contents

This issue: The state of the 'Education' in ALBE

Features

3 **Teachers for the learning society**
by Terri Seddon
An examination of the historical context for the current changes running through education and a look at a range of responses within the field to these changes.

8 **Working the Market: Shifting Boundaries and Practices in VET**
by Peter Kell
An analysis of how the VET sector has been redefined and how education needs to help with community building.

12 **Teacher education for adult literacy**
by Rod Maclean
A discussion about what sort of an education teachers need in a time of rapid change.

16 **The 'Education' in ALBE: Looking Back and Looking Forward**
by Jill Sanguinetti
A discussion of the various discourses which frame our teaching, and of the contradictions and dilemmas which the current climate presents.

20 **Learner Snapshots: education reaches out**
by Alan Brooker, Marg Simmonds, Judy Eland, Julie Bertram, Leisl Bruhn and Mary Hurley
Fine Print puts a number of questions to a broad range of educational sites about their different learner groups.

24 **By-Lines, Appropriation and the Big E in ALBE**
by Liz Suda
A discussion of bureaucratic appropriation of the language of Education.

Regulars

27 **Open Forum**
Some questions from within the field about the funding for youth Language and Numeracy Training, a look at the language of "Quality", and a reflection on ten years of VALBEC.

32 **Policy Update**
An example of the Managing Diversity Policy at work.

34 **Beside the Whiteboard**
Barbara Goulbourn talks with Nick Gadd about the ever changing roles she has had since the early seventies, and gives an insight into the possibilities within the field.

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Editorial

Throughout 1998 Fine Print has revisited the themes central to our field through examining concepts, understandings and current practices around the terms adult, literacy and basic. In this final edition for 1998 we address the most challenging theme to our field in the nineties - the one of education.

There is no doubt that our theories and practices in education are continually changing. The nature of teachers' work is intense, diverse and challenging - and nothing like it was ten years ago. What are the broad social and political changes that have impacted on us? How is our work different now? How do we as teachers position ourselves in terms of educational rigour? What is the state of teacher education? Are we becoming extinct? Who are our learners now and what do they expect? How do we judge success in times when training packages, competency statements and student contact hours dominate our discourses? What is important in the late nineties as we approach the end of a decade, the end of a century and the beginning of a new millennium? These are some of the questions we ask ourselves when we have a moment to reflect (and these opportunities seem to be fewer and fewer) and they are some of the questions that the Fine Print editorial group wanted to ask as we planned for this edition.

The articles in this edition of Fine Print carry many recurring themes - historical constructions of education theory and practice, the social and cultural contexts of (and for) education, the impact of the globalisation and marketisation of education, conflicts between definitions of education and training and the irony of attempting to measure success in education, which is viewed in holistic and learner centered contexts, in terms of current demands for 'competence' and 'quality'. Read Cathy Donovan's article which reports on a 'Focus on Quality' conference and highlights the new glossary for our field.

In her feature article Terri Seddon reflects on the 'clever country decade' and the shift from further education to VET and how teachers have experienced this as a process of "living contradictions between economic imperatives and their own educational commitments". More and more, Seddon suggests, teachers are using the rhetoric "to reassert teacher identities .... and reaffirm the cultural content of educational work".

Peter Kell refers to the "hollowing out of sectors" and the "gentrification of VET" that are, among other trends, key changes in post compulsory schooling in the nineties. He discusses the change of the teacher's role to one more of a sales representative seeking to make the 'big deal' in order to remain viable in their educational settings. Rod Maclean assures us though that the teacher is alive and well, and teacher education, while struggling with multi-faceted processes, has changed little in twenty years. He asks us not to be seduced by current policies and packages that will be forgotten in two years. He further suggests that we are strengthened by the amount of educational theory we have at our disposal now and the technical means we have to deliver.

Jill Sanguinetti discusses the shortcomings of 'performativity' as the new meta-discourse, but insists that we can survive it by reflecting on our pasts and being reflexive as teachers so we might find ways of creating new discourses of good practice and of working more confidently for the survival of the field. Liz Suda has discovered that her Education file was buried and she has relocated it under 'H' - for History. Much is to be gained from a historical perspective of education and it leads Liz into a discussion of how 'training', which has become such a part of our discourse, is opposed by education and lifelong learning.

In keeping with this dichotomy of training and education is the Learner Snapshots article, a series of responses from various providers about their learners, curriculum and definitions of success. These responses highlight for us, in a refreshing way, that education is holistic, and success is not necessarily driven by student contact hours and 'competency'.

A new and emerging context is the LANT programs funded by the now dismantled DEETYA. We wondered how these programs were going and how the referral system was working. We contacted a range of providers of LANT training and were disappointed with what we discovered.

This year marks 20 years of VALBEC, a milestone that was acknowledged at the VALBEC Conference. In this edition Past President of VALBEC, Bev Campbell, reflects on some of these years and presents us with a series of images which for her have been the markers of change, the indicators of development. She wonders now in 1998, about the marking images of adult literacy education for the next decade.

What do we want those to be?

VALBEC aims to lead the adult literacy field through identifying issues of importance to practitioners and facilitating positive change. This is achieved through networking, professional support, the sharing of information and the promotion of best practice.

a journal of adult english language and literacy education

Teachers for the learning society

by Terri Seddon

In this discussion, Terri Seddon provides a historical context for the current changes running through education and she considers a range of responses within the field to these changes.

It is easy to despair at the impact of the 'clever country' decade on Australian education. It began in the late 1980s with proclamations about the crucial role of education and training in making Australia globally competitive. It has ended with highly contradictory developments in terms of funding, governance, curriculum and the working conditions of teachers. But to see the clever country decade as merely a bleak retrenchment of education is to overlook the complexities of the period and to read its effects in a too narrowly educational way. My aim in this paper is: (1) to consider where the clever country decade has left us in education; (2) to identify educators responses to these 'clever' developments in order to identify emergent trends in education; and (3) to comment on the implications of these trends for teachers.

The 'clever country' decade

The clever country decade was shaped fundamentally by the ascent of Labor State and Commonwealth governments through the 1980s in a global context in which the rise of informational capitalism and the neo-liberalism of Thatcher and Reagan went hand in hand. It was driven by corporatist strategies and realised through microeconomic reform, industrial relations, the social wage and the 'new federalism', which promised something for everyone.

Education and training was promised a central role in microeconomic reform. Skill formation, skill enhancement, skill flexibility and overall training was to be a crucial means of overcoming Australia's endemic balance of payments problems and of enhancing economic restructuring. Growth funding expanded enrolments in education and training and extended access to groups who had been poorly serviced in the past. For example, adult education benefited from the expansion of operative-level training and the growth of labour market programs. Funding increased and, from being on the edges of education and training, literacy and numeracy educators found themselves mainstreamed in training reform.

Yet ironically, while the clever country reforms acknowledged the contribution of education and training to national development, the education industry was merely seen as an instrument in the process of economic reform. Education and its workers were to be used to achieve specific economic goals. Opportunities increased for some educators, but overall educators tended to be subject to, rather than participants in, the processes of change. The upshot of these developments has been a highly contradictory set of changes.

> **'the education industry was merely seen as an instrument in the process of economic reform'**

Their effects were firstly to transform TAFE to VET. This shift was significant because it turned a publicly funded sector of technical and further education into a specific kind of quasi-private vocational education and training provider. Further education sort of disappeared. The development of the training market spread the costs of training: increasing the individual private costs of education, diversifying the range of providers able to access public funds and institutionalising fierce competition for funding amongst providers. This diversification of provision was regulated through centralised competency frameworks alongside accountability regimes that preferred accounting procedures to expert judgement. Competency-based training tied to industry standards curtailed decision making on educational grounds in favour of decision-making informed by generalised abstracted notions of 'industry-needs' voiced through administratively constructed Industry Training Boards. Accountability regimes linked competencies and competitive funding arrangements. Public providers were decentralised, becoming self-managing institutions which remain highly dependent upon government funding. The impact of government cost cutting has therefore been decentralised, leading to policy compliance and internal restructuring to maximise performance per dollar.

However, these developments set contradictory trajectories in train which have further decentred and diversified vocational and further education. The training market and the availability of public funding via competitive-competency arrangements has continued to diversify the range and character of education and training providers. Cost-cutting and reductions in full-time staff, together with work intensification as those who remain try to make up for those who leave, has driven innovation in teaching as teachers have attempted to reconcile competing demands through the application of technology, workplace delivery, internationalisation and other reforms. Teachers and managers have inventively worked with and against the training reform agendas, reasserting the centrality of learning as they contextualised teaching to different groups in different contexts. These developments have meant that training reform has become less of a coercive agenda aimed at changing TAFE and more of a means of effectively managing national vocational and further education provision.

These developmental trajectories have also fuelled significant criticism of the clever country reforms. A central theme in this criticism has been directed at the way self-management has been institutionalised on the basis of abstracted decision-making and an extension of empty operational control, rather than affirming grounded decision-making and governance by those actually affected by education and training. There is growing criticism from enterprises and industry, as well as individuals and communities about neglect of their concerns. Such criticism has revealed 1990s marketised self-management to be very different to the more grounded community development form of self-management which developed in the 1960s and 1970s. It has raised questions about the viability of top-down versus bottom-up change, the relationship between centralisation and decentralisation, and the proper role of government in local and national development.

'teachers and managers have inventively worked with and against the training reform agendas'

Further criticisms challenge the notion of training reform and, instead, advocate lifelong learning as a preferable goal. The clever country decade confronted traditional academic and vocational education through its organisational changes and also through its emphasis on competencies as preferred learning outcomes. But as decentering and critiques of abstracted decision making continues, there are growing demands from industry, enterprises, students and wider community groups to acknowledge and create effective interfaces with 'knowledge in practice', that is "a live mix of information and concepts, coupled with the understanding necessary to apply them in everyday work" which is seen to be necessary for increasing productivity in a globalised economy (Field and Ford:1994:4). Trade with Asia, and increasingly diverse cultural flows into Australia through IT and education, have further challenged Australia's traditional monoculturalism in and beyond education. It has created backlash as well as educational developments which affirm the importance of sophisticated literacies oriented to cross-cultural communication and understanding.

In a variety of ways then, 'clever country' change has confronted the historical legacies of older education and training provision and those individuals who developed as teachers within its organisation. For some teachers this has been an experience of deinstitutionalisation as TAFE has been decentralised and quasi-privatised. For others, like adult educators, the clever country decade has been a struggle with institutionalisation as adult education has been mainstreamed. Irrespective of the trajectory, such changes have challenged teachers sense of self, their professional identity and their notions of 'good practice' in education. Some are appalled by these developments, others are exhilarated by the new opportunities to affirm their occupational activities.

These different attitudes map onto increased diversity in the teaching workforce as the range of education and training providers increase, as sessional and contract employment grows and as occupational entry requirements change. This fragmentation of the teaching labour market is producing a large secondary-labour market which is disproportionately female and transient, and a smaller primary-labour market of specialist teachers and managers. This fragmentation creates problems for teachers occupational networks, particularly unions, because different groups are driven apart (and often at odds) by the trajectory of change, leaving little common ground on which to build occupational agendas.

Now, in the late 1990s, the clever country decade is passing. In itself it destabilised what education meant and undermined commonly held views of what it is to be a teacher. Recent changes of government, their affirmation of conflictual rather than consensual models of governance, savage cuts to public sector activities - particularly those associated with previous Labor governments - and an increasingly unstable global environment have all added to the growing uncertainty about the direction of national and educational development. This uncertainty has been made explicit by the Victorian State Training Board:

> "In the 1980s and 1990s, training and further education has come to be defined in particular ways due to the policies of successive governments. These policies relate specifically to training and further education but also emanate from 'whole of government' approaches. Key aspects of these policies ... include approaches to teaching and learning, and the role of markets and quasi-market mechanisms in government. *It is increasingly clear that aspects of this approach are under challenge as an adequate basis for future development*." (State Training Board:1998b:14 - emphasis included)

In this context of uncertainty, what are the prospects for education and for educators?

Responses to the clever country decade

In my research, I have found that teachers have experienced the clever country decade as a process of living contradictions between economic imperatives and their own educational commitments. They are pressed towards income generation. They are subject to work intensification. They are expected to deal with a whole raft of new organisational demands: accountability processes, quality processes, various forms of management and the work of managing their own careers and employment conditions. And in the process, many report being forced away from their traditional core relationships with students and learning. In these complex processes, some teachers continue to commit themselves to the traditional parameters of being a teacher, but many others are living the contradictions in ways which take them into new and innovative forms of educational practice. Let me illustrate this point.

In a TAFE department, the remaining three permanent staff worked with sessional teachers coming from industry to develop a cooperative approach to curriculum development, pedagogy and assessment. The effect of this development was to meet the Institute's managerial and budgetary requirements and also extend educational opportunities for students and staff. Perhaps more significantly, the innovations served to realign the work of the departments so that its organisational axis shifted. The department became less significant as an organisational frame and staff began to see their contribution as being to the occupational community they served. They occupied a distinctive place in that community, producing knowledge through the engagement of industry-based and permanent teachers, disseminating knowledge as they inducted students into the knowledge and ways of the occupation, and circulating knowledge and expertise through the occupation more generally (Seddon and Brown:1997).

In a recent consultancy investigating staff development to support research in VET providers, there was considerable evidence of staff engaged in knowledge production for organisational purposes (Seddon and Malley:1998). CEOs in some VET enterprises approached research instrumentally as an externally imposed requirement. Other managers recognised that, in self-managing organisations, there was a need for site-based knowledge production to inform organisational decision making and, furthermore, this knowledge production provided a valuable strategy for staff development which benefited both individuals and the enterprise. Management of the enterprise increasingly became a process not of hierarchical decision-making, but of cooperative engagement which supported a culture of questioning and enhanced enterprise operations.

In a small private training provider, the managing director indicates that employers seek out her training provision because it makes a difference to their productivity and profitability. She is committed to an integrated educational approach to workplace learning which is rooted in the culture of the workplace and she asserts that these educational practices depend upon the professionalism of her teachers. However, she requires her teachers to develop their skills in crossing boundaries between educational and industrial contexts, dealing with the contradictory discourses of public service education and capitalist profitability in industry, and learning to use forms of organisation and reporting which accommodate the culture of workplaces (Waterhouse and Sefton:1997).

“there is growing criticism from enterprises and industry, as well as individuals and communities about neglect of their concerns”

Overseas there are parallel developments. The City of Birmingham, in England, for example, has defined itself as ‘The Learning City’. It is developing a sophisticated strategy for urban development which builds centrally on the capacity-building role of learning through life. Tim Brighouse and his colleagues acknowledge that education is fundamental to the survival of cities as civilised societies for all citizens. This approach refuses an individualising and abstracted neo-liberal strategy of ‘city boosterism’, investing in events, spectