affected students; networking and accessing multiple agencies; mentoring; showcasing youth training programs (warts and all); and developing strategies to deal with difficult situations.



## National Youth Literacy Providers' Network

An opportunity to access and influence relevant information, resources and developments in the emerging 'Youth at Risk' field



## NYLP Network state Conferences 2002

Training providers working in the fields of literacy, youth specific and community programs now find themselves with an emerging and often challenging group of young, disadvantaged 'at risk' learners. This has created a need to provide relevant, engaging and unique programs that meet the various and complex requirements of these young learners.

The NYLP conferences will address the issues relevant to the challenges of such training provision. Workshops, panels and open forums will provide the opportunity to inform, exchange and generally improve provision for our young learners. Areas to be covered include curriculum, resources, student boundaries, program management, initiatives/projects, networking and policy developments.

CITY	DATE	LOCATION	REGISTRATION
MELBOURNE	22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Swinburne University – Hawthorn	Complete the section below and send it to: NYLP Network Conference 2002 Att: Cat Williamson Swinburne University of Technology Access Dept, Mail No. P28 Building PK, St John Street Prahran Vic 3181
SYDNEY	11 <sup>th</sup> April	Sydney Uni Lodge	
BRISBANE	10 <sup>th</sup> May	Brisbane Albert Park Hotel	
ADELAIDE	31 <sup>st</sup> May	Adelaide Meridian	
PERTH	7 <sup>th</sup> June	Perth Inner City	
HOBART	19 <sup>th</sup> June	Hobart Wrest Point Hotel	
DARWIN	29 <sup>th</sup> July	Darwin Top End Hotel	

- CONFIRMATION OF CONFERENCE REGISTRATION WILL BE VIA EMAIL
- Conferences are free (ANTA funded) and will run from 9-4.30 (lunch provided)
- Places are limited (50 per city) – preference will be given to users of the NYLP Network WebBoard

Your details	City
Name	£ Melbourne
Organisation	£ Sydney
	£ Brisbane
Phone	£ Adelaide
Email	£ Perth
Postal Address	£ Hobart
	£ Darwin

*Cybermall is a multimedia resource designed specifically to assist trainees working at Certificate I and II level to develop the underpinning literacy, language and numeracy skills required to demonstrate the Key Competencies in workplace contexts.*

*It consists of a cross platform interactive cd-rom, a trainee workbook and an implementation guide.*

*Cybermall is an ANTA funded product developed by AMES and Angliss Multimedia and noted by the National Training Quality Council. It is suitable for trainees with low level language, literacy and/or numeracy skills, trainees needing training in effective communication skills and those at risk of dropping out of the training system, or who are currently not accessing training.*

*The content focuses on the development of cross industry customer service and communication skills. It supports the development of specific units of competency from the National Retail Training Package (WRR97), the Hospitality Training Package (THH97), the Automotive Industry Retail Service and Repair Training package (AUR99).*

## **What was the thinking behind the commissioning of the project?**

In September 1999 the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs approved the transfer of funds from DETYA to the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) to fund products which would support the implementation of Training Packages and the acceleration of New Apprenticeships.

Resources were produced with this funding to:

- respond to gaps in both industry specific and generic Training Support Materials;
- accelerate the process of translating the Training Packages into products and services to meet employer, enterprise and individual needs, and;
- provide support materials for New Apprenticeships.

One part of the total budget was set aside to develop a suite of products to support target groups that were traditionally under represented in structured training. Two groups were identified: Indigenous youth trying to access Training Packages and trainees at risk of dropping out of existing training.

For the first group a cd-rom, *Deadly Bay* was produced by TAFE NSW and Tantamount productions and for the second: *Cybermall*, which was a collaboration between AMES and Angliss Multimedia.

The requirement from ANTA for the *Cybermall* project was that it—

- support the development of literacy, language and numeracy skills,
- provide cues for mentor and/or teacher support, and
- Include the input of young people in the design of the resource.

