



## The Training And Assessment (TAA) Training Package

*The language, literacy and numeracy components of the Training And Assessment (TAA) Training Package were outlined by Lynne Fitzpatrick (TAA project team) in the February issue of 'Literacy Link'. Many readers will be affected by the new training package. The following article is a shortened version of the response to the second draft of the TAA by the ACAL Executive. It is likely that a meeting will be held with state training agency representatives to resolve some of the issues outlined below.*

We are delighted that units related to language, literacy and numeracy (LL&N) are included in the draft Training Package. This recognises the importance of these skills as underpinning learning in Vocational Education and Training (VET). It also appropriately situates LL&N teaching in a vocational context as well as the traditional general education context. We also recognise the difficulty of capturing the complexity of LL&N development and training and appreciate that the units reflect this complexity.

However, we have several concerns about the Draft Qualifications Framework. The first concern relates to the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Currently all VET trainers are required to have this qualification. While the

qualification may be relevant for those teaching in work places, a number of units in the draft qualification are not relevant to those working in general adult education settings. It should also be recognised that not all VET training is based around Training Packages.

While it is important that general education and LL&N Teachers have an understanding of Training Packages and the VET sector, this understanding can be gained through professional development and induction processes as an alternative to completing the Certificate IV. Moreover, if all VET teachers are required to have this qualification there is a concern that skilled, experienced LL&N teachers, working in general adult education settings, may be excluded from teaching accredited curriculum.

The second concern relates to the Advanced Diploma of Specialist Practice (LL&N). While it is encouraging to note that units in this qualification have been largely drawn from components of the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Teaching courses which have wide acceptance in the field and partly articulate with some higher education courses, they do not sufficiently acknowledge the required skills, knowledge and experience for adult LL&N teaching.

The packaging of the LL&N units into a qualification increases the possibility of its being used as the 'base' qualification for those working in the LL&N area. This would be a lesser qualification to that now required.

The proposed qualification also does not take into account the differences in knowledge and teaching methodologies within what is encompassed by the broad term 'Language, Literacy

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and Numeracy specialist'. The areas of English as a Second Language, adult literacy and adult numeracy, although related, are separate specialist areas built on different theoretical paradigms.

Teachers who specialise in these areas usually do intensive post-graduate study or complete specialist studies as a major component of a four year qualification. This is similar to the length of time a plumber or automotive engineer needs to train and keep abreast of new developments in their field. The obvious question is: 'Would you rather a mechanic have four years training and experience or one unit of competency to repair your car?'

The Advanced Diploma of Specialist Practice (LL&N) should not therefore be represented as an adequate stand-alone qualification for delivery of specialist training and assessment. Rather the proposed Units of Competency need to be seen as a way of increasing understanding about LL&N for those working in the VET sector in non-LL&N specific training. ACAL acknowledges that teachers with qualifications and experience in other sectors wishing to enter the LL&N sector would benefit from undertaking the units, as would current LL&N practitioners who wish to update their skills and knowledge, or gain competence with LL&N in an industry context.

Finally, the lack of consultation with the Higher Education Sector makes problematic the pathways to and from (post)graduate courses to the proposed qualification. This needs to be addressed so that those already qualified can be assured that they will not be required to

undertake time consuming and costly exercises in RPL to gain credit for an Advanced Diploma, for specialist studies completed in graduate, postgraduate and formerly recognised programs such as the Adult Literacy Teaching Certificate and the Adult Numeracy Teaching Certificate. Simply stated the Advanced Diploma should not be required by teachers who already have specialist qualifications.

The ACAL Executive recommends that :

- The term 'specialist' be removed from the title as lecturers/trainers will not become specialists in the three related yet distinct areas of ESL, Literacy and Numeracy teaching on completion of the existing Units of Competency.
- The qualification is not regarded as a specialist qualification but is considered to describe the competence, skills and knowledge required for basic LL&N teaching practice in the VET sector.
- The qualification be called an Advanced Diploma in VET Practice with the focus area included after the title eg, Numeracy or English as a Second Language or Literacy.
- That the Higher Education Sector be consulted to establish clear pathways between the proposed qualification and existing qualifications.

The ACAL Executive would be pleased to participate in any further dialogue concerning the Training and Assessment package.

*Jim Thompson  
President, ACAL*

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## A 'Community of Practice' considers the TAA

**A**delaide Institute of TAFE has recently been funded by Reframing the Future (see [www.reframingthefuture.net](http://www.reframingthefuture.net)) to establish a Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LL&N) Assessor Network in South Australia. This Network is a response to the forthcoming implementation of the Training And Assessment (TAA) Training Package, which will mark a new era of LL&N in Vocational Education and Training (VET).

The Network has drawn interest from a range of professionals across different VET sectors including teaching and management staff from metropolitan and regional Institutes of TAFESA, Adult Community Education, SA Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology, the Commonwealth DEST, Industry Advisory Groups, the Higher Education sector, and trainers from the food processing, construction, agriculture and horticulture, avia-

tion and retail and job network agencies.

The SA LL&N Assessor Network would like to share its views on the current draft of the TAA Training Package.

- Consultation and data gathered supported the need of a 'specialist' stream to be preserved in the VET environment.
- The Network supports the proposed qualification structure of TAA, in particular the Advanced Diploma of LL&N Practice as a separate qualification, not a single Advanced Diploma with specialist electives, including LL&N units eg, Advanced Diploma in VET Practice (LL&N)
- A new name was proposed to reflect the uniqueness of this qualification: Advanced Diploma in LL&N Practice in VET
- This qualification is not supposed to replace the LL&N qualifications in Higher Education; it is the specialist stream of LL&N practice in VET.

# 26th ACAL National Literacy Conference

## Metropolis to Desert Sands—Literacy in Multiple Environments

### Alice Springs Convention Centre Northern Territory 19-20 September 2003

The theme for this year's conference is 'Metropolis to Desert Sands— literacies in multiple environments'. It aims to provide a unique experience to participants in capturing the diversity in adult literacy and numeracy provision across the country, and to examine the range of delivery modes which allow the needs of individuals and communities to be met. It will provide a window to the methodologies operating in particular domains such as vocational education and training, and Indigenous and multicultural environments where differing value systems and cultures exist.

Due date for registration is 4th September 2003.

#### To Register:

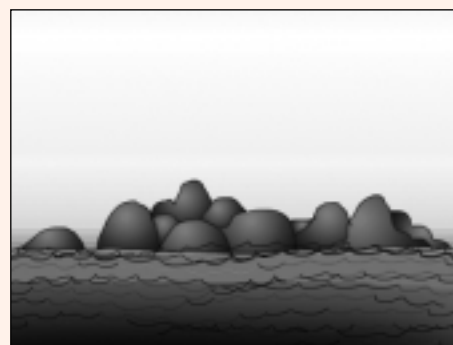
Contact Dick Roebuck

Ph: 07 3875 5862 Fax 07 3875 6868

Email [r.roebuck@griffith.edu.au](mailto:r.roebuck@griffith.edu.au)

Conference details and the registration form are also available from the internet—

<http://cwpp.slq.qld.gov.au/qcal/arch/2001-odyssey.htm>



#### Cost

Presenter / Member	Delegate	Full time student / Pensioner	One day only Fri / Sat (circle)	Conf. dinner Friday evening	ACAL Forum (see below)
\$330.00	\$395.00	\$220.00	\$195.00	\$77.00	\$66.00

## ACAL Forum— Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and learning

*courtesy—NT Tourist Commission*

Alice Springs Convention Centre

Thursday 18th September 9.00am—4.30pm cost \$66.00

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have among the lowest English literacy levels of any group in Australia. Even with the best of intentions much of the effort from the literacy and related fields fails to impact on a significant proportion of the Indigenous community and we need to again consider the reasons for this.

Register through Dick Roebuck (details above)

- An LL&N specialist is not necessarily someone who is a specialist in all of language, literacy and numeracy. We see the term LL&N as a way to capture the uniqueness and the inter-connectedness of these three related fields.
- The Network proposed to preserve the TAALL&N 605A 'Provide specialist adult English language, literacy and numeracy support in an institutional learning environment'. This unit is about specialist LL&N support for diverse groups of learners who may be the high risk groups, youth at risks, long-term dependency people, people with a disability, people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, overseas students, etc.
- The Network suggested some reworking on the elements and performance criteria of this unit to better reflect the client groups' needs.
- Many queried why so few LL&N units at Certificate IV and Diploma levels?
- Many industry trainers do not regard LL&N support as the unique preserve of educators with higher education qualifications.

*Wing-Yin Chan Lee  
Workplace Education,  
Adelaide Inst. of TAFE*

## Restructuring public education in NSW

ACAL's Pat Hazell together with other stakeholders recently met with Dr Gary Willmott, Assistant Director General, the Department of Education and Training (DET), who provided an overview of the restructuring of NSW TAFE that is currently under way.

DET is the provider of public education in both schools and TAFE in NSW. The restructure falls in the current context of the NSW Government's aim to streamline the education effort by combining education agencies and making closer connections through all stages of lifelong learning.

Key elements of the TAFE restructure:

- All existing schools and TAFE regions to be recast as eight education regions, combining both schools and TAFE.
- There will be increased focus on on-line learning, primarily seen as a TAFE function.
- The Open Training and Education Network (OTEN) delivery will become a faculty of Distance Education and OTEN products will be part of On-line Learning
- A new portfolio of Teaching and Learning will be created. This will support the professional development of teachers, and coordinate curriculum support, product development and on-line education. It is seen as a major vehicle to bring TAFE and schools together.
- Within the curriculum area, generic workplace skills have been kept separate from vocational education. Adult literacy and numeracy is located here. The terminology has changed, and can now be found under a range of titles, for example Information Literacy; Workplace Literacy and Numeracy; Adult Re-entry and Retraining; Adult Transition Programs; Workplace Generic Skills. What this means for current curriculum and delivery mechanisms is unclear. The use of 'Workplace' is not intended to prevent people focusing on a general education without identified workplace goals. The stated aim is to reflect what TAFE is already trying to do, which is to allow people to participate in the workplace.
- Considerable staff reductions envisaged.
- Fees in TAFE (as mentioned in the June issue of *Literacy Link*) are not part of the restructure but are something imposed by Treasury.

Feedback can be offered: [feedback@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:feedback@det.nsw.edu.au). In addition the DET web site ([www.det.nsw.edu.au](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au)) has FAQs.

## Notice of ACAL Annual General Meeting

The 27th Annual General Meeting of ACAL will be held at the Alice Springs Convention Centre, Alice Springs NT on Friday 19th September 2003 at 5:00pm.

agenda

- welcome and apologies
- minutes of last meeting
- annual report
- election of office bearers
- other business

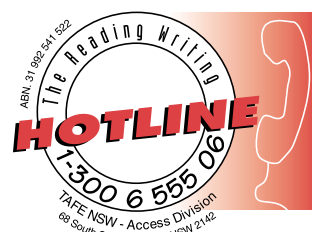
The Australian Council for Adult Literacy Executive Committee is elected each year at the Annual General Meeting. The committee is made up of representatives nominated by each affiliated State/Territory adult literacy council, office bearers and co-opted members as required. Nominations are invited for the positions of President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary.

Nomination forms can be obtained by contacting ACAL. All nominations are to be submitted in writing on or before 5.00pm Monday 15th September 2003 to:

*The Returning Officer,*  
*Australian Council for Adult Literacy,*  
*PO Box 850*  
*Reservoir VIC 3073,*  
*Ph: 03 9469 2950 Fax: 03 9402 1143*  
*Email: [acal@mira.net](mailto:acal@mira.net)*

## Conference—Sponsorship Winners

Gayla Mathews (Corryong Community Education Centre), Renae Phillis (Pilbara TAFE) and Narelle Sanford (Northern Territory University) were selected as the winners of conference sponsorships from those nominating to present papers and workshops at the forthcoming 26th National Adult Literacy Conference 'Metropolis to Desert Sands—Literacy in Multiple Environments' (see previous page). The sponsorships give them free conference registration.



# A promising community literacy project in Far North Queensland

by Cathrena McRae

In 2002 the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) introduced a pilot project in Far North Queensland to assist in the implementation of the Indigenous Recruitment Strategy 2001—2005 in the Department of Emergency Services. The CDEP/QFRS Auxiliary Training Program is an agreement between Indigenous organisations that have Community Development Employment Programs (CDEP), and identified Queensland Fire & Rescue Service stations that are staffed by auxiliary fire fighters, to provide employment opportunities for local Indigenous people.

The QFRS trialled the 'CDEP/QFRS Auxiliary Training Program' in Mareeba, Far North Queensland in September 2002. The trainees for the project were drawn from Kuku Djungan Aboriginal Corporation. The program began in Mareeba with five trainees completing the program in November 2002.

## Background

The Government introduced the CDEP scheme in the Northern Territory Indigenous Communities in 1977. It is administered locally by Indigenous community organisations and regionally by elected Indigenous representatives. The scheme addresses Indigenous problems such as unemployment and the lack of essential services taken for granted by other Australians.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) administers the CDEP scheme. Through the integration of ATSIC funding and service delivery, the CDEP deliver employment, community development, housing and infrastructure development, training, business development and essential services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities.

In 2001 the Queensland Department of Emergency Services implemented 'Strategic Plan for Indigenous Australians 2001—2005'. In response to this initiative, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has been actively recruiting Indigenous Australians to the ranks of permanent and auxiliary fire fighters.

## How trainees were recruited

Trainees were recruited from the Kuku Djungan Aboriginal Corporation. They had to undergo the standard QFRS recruitment process. In addition they underwent a literacy and numeracy assessment which indicated the level and type of support they would require during

the delivery of their ATEP training.

## The training and skills the trainees learnt

The ATEP program consisted of basic fire fighting skills interfaced with pump operations, breathing apparatus and search and rescue techniques. The program consisted of both practical and theory components delivered over a three month period. A literacy and numeracy program focused on developing QFRS writing, numeracy, reading, speaking, listening and spelling skills.



Photo courtesy Queensland Fire & Rescue Service

## Trainees' personal stories

### Hubert

*My name is Hubert Creed and I am stationed at Mareeba. I am 24 years old and I live with my partner Natasha Grogan, 25, Shonttel (five) and Jay-Kaylah (three). I was born at Hughenden. I joined the QFRS to educate the people in my community about the dangers and the damages of fire. Successful completion of this program has meant that I have the knowledge to help in Fires and Emergency not just at home but in the workplace and on the street.*

### Kurt

*I became an auxiliary fire fighter because I had been working away from home most of my life. Thirty years from now I want to be able to look back and remember the important things I have done in my life. I feel really proud to wear this uniform. Some people ask me if it was hard and I just tell them no. If you set your mind to it, it gets easier and the rest of the QFRS team are more than willing to help in any way they can. It's not every day you see a Murri fellow driving a fire truck!*

Nasonah

Hi my name is Nasonah Lonwell Pedro. I was born on Thursday Island and did my schooling in Townsville where I completed Year 12. In Townsville I met my wife to be and now we have four beautiful children. My previous jobs were mainly labour work, machinery driving and security work. I am now working as a bus driver and working with the Queensland Fire and Rescue.

I joined the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service because I wanted to gain a better understanding and experience of what is required to become an Auxiliary Fire Fighter. As an Indigenous person in Mareeba I feel there is a definite need for role models such as others and myself who have taken the initiative to attempt this training and have succeeded.

Rosina

I am Fire-Fighter Rosina Gutchen/Watson. I was born in Mareeba, am a Torres Strait Islander, 39 years of age and have six children. Before I become a Fire Fighter I use to do farm hand, barmaid, teacher-aide, age care worker

and waitress work. I am the only woman with four Indigenous men and I find it very interesting.

Donald

I joined the QFRS because I saw an opportunity to improve my chances of gaining employment in a rewarding career. I also realise I will be used to teach and encourage other Indigenous people to consider a career in the QFRS.

As a group we knew little about the QFRS but over the course of a month of pretty intense training we have become skilled in fire fighting. All the trainees had positive feedback from the instructors especially the skills and drills that we all enjoyed. I feel a great sense of pride in completing this program, as I was not sure if I could last the distance. I have learned a lot of new skills and look forward to continuing my training.

Preliminary research currently being undertaken suggests that this initiative has had a significant impact on all program stakeholders. Trainees have expressed their great pride in their new role in the QFRS. QFRS staff, the CDEP Coordinator and the literacy and numeracy provider have detailed the cultural and professional 'learning' they experienced during the delivery of the program. The Mareeba community has welcomed the role models that these trainees have provided to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members. This program is being extended to seven additional stations in south west, central and far north Queensland in 2003.

Cathrena McRae

The Learning Workshop,  
Cairns, Queensland



- The Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) web site **literacynet** has been restructured.
- **literacynet** is a major improvement on its predecessor and is a valuable professional development tool for the adult literacy and numeracy field.
- **literacynet** is now on line at—[www.dest.gov.au/literacynet](http://www.dest.gov.au/literacynet)

**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 Web site: [www.acal.edu.au](http://www.acal.edu.au)  
The email address is:  
[acal-discussion@edna.edu.au](mailto:acal-discussion@edna.edu.au)

**Contributions to Literacy Link** should be sent to email:  
[dicksond@labyrinth.net.au](mailto:dicksond@labyrinth.net.au)

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# Fostering the generic skills

## —recent research

by Suzanne Curyer

Throughout our working lives it is likely we will change occupations several times. This is particularly the case for those just beginning their careers. More than ever before we will work in jobs that require us to be flexible, use initiative, and undertake many different tasks. While the 'hard' technical vocational skills remain important, generic skills are becoming increasingly important.

In 2002, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the Business Council of Australia (BCA) completed the report *Employability skills for the future*, which listed generic skills and a set of related attributes that employers consider crucial for employees to work effectively.

The eight skills ACCI and BCA identified were: communication, teamwork, problem-solving, self management, planning and organising, using technology, learning, initiative and enterprise. The list of attributes included: enthusiasm, loyalty, honesty and integrity, reliability, common sense, adaptability and ability to deal with pressure.

These skills and attributes are truly employment and workplace focused, but many argue they are important in life too—these skills develop throughout a person's life and in multiple settings, including educational contexts and in work, community and family life.

This list was not the first—generic skills first came to prominence in the 1980s. The seven Mayer key competencies were developed in the early 1990s, and have been built on in ACCI's and BCA's report.

### The roles of the learner and practitioner

Research commissioned by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) found these skills are best fostered through a partnership between the learner, teacher and training provider, and employer.

The learner must recognise the importance of employability skills, want to learn them, and be able to assess whether they have these skills. As one TAFE student put it: 'The lecturer does make a big difference and so does your employer, but at the end of the day it's [up to] you.'

In today's job market personal entrepreneurship is essential. Increasingly, people are employed on a part-time or casual basis, and are responsible for their own professional development.

They must self-manage their careers. Additionally, individuals rely on their 'adaptability' skills in new and different work environments.

Research by Victor Callan (*Generic skills: Understanding vocational education and training teacher and student attitudes*, NCVER, 2003) found students value teachers with real-life experience. Students believe these teachers help them develop technical and broader life skills, and inspire them to get a job in their chosen vocation because of the teachers' passion, enthusiasm, knowledge, organisation and approachability. Nevertheless, the research found students tend to focus on technical rather than generic skills. Teachers must emphasise the importance of broad life skills.

### The roles of employers and the broader community

Generic skills are primarily learnt through experience. Accordingly, workplaces, families and community activities are also important sites and contexts in the development of generic skills. Indeed, it's only in the context of real work that these skills live and breathe. Employability skills must be fostered in the workplace in a number of ways if they are not to be lost from an individual's repertoire of skills. Employers play a vital role in fostering employability skills.

### Practitioners fostering generic skills

Teachers need to promote the importance of these skills in the workplace, and training organisations. Furthermore, they must develop ways of communicating the scope of generic skills to learners, training providers, and employers. Research suggests effective teaching and learning requires:

- documenting generic skills embedded in various contexts
- incorporating these skills in Training Packages and making it easier for practitioners to interpret them and provide a range of strategies to teach them
- including learner-centred approaches, such as experiential or problem-based learning
- including authentic experiences as much as possible to help people learn or reflect on their skills
- teaching and learning strategies like group work, role plays or simulations
- including team-based approaches by staff to their teaching, learning and assessment
- identifying teachers who have considerable

experience in teaching and assessing employability skills

- building and maintaining networks to discuss and enhance practice
- supporting resources and professional development in teaching, learning and assessing employability skills.

To help individuals develop generic skills training providers can:

- set workplace and community projects
- incorporate simulations and role plays
- set up mini companies or practice firms
- prepare critical incidents to focus discussion and problem solving
- incorporate investigation or enquiry-based learning, problem-solving learning and project learning
- reflect on learners' current workplace practice and experiences.

### Employers fostering generic skills

To assist employees develop generic skills employers can:

- include generic skills as key features in job descriptions and recruitment processes
- use induction programs to focus on these skills
- use buddy or mentoring approaches
- use rotation of tasks or working at higher duties
- provide targeted training for staff to foster key generic skills
- use staff or team meetings to explore generic skills issues such as dealing with difficult customers
- use quality circles and improvement teams
- undertake specific work-based projects that demonstrate these skills
- use staff assessment and performance appraisal systems to reflect on these skills
- use critical incidents, including dealing with mistakes, conflict resolution or performance problems
- involve staff in community projects.



### Assessing and certifying generic skills

Assessing generic skills correctly is very important. Research by Clayton, Blom, Meyers and Bateman (*Assessing and certifying generic skills: What is happening in vocational education and training?* [forthcoming], Berwyn Clayton, Kaaren Blom, Dave Meyers, Andrea Bateman, NCVER) found that technical or vocational competencies and generic skills are typically assessed together, using the same methods, and in the context of whole work tasks. Teachers appear to be more confident assessing generic skills when they occur as discrete units of competency than when the skills are embedded into vocational units.

A quality assessment approach should provide:

- a mechanism for communicating the scope of employability skills to learners, training providers and employers
- a means of providing feedback to learners on their acquisition of employability skills and a framework for their improvement
- a document containing information about individual achievement, with supportive evidence
- an opportunity to undertake assessments that are authentic and occur within a work context or one that closely simulates it
- an assessment procedure that is not onerous for either learner or assessor
- a summary of the performance of individuals that is readily accessible by employers
- a cost-effective means of collecting performance information, individually and at institutional and system levels.

Learners need to have a significant role in the assessment of their generic skills—their assessment should be done *with* them not *to* them. This is irrespective of the context in which these skills develop, be it the workplace or with a training provider.

Accordingly, good guidelines are required for assessors. Learners and assessors have to be aware of the opportunities to assess various generic skills. The approaches to assessment must be detailed, integrated, and quality-assured. Furthermore assessors need adequate time and resources for assessment and professional development. All parties must play an appropriate and active role if generic skills are to be taught, learned, assessed and documented well.

To access the publications mentioned above or other forthcoming reports about generic skills, please go to [www.ncver.edu/pubs.htm](http://www.ncver.edu/pubs.htm) or the NCVER key topic page at [www.ncver.edu.au/generic.htm](http://www.ncver.edu.au/generic.htm).

Suzanne Curyer, NCVER  
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# Investigating numeracy demands for today's workplaces

by Robyn & Kelly Zevenbergen

Times are changing. Patterns of work are radically different and are likely to change even more. The role of technology is central to reformed work patterns. The implications for youth preparedness of the demands of the new workplace need to be considered. But do we know what the demands of these new workplaces are in terms of literacy and numeracy? Are they radically different from the old workplaces? What forms of mathematics are going to be needed for most young people as they exit from school? Does school mathematics cater for the changes occurring in the wider society?

To investigate the demands of workplaces on young people, a consortium of industry partners and the local university have united in a research project. The consortium consists of active membership of Gold Coast City Council, Scisco, a Job Placement Provider (JPP), Centrelink, Gold Coast Institute of TAFE, the Queensland Schools Authority and Griffith University. This article reports on the perceptions and experiences of two diverse groups: young people in work, looking for work, or in school engaged in part-time work; and older people who are employers, job placement officers and teachers.

The data reported below comes from the first phase of a three year project. It involved a large survey distributed across the region and across the key stakeholders. The second phase, currently in operation involves work shadowing of selected industries in order to better understand the demands placed on young people in terms of literacy and numeracy in these new workplaces. The third phase, to be undertaken in 2004, will involve the development and trialling of recommendations arising from the first two phases. The project is unique in that it uses a consortium model of key industry partners working with youth, employment and education.

The data collected in Phase One involved a large survey (with almost 1000 responses) that sought the views of younger people and senior people as to the literacy, numeracy, computer and general skills that were used in industry. Respondents were asked to rank the perceived importance of the various skills in their industries. Representative samples of the various industries across the region were involved in the study design.

The data were collated into the two major cohorts— younger people (who we defined as being up to 21 years of age: students, employees and job seekers) and senior people associated with the education and/or employment of younger people (teachers, employers and job placement officers).

When a step-wise multi-variant analysis was undertaken it showed the weighted multiple linear combinations of the predictor variable best distinguished between the two groups. In step-wise order, the following variables were found to be statistically significant at less than  $p < 0.001$ .

1. Computers for general use
2. Statistics
3. Industry-relevant technology
4. Non-verbal communication
5. Computer technology
6. Number
7. Industry-specific technology
8. Volume
9. Location

These results suggest that aspects of numeracy and the use of computer technology are key variables in the differences between older and younger people in this study. While there is a concerted focus on literacy in contemporary debates about employability of young people, this study only identified one aspect of literacy (non-verbal communication) as being a critical variable. These data confirm the growing recognition of theories of new times and new knowledges.

It would appear that senior people saw number skills as being important learnings for young people. They consistently ranked these items as more important for work than did younger people. In contrast, younger people consistently ranked applied areas of numeracy—that is measurement (*vis a vis* location and volume); and statistics as being important variables. Indeed, statistics was seen to be the second key discerning variable in the differences between older and younger people.

The use of technology was identified as the second most common significant difference between senior and younger people. The differences in computer use seemed to be more that senior people saw it as important whereas younger people took it for granted. In the remainder of the paper, we discuss the ways numeracy emerged as a key differing variable.

### New numeracies in new workplaces

One of the perennial questions in mathematics in the current context centres on definitions of numeracy. In this study, older people identified number as a key variable in work. This is in line with many of the reports by employers and members of the wider society who bemoan the inability of many young people to undertake calculations and other aspects of number work. As noted in the qualitative comments of two employers:

**Employer:** *Young people do not seem to have the ability to mentally calculate things like we used to. They need to use a calculator to work out change when the cash register does not work. They do not know when the change they are giving is incorrect.*

**Employer:** *It gets frustrating when young people can't work out percentages. If they don't know how much petrol and oil is needed for the engine, then they will blow it up and that costs me a lot of money.*

Senior people appear to see important skills related to numeracy as aligning with number knowledge (including operations) In contrast, young people identified applied areas of mathematics, statistics, volume and location, as key variables.

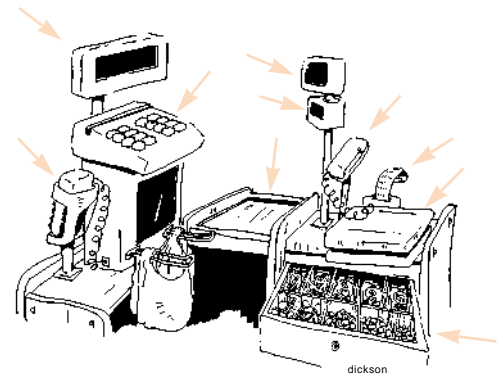
Considering the example above where the employer saw numeracy as being calculating 'percentages', it may be that young people see this type of example in an applied context. In this context, it may be volume. So, it may be that the differences observed are due to definitions of how the participant interpreted the question.

We would contend, however, that it is more than interpretation of the questions. Rather we would suggest that young people are more likely to see numeracy as an applied notion. In part this is due to their familiarity with technology so that the cash register example cited above has de-mathematised the activity in the sense that the work with numbers has been reduced but other aspects of numeracy become more important. Such aspects would include number sense so that incorrect (and correct) amounts would be known intuitively.

Estimation would be critical whereby the young person is able to validate the amount to be tendered through guessing what the amount should be and then comparing this against the amount being shown on the cash register. This becomes apparent in the comment below:

**Shop Assistant:** *When it is peak time, you get people through all the time and some of them are really nasty. You have to be nice to everyone. One day I had this*

*grumpy old man come through and I rang up his stuff wrong. Well he ripped right into me. Told me I was dumb and I needed to go back to school and that the company should give my job to an intelligent person. I got upset, but when I looked at his docket, I could see that I rang up one item twice and that's where the mistake was. I called my supervisor over to alter the till and he was going mad. I started to cry and my supervisor asked him to come over to the inquiry desk to fix it up. It is so hard when it is busy and it is easy to make a mistake but I could see what I did wrong, he just wouldn't listen.*



Problem solving is integral to these skills so that the young person is able to apply their number sense and estimation skills effectively in a given situation rather than rely on technology to provide answers. The pressure to process customers quickly and efficiently is immense as identified by this young shop assistant, but it is also apparent that she could identify her mistake and was able to rectify it. But as she indicates, the older person was intolerant of what he perceived as her 'innumeracy'.

The differences in the perceptions of the participants are commonplace and may well be due to different ways of perceiving the demands of the task. The shop assistant saw the task of addition of the items being the domain of the cash register and her role was to ensure that items were scanned effectively. In contrast, the older man saw the task of the shop assistant as adding the items and ensuring correct addition. When the cost of the items did not correlate with the purchaser's expectations, the young person was seen as being cognitively inferior. These differences in how numeracy is being lived through the activity supports the trends identified in the data set of the survey.

Young people identified statistics as a key skill in their work. This was an important variable using the analysis cited above. This finding supports the general contention of this paper and its theoretical position that young people,

# Thinking about adult literacy from a *New Literacies* perspective—promises to keep and challenges to face

by Don Leu

*This article is to whet the appetites of readers going to the the 26th National Adult Literacy Conference in Alice Springs in September. It is a shortened version of the paper to be presented by Professor Leu, one of the keynote speakers at the conference.*

Change envelops us as adult literacy educators. It defines the nature of our work, our own journeys as educators, the nature of reading and writing, and even the theories that shape the essential perspectives that we bring to adult literacy. As literacy educators, change is central to our lives.

Through our work we seek to change the world, assisting one person at a time to become more fully literate and more able to realise their dreams. Our goal each day is to leave the world a better place, with adult learners more confident and more skilled at navigating the complexities of life. We change lives.

Moreover, it is not just participants in literacy programs who change; change defines our own journeys. We change through the lessons we learn each day while working with individuals and from professional development opportunities, such as this conference. On our journeys, we discover new insights about literacy, about learning, about ourselves, and especially about the wonderful individuals whom we have the privilege to serve.

Change also defines the nature of our twin touchstones: reading and writing. Each act of reading or writing changes an adult learner forever. Readers return from the worlds they inhabit during their reading journeys with new insights about themselves and the world around

them. Writers return from their compositional experiences with new understandings about who they are and where they are headed.

Even our understanding of the nature of literacy is rapidly changing with much of this change being led by literacy educators in Australia. Around the world, we are beginning to explore new conceptions of literacy including multiliteracy (The New London Group, 2000), critical literacy (Luke & Freebody, 1997; Musprat, Luke & Freebody 1998), media literacy (Tyner, 1998), and others. These help all of us to rethink our conception of literacy by focusing on the multiple contexts in which literacy occurs, forcing us to reconceptualize the very definition of literacy. In short, change is central to adult literacy education. It is simultaneously what we seek to accomplish, the process we employ, and the context in which we work. Unlike other areas, change is a familiar friend to most of us.

While change is a familiar friend, we are now being challenged by change as never before. Rapidly emerging information and communication technologies (ICT), such as the Internet, are fundamentally redefining what it means to become literate. New ICT appear daily, each requiring new literacies to effectively exploit their potential. As a result, our role as literacy educators must also change, becoming one that transcends the foundational literacies of our  
*(continued over)*

having grown up in an information-rich society are surrounded by data so that statistics are an integral part of their lives. New Times are characterised by the supersaturation of information but how this is lived out in the workplace is unclear. There was no evidence in the qualitative comments to shed light on how young people were seeing the role of statistics as being important in their work lives. Further investigation in Phase Two will seek to identify how this variable is perceived and/or enacted in the workplace.

These two variables, as identified through the step-wise multi-variant analysis, support the contention that what are seen as key numeracy skills may be influenced by the society within

which one lives. The data from this study indicate that the demands placed on young people vis-a-vis numeracy may be different from what young people see as numeracy. The different orientations that the two cohorts have towards the important skills and knowledges needed in contemporary workplaces suggest that there may be different expectations of younger and senior people in terms of numeracy in the workplace.

This project is funded through a Australian Research Council Linkage Grant.

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past to embrace the new literacies of our future. Unless we adapt more rapidly to the changes that are taking place to literacy, we risk failing to prepare adult learners for the challenges they face in world of global information and communication.

In this paper, I will argue that change is the essential reality of literacy today, a reality that has often gone neglected. The Internet and other ICT force us to reconsider the goals we have for adult learners and the expectations we must have for ourselves. Not only does the Internet require new literacies for its effective use, the Internet also spreads new ICT with startling speed and these new ICT, in turn, require additional new literacies to effectively exploit their potential. Thus, the Internet is both the source of new literacies and the means

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*"Not using technology much in their own research and teaching, (the) teacher education faculty have insufficient understanding of the demands on classroom teachers to incorporate technology into their teaching"*

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by which even newer literacies are rapidly being generated. These changes have fundamental implications for our work as adult literacy educators. We must acquire many of these new literacies, ourselves, continuously developing the newer and newer literacies required by continuously changing ICT. Most importantly, we must also support adults in acquiring these new literacies. It will be a challenging task for each of us.

This paper explores an evolving theoretical framework that helps us to understand the new forms of reading, writing, communication, and learning that are required in an information age, a 'New Literacies Perspective.' This perspective outlines the nature of these new literacies and explains how best to go about supporting their development among literacy learners of all ages. I then explore the promises that new literacies require us to make and the challenges they require us to face in order that all members of our global society might fully enjoy the potential that life bestows in an information age.

#### **The challenge of professional development**

As in all educational endeavours, a committed, knowledgeable teacher is the most instrumental factor in effective instruction. This will be especially true as new technologies for information and communication regularly appear and converge with literacy and literacy instruction (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, in press). The repeated changes I envision in the nature of literacy instruction will require continuous

professional development to support educators in the effective use of new technologies for information and communication. Never before have we been faced with the professional development needs that will occur in our future. Will we be able to continuously support educators when the definition of effective literacy instruction regularly changes? The answer to this question is not yet clear.

The challenges will be enormous. While we do not have adequate data on adult literacy educators, consider a somewhat parallel situation among K-12 teachers in the US. The results of a recent survey indicate that only 1 in 5 public school teachers reported feeling very well prepared to integrate educational technology into classroom instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 1999a). Moreover, schools in the US planned to spend only 20% of the amount recommended by the US Department of Education for staff development with technology (CEO Forum, 1999). Districts are only spending about 6 per cent of their technology budgets on staff development as opposed to the recommended 30 per cent (US Department of Education, 1999b). One suspects that the situation in adult education is even more both-ersome.

We also need to keep in mind that any commitment to support professional development must be both substantially larger than it is today and also continuous. I have argued that literacy can be viewed as a deictic term. A similar argument can be made for literacy instruction. New approaches as well as new content will regularly emerge as new technologies for information and communication appear. We are just beginning to see some of these changes, changes that will repeatedly occur in our futures.

Perhaps an even greater aspect of this challenge will be the response of programs within universities and colleges that prepare adult literacy educators. These programs must begin to include the new literacies of networked information and communication technologies within their courses. Most importantly, those of us in reading and literacy education must begin to lead the way in these efforts, bringing our special insights about literacy education to these new contexts for literacy and learning. Looking at the current situation one cannot be especially sanguine. In the U.S., for example, few education programs currently provide this preparation and many that do provide preparation in technology use tend to provide it as an isolated course, seldom integrated within courses on literacy education. As the recent report from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education noted, 'Not using technology much in their own research and teaching, (the) teacher education faculty

# Innovative adult literacy delivery models

## — from a ‘personal development’ to a ‘capacity building’ model

by Rosa McKenna et al

This article is a shortened version of a paper to be presented at the 26th National Adult Literacy Conference in Alice Springs in September. Contributors include: Mr Ray Fogolyan, Executive Officer, Public Safety ITAB; Mr Rick Stone, Manager, Learning and Development, State Emergency Service, NSW; Mr Shane Wood, Senior Training and Development Officer, Counter Disaster and Rescue Service, Queensland; Ms Margaret Fraser, Swinburne University of Technology; Ms Cathrena McRae (see page 5), The Learning Workshop and Ms Rosa McKenna, Communication in Education and Training, WELL Consultant to the Public Safety ITAB.

Through this project, the Public Safety Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB), the Public Safety agencies and the Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) believe they have built a model of provision that is learner centred, responsive to local culture and conditions, integrated into the competency based training in the industry, providing transferable skills for individuals tied with qualifications, yet helpful to personal and social needs and makes for competent and safer volunteers working in and for their communities. (See page 5 ‘Promising community literacy project in Far North Queensland’)

Conscious efforts to develop adult literacy and numeracy began in Australia during the late 1970s based on models used in the United Kingdom and heavily influenced by the community and personal empowerment theories of Paulo Friere. These programs were built on personal development models using volunteer tutors within community based programs. The programs were seen as being learner centred but attracted criticism for a number of reasons. For example, there was:

- a mismatch between the supply of volunteers and the demand for them in different types of communities
- no curriculum or accreditation and therefore few resources and no clear pathways to other

forms of education and training

- inconsistency in the quality of provision
- poor accountability for government funding
- formation of dependency rather than individual empowerment; and
- a psycholinguistic theory based on development of individuals’ skills.

In the period since then the adult literacy field has changed significantly. It has:

- professionalised, that is, teacher qualifications are now generally required
- moved to models of provision based on competency based training and assessment
- diversified to include community, vocational, workplace and electronic forms of delivery
- adopted a sociolinguistic approach that places the individual and their literacy practices within a social context; and
- operates with the Australian Quality Training Framework standards for accreditation, recognition and quality.

### The Public Safety Industry

The Public Safety Industry includes Police, Fire, State and Territory Emergency Services, Emergency Management and Defence. The major public safety services in rural and regional Australia are provided through a coordinated system of volunteer units and brigades. Such

*(continued over)*

have insufficient understanding of the demands on classroom teachers to incorporate technology into their teaching’ (N.C.A.T.E., 1997). Unless we begin to rethink the commitment we have to professional development and teacher education, our ability to prepare citizens for the literacies of their future will be severely limited.

### Conclusion

I have argued that the Internet and other Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are fundamentally redefining what it means to become literate. New information and communication technologies (ICT) appear daily, each requiring new literacies to effectively exploit their potential. I have also argued that our role as literacy educators has also changed,

becoming one that transcends the foundational literacies of our past to include the new literacies of our future. I have tried to show how a New Literacies Perspective can help us to respond in more thoughtful ways to the changes we will encounter, harnessing the potential of these powerful new technologies to the desires and dreams of adult learners. If we make the correct choices, these new literacies contain important promise for adult literacy education, enabling us to ensure that all members of our global society might fully enjoy the potential that life provides each of us in an information age.

Donald J. Leu, Jr.

John and Maria Neag Chair of Literacy  
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services are managed by the State and Territory Emergency services and Bush and Country Fire Authorities.

The Public Safety Industry is unusual in that service provision within the industry is spread across paid and volunteer personnel. The total number of employed and volunteer personnel within the industry is approximately 540 980.

Sector	Full-time Employees	Volunteers	Reserve
Police	84 718	-	-
Fire	17 000	270 000	-
State & Territory Emergency Service	310	100 000	-
Defence (Army, Navy & Air Force)	67 050	-	21 904

Recent tragedies, such as the Linton fires in which several members of the Victoria Country Fire Authority (CFA) were killed in the course of their work, have highlighted the duty-of-care and legal liability issues for government agencies. These in turn have been a driver towards more rigorous assessment of competencies and equitable access to training.

Research conducted by the Public Safety ITAB in 2001 established that it is highly likely that there will be a significant number of volunteers who will not have the literacy and numeracy skills to participate effectively in the training and assessment required to achieve competency. The research indicated that they are not able to understand the sometimes complex nature of the rules and regulations, policies and procedures created within bureaucracies. This view is supported by anecdotal information. There is concern that the reforms associated with implementing the National Training Framework may 'put off' some volunteers.

With the introduction of the Public Safety Training Package there is an opportunity to build in ongoing literacy and numeracy support with industry training. The Public Safety ITAB, through its WELL National Resource Project, is focused on delivering literacy support in a way that provides useful skills to individuals and also contributes to community capacity building.

The nature of the industry indicated that the neither the traditional rural and remote community literacy model (that is referral for reading and writing assistance for personal development) nor the workplace model (in which workers get literacy support while undertaking vocational training) would work. The community development model is an innovative way forward, marrying the best of the personal development heritage of the field with a sociolinguistic approach and developments in the National Training Framework.

While there was a lot of anecdotal data about the impact of inadequate literacy and numeracy skills in the industry, there had been little effort

to tackle the issue. Early work in WA through a WELL funded research project in 1997 established a need and drew attention to the reliance on poor quality text-based technical manuals and the lack of awareness of the issue among trainers.

### The Community Network Concept

The objective of the Community Network concept is to promote partnerships between volunteer public safety organisations at regional and unit level and local Recognised Training Organisations (RTOs) with adult literacy and numeracy expertise.

### The Pilot Projects

With support from the Public Safety ITAB, it was decided to co-ordinate and prioritise WELL activity in the industry to develop resources and training models as pilot projects before implementing the model more widely. It was recognised that work needed to be done to familiarise all the players with industry training and specific Training Packages. Like most of the community, the paid training staff, management and members have a perception of adult literacy as being about 'illiteracy', that is, a lack of personal communication skills, rather than the application of a communication skill to the workplace. A deficit model of literacy prevails.

The wide range of choices for WELL support enabled local CFA training staff to select areas that best met the training objectives of the CFA and their local volunteers. The Queensland SES decided to develop and trial an assessment tool for use at 'point of entry' recruitment to give an indication of learning support needs when new members join.

Other tools were developed and trialled at various sites in both pilots to gather data about current skills and to prepare a personal training plan. Training for the unit of competence 'Communicate in the Workplace' was provided in Far North Queensland. (See the article by Cathrena McRae on page 5.)

There is evidence to suggest that implementing WELL effectively in complex organizations such as CFA and SES does take time but is worthwhile. The 'Evaluation of the Community Network Model of delivery of Workplace Communication' recommended in its conclusion that DEST consider submissions from Public Safety agencies to implement the model with support from the Public Safety ITAB.

More information on the projects mentioned above is available from the PS ITAB web site—<http://www.psitab.org.au>

*Rosa McKenna*

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# 2003 ANTA Adult Literacy Innovative Projects

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## *Yeyo learns along with me*

A resource development project that will produce a manual and teachers' guide to assist mature-aged refugee women improve literacy skills around the practices of childrearing and childcare. The resource will have broad applicability and will be developed from workshops involving a group of mature-aged refugee women from Africa—VICSEG LTD, Maree Raftis (03) 9384 2544

## *Watcha talking bout—Understanding differences and identifying literacy within the community*

A project that will produce a video to assist Indigenous literacy learners by focusing on the appropriateness of both Indigenous and English language skills in a range of work and social contexts. Resource will include Indigenous persons discussing their personal experiences—Tropical North Queensland TAFE, Mary Brodie (07) 4042 2480

## *Numeracies in the Community*

A project to provide Aboriginal Education Workers with resources (CD and video) to assist Indigenous communities improve numeracy skills. Will focus on numeracies used in Indigenous communities—Dept of Education and Children Services (SA), Caty Morris (08) 8343 6500

## *Customisation of Cert 1 & 2 in Communication and Community for Nyoongar Community Patrol*

A project that will provide literacy and numeracy skills training for Nyoongar people to conduct community patrol work working with at-risk Indigenous people in Fremantle. The project will customise the Certificate 1 and 2 in Communication and Community Services.—Challenger TAFE, Douglas Thompson (08) 9239 8298

## *Never Too Late to Learn (NTLL) Pilot Project*

A project that will develop curriculum to improve ICT/literacy learning outcomes for mature-aged men using a range of flexible delivery options. Project participants will be men from the Narre Men's Group—Narre Community Learning Centre Incorporated, Kay Vreize (03) 9704 7388

## *Strategies to engage older workers in literacy learning*

An action research project that will produce a report outlining models of delivery, learning strategies, and training plans to improve ICT/literacy outcomes for mature-aged men. The project team will work with mature-aged men from the Hume Global and Meadow Heights Community Centres—Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE, Wendy Schwedes (03) 9375 2726

## *Older Learners and ICT—Strategies and Case Studies to answer Frequently Asked Questions*

A project that will produce a booklet that

through case studies, illustrates how mature-aged people have successfully engaged in and completed ICT training. The project will consider specific barriers to training including literacy needs, and will include input from teachers, trainers and trainees—Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES), Jan McFeeter (03) 9926 4686

## *What's that you said? Oral Communication, Learning Strategies and the NRS*

A resource development project that will provide trainers and assessors with a kit to help assess Oral Communication skills against NRS levels 3 and below. The kit will include a video and workbook—Centre for Adult Education (CAE), Philippa McLean (03) 9652 0717

## *Penguin Adult Enterprise Program*

An action research project that will enable persons from the Penguin community to enhance their literacy and numeracy skills to improve education and employment outcomes and personal esteem. The project fits within the Learning Communities framework and will result in a business plan being produced—Penguin High School, Liz Banks (03) 6437 2102

## *Working Connections*

A project that will produce a range of presentations to be broadcast on radio featuring adults discussing how they have overcome literacy barriers to achieve personal goals. The project will also produce a three CD set containing the radio broadcasts—University of Adelaide (Radio Adelaide), Tony Ryan (08) 8303 5000

## *Intergenerational ICT learning and literacy in a multicultural setting*

A Learning Communities project that will provide training to parents in the Woodville Gardens Community in the areas of basic IT and the internet. The project focuses on inter-generational literacy with a large proportion of parents coming from NESB and Indigenous backgrounds—Ridley Grove School & Woodville Gardens Preschool, Rosalind Jamieson (08) 8445 1530

## *Building Skills for Indigenous Governance*

A resource development project to produce interactive literacy and numeracy support materials to assist Indigenous people complete Certificate IV in Business (Governance)—The Learning Workshop P/L, Sue Muller (07) 4041 0299

## *Integrated Literacy Learning through Music*

A project that will develop support resources for teachers and Indigenous adult learners that will enhance the development of their literacy skills using music as a motivational and teaching/learning tool.—Skinny Fish Music Pty Ltd, Mark Grose (08) 8947 0376

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