## **What was the basis for selecting the project team?**

Given the range of skills and experience needed to deliver the project outcomes a multi-discipline consortium was required. The ANTA brief stated that “the leading agents in any consortium should show strength in the educational, conceptual, industry and business spheres. Access to technical expertise is also essential, but it must be conceived as supporting the major aims of the project, and not be the driver.”

The production partnership between Angliss Multimedia and AMES was seen to represent best practice in teaching and learning with the target audience and multimedia expertise. The project team ensured that there was extensive consultation with industry, (via representation of Industry Training Advisory Boards on the Steering Committee) enterprises and target user groups.

## **What were the technical parameters of the project?**

We referred to *Support Materials Guide: A Guide for Developers of Training Package Support Materials* (ANTA August 2000) which gives detailed guidelines for the presentation of content and design of products. This includes specifications for software and hardware (eg cross platform compatibility, provision of Read me files with installation instructions, supplying specific files such as Quicktime on the disk).

## **Why a cd-rom and not the internet?**

An initial scoping project found considerable support for cd-rom products to support trainees, particularly younger people. Reasons given included:

- trainees are motivated to work on computers,
- technology provides an opportunity to learn

and practise skills at their own pace

- computer skills development can occur whilst generic skills are also being developed.

As the most appropriate delivery platform for this particular learner group the cd-rom also provided scope for a level of interactivity which is very motivating for the learners but is not possible on the internet. Additionally *Cybermall* being a self contained resource did not require the communication functions offered by online medium and was designed to be customised.

Working in a cross functional team to develop the resource was a professionally energising experience. Among the pleasant surprises were the liveliness of the resulting product using multimedia, the ability of the media to provide all important visual and audio context for the learners and the motivational possibilities for the learners.



The screen allows the user to choose between a number of activities by clicking on different areas on the picture. For example, clicking on:

- the woman will take you to an active listening and form filling activity.
- the order form on the desk will take you to an activity about reading and understanding workplace documents
- the phone will take you to activities on taking telephone messages
- one of the male customers will take you to activities about selling points and benefits



This activity is from the retail stream. It focuses on:

- Interaction with customers
- Personal presentation
- Setting priorities
- Working in a team

### Does the cd-rom fit into assessment procedures outlined in the national standards ?

No - the project brief did not include assessment of specific competencies - rather the resource was providing opportunities for repeated skills practice. *Cybermall* is a resource to be used as part of full course delivery.

### What sort of monitoring has taken place?

The demo cd-rom and Implementation Guide together with an evaluation form were mailed out to 190 people nationally. Recipients were from a wide range of training companies, including RTOs, Group Training Companies and organisations and individuals providing language, literacy and/or numeracy training to young people. The time line for the evaluation was October to December 2001. Feedback from

this evaluation was incorporated into the final version of the material in January 2002.

The evaluation focused mainly on technical, navigational and useability issues. It was not possible to include major changes to content or activities by this stage of the project as field testing of this nature had occurred throughout the development of the product.

*Cybermall* was shortlisted for an Australian Interactive Multimedia Industry Association award in 2001, in the Austrade Award for Excellence in e-learning category.



This activity is from the hospitality stream. It focuses on:

- Occupational Health & Safety
- Upselling products
- Reading workplace document

*Cybermall* is now available through AMES. Contact Suzie Todorovski on 03 99264694 or email [suziet@ames.net.au](mailto:suziet@ames.net.au)



# Assessment kit—literacy and numeracy

review by Pat Hazell

The first semester this year heralded major new curriculum in TAFE NSW. The new course, Foundation and Vocational Education (FAVE) is linked to the National Reporting System levels 1, 2 and 3, which was a major change from previous curriculum. Practitioners in TAFE therefore grasped with relief a literacy and numeracy assessment package tied to NRS levels.

At Petersham TAFE college, the kit was trialed under considerable pressure on enrolment day, as more than twenty prospective students were assessed in one morning, in interviews of about thirty or forty minutes, using a selection of materials chosen from the kit. We found it to be pedagogically reliable, thorough, relevant and user friendly.

The kit was developed by teachers experienced in adult literacy and numeracy provision, and in assessment using the NRS. Materials were selected for their relevance, authenticity and their potential for integrating the macro skills of reading, writing, oral communication, learning strategies and numeracy. It focuses on NRS levels 1 to 4, and all tasks are around two themes, 'Going Places - Travel and Transport' and 'Shopping - Food and Money'.

The kit offers recommendations about ways the interview and assessment procedure ideally should take place. These recommendations are underpinned by strong principles of adult learning, such as 'making the first contact a positive one', 'start the assessment with tasks at a level below the estimated skills level of the client'. Such recommendations make the kit very accessible and sound for teachers and trainers who may be new to adult literacy and numeracy assessment and provision.

The package begins with an easy to read summary of tasks. All the tasks are set in a table which matches NRS indicators to tasks, and are grouped in macro skills. This is followed by interview and assessment record sheets, which provide for data such as personal details, education and employment background, information about the student's health, literacy and numeracy skills and strategies and learning goals, and a checklist of skills for students to self assess. At Petersham, we found this section confining. It did not allow us freedom to make program recommendations or record the wide range of information which inevitably emerges from the interview process, and which teachers who deliver the educational

program need. As a result, we have now adapted these pages to meet our own needs.

The next two sections are devoted to the macroskills, Oral Communication and Learning Strategies. They are short sections which allow the interviewer to record relevant observations.

The largest and most interesting sections are devoted to the two themes, and are for the assessment of reading and numeracy, from NRS levels 1 to 4. The first section, 'Signs', is made up of texts ranging from a 'stop' sign through to various maps. These are presented in a clear format and are followed by pages with questions related to the text, space to record the student's answers, which can then be easily matched to NRS competencies. At Petersham we didn't use this as it was not relevant for sub-urban settings, but it could be adapted to suit different locations.

The format for the 'Shopping' section is similar to 'Signs'. The theme follows the same format. At Petersham the 'Trolley Tracker' text was one we chose, and was excellent for student assessed for FAVE levels 1 and 2. However, for

**WANTED**

The Fresh Food People  
WOOLWORTHS

**\$50 REWARD:**

1-800-641 497 **Trolley Tracker**

FAVE 3 placement, we found we needed a more challenging text, and hastily supplemented a newspaper article.

The numeracy tasks were thorough, but time consuming, and we found we could not get through many in the time we had available. The writing tasks consisted of triggers for writing, and allowed students the opportunity to produce writing from simple form filling through to longer recount texts. However, we needed something more challenging for higher levels students to write. No suggestions were offered for assessing writing to the NRS. We were puzzled to find a newspaper article with reading activities apparently misplaced in this section.

The package is not without limitations. It has been developed to meet the needs of practitioners in Western NSW - mostly a rural area, where the population is largely of English speaking background. However, it is meant to be 'a living document' and a group of teachers is currently working to update it. Additional activities will be added and available to people who have already purchased the kit. Also in the pipeline is a section to assess ESOL students.

In our use of the kit, we found activities to be thoroughly thought out, clearly presented, ped-

agogically sound and attractive to use. We appreciated the inclusion of answers!

It's a pity the people who developed this excellent package were not given credit anywhere in this very valuable document.

The cost of the package is \$15.40, which includes GST. Postage is \$5.60, and as this is a rate per box, if multiple copies were needed \$5.60 would cover up to ten copies. We list the package in our catalogue as 'Literacy & Numeracy Assessment Kit.'

#### Copies may be ordered several ways:

- Details may be sent in the mail with a cheque made out to PrintWest;
- or
- A purchase order may be sent, and the goods would send out an invoice; or
- A phone order may be placed using a credit card.

Contact details are as follows:

PrintWest  
PO Box 1059  
ORANGE NSW 2800

Phone 02 6391 5662  
Fax 02 6391 5752  
ABN 77 994 891 808

#### Wanted - shopping trolleys

NRS assessment tasks - levels 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

If used	Task / Question	Response / Comments	NRS level	If achieved
	<i>Point to the word Woolworths</i> Who is offering the reward?		1.2	
	What does this word say? What is the reward worth?		1.2	
	What is the reward for?		2.1	
	Who collects the trolleys?		2.2	
	What does the ad tell you to do if you find a stray trolley? (Note: At this level detailed information required)		3.1	
	How much does the phone call cost?		2.1, 2.2	
	Why do you think there is a star in front of the words \$50 reward?		3.1, 3.2, 3.3	
	Does everyone who phones get a reward?		3.1	
	How do they choose who gets a reward?		3.1	
	Why do you think stray shopping trolleys are a problem in this community?		3.3	
	Why do you think Woolworths have put out this poster?		3.1, 3.2	

# NRS Assessment Task

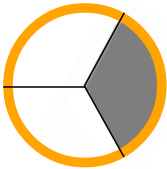
## Supermarket Specials Sheet

### Numeracy Problems Level 2

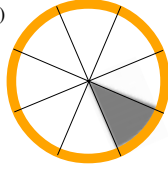
1. a) What fraction of each pizza is shaded in? i) \_\_\_\_\_  
ii) \_\_\_\_\_

- b) What fraction of each pizza is not shaded in? i) \_\_\_\_\_  
ii) \_\_\_\_\_

i)



ii)



2. a) How many cans of lemonade are there in the pack? \_\_\_\_\_

- b) How much lemonade is there in each can? \_\_\_\_\_

- c) How much lemonade is there in all of the cans put together? \_\_\_\_\_

- d) If you paid \$6 at the checkout for the lemonade, how much would you be paying for each can? \_\_\_\_\_

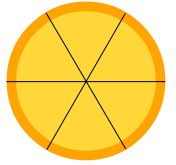


# NRS Assessment Task

## Supermarket Specials Sheet

### Numeracy Problems Level 3

1. A pizza is cut into 6 slices. If each person has 3 slices, how many pizzas would you need to buy for 12 people? \_\_\_\_\_



2. a) How much more expensive is a kilo of Jarlsberg cheese than a kilo of Bodalla cheese? \_\_\_\_\_

- b) Which cheese has the bigger saving per kilo? \_\_\_\_\_

- c) What is the difference in saving per kilo? \_\_\_\_\_

3. a) You want to buy enough orange juice for 24 people to have one cup (250ml) of juice each. How many 2 litre bottles would you need to buy? \_\_\_\_\_



- b) What would be the difference in cost if you bought the cheaper brand of juice for 24 people? \_\_\_\_\_

## Supermarket Specials Sheet continued

NRS assessment tasks - levels 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13

*Numeracy 4 problems on a separate sheet at appropriate level*

If used	Task / Question	Response / Comments	NRS level	If achieved
	Pizza problems • fraction shaded and unshaded		2.9, 2.10, 2.12	
	Lemonade problems: • no. of cans in pack • individual capacity • total capacity • price of individual cans		2.9 2.9 2.10, 2.11, 2.12 2.10, 2.11, 2.12	
	Pizza problem		3.11, 3.12, 3.13	
	Cheese problems: • which cheese is more expensive • saving most money • how much more		3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13	
	Juice problems: • how much juice for 24 people • how much saving with cheaper juice		3.11, 3.12, 3.13	



Dear *Literacy Link*,

I am writing in response to your article about 'Our Profession - A National Snapshot'. I am one of the 2% of the under 30 age group relating to age of a literacy teacher. There is a lack of new blood coming into our profession because of various reasons. Adult literacy is not an advertised choice when you enter university at 18 and it is hard to gain employment if you have no experience.

Adult literacy teaching is not an option when you are studying education at university. The degrees are reserved for mature age students. I studied at QUT and found out about the Adult Education degree when I was in my second year of high school teaching. I changed over to Adult Education in my third year at uni. I was the youngest in my class by 20 years which was imposing. I felt lost in the class, but found a few friends who took me under their wing and introduced me to the adult world of university. I had come from the university world of young people going nightclubbing all night and studying at the last minute. I enjoyed my degree and the friendships I made, but it was hard to adjust.

I graduated from university with my education degree, but could not find work. I was 22 and had a degree, but no work experience. One day, I was handing in my dole form and saw a poster on Centrelink's wall advertising literacy classes. I thought it would be a great opportunity to learn about literacy teaching. I volunteered for four months and then was employed casually. I fell in love with adult literacy teaching from the moment I observed my first class. I knew it was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I was lucky to find my passion at such a young age.

I am now 25 and have been teaching adult literacy for 3 years. I have not tired of it and still love helping people. It was a hard start for me and I am glad I persevered and have succeeded in my job. I am proud of what I do. I hope I can inspire other young teachers to teach adult literacy. It's worth all the work.

Kind Regards,  
Steph Young  
Adult literacy teacher



## International snapshot of adult numeracy

**T**erry Maguire from Ireland, Keiko Yasukawa and Betty Johnston from Australia, are working on a joint research project to put together the beginnings of an international picture of what is happening in the adult numeracy field worldwide. They would very much welcome and value your help.

One section of the research requires them to identify any particularly interesting or significant initiatives relating to adult numeracy in a variety of countries.

These might be to do with:

- provision and policy for indigenous groups
- numeracy and other social justice issues
- explicitly integrated literacy and numeracy initiatives
- initiatives involving second-language and numeracy learning
- cross-cultural issues
- numeracy and community development or capacity-building in urban, or rural, or isolated areas eg in the environmental or women's movements
- family, community, school partnerships

They would be very grateful if you could briefly describe the initiative, indicating why you think it is interesting or significant and giving them some way of contacting those involved (email would be best, if possible). If you could also add any references of related published material that would be very helpful.

### Who are the researchers?

Dr Betty Johnston (Director, Adult Literacy and Numeracy Australian Research Consortium, NSW, Sydney) E-mail: [betty.johnston@uts.edu.au](mailto:betty.johnston@uts.edu.au)

Terry Maguire MSc (Centre for Advancement of Mathematics Education in Technology CAMET Ireland, University of Limerick, Ireland) E-mail: [terrymag@iol.ie](mailto:terrymag@iol.ie)

Dr Keiko Yasukawa (Lecturer in Adult Education, University of Technology, Sydney) E-mail: [keiko.yasukawa@uts.edu.au](mailto:keiko.yasukawa@uts.edu.au)

### The timeline

They plan to have a draft report of the project completed by June 2002



# literacy contact lists



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grimsh@midland.training.wa.gov.au

## Portfolio notes

*continued from page 2*

disseminating information about on-going research projects and reporting on outcomes from research projects conducted in Australia as well as overseas.

Membership of the research portfolio currently includes Helen Foley (Queensland state representative), Cinthia del Grosso (co-opted member from Victoria) and Geraldine Castleton (ACAL President).

We would welcome membership from *Literacy Link* readers with an interest in research and I invite you to contact me at G.Castleton@mailbox.gu.edu.au. We would also like to hear what you believe should be research priorities in adult literacy in Australia, as well as any suggestions you might have for our Research column.

*Geraldine Castleton*

## Online forum—March 2002

The Adult Literacy and Numeracy Australian Research Consortium (ALNARC) is convening an online forum from 15 March to 12 April 2002.

The forum is an outcome for research conducted in 2002 into the scenarios for the future of adult literacy policy, provision and research. You will have the opportunity to read papers and discuss their contents online.

In order to ensure that we notify you when the online forum has commenced and when new papers are available, you are asked to register your interest by visiting the homepage of the online discussion forum.

The homepage URL is:  
[www.http://www.staff.vu.edu.au/alnarc/onlineforum](http://www.staff.vu.edu.au/alnarc/onlineforum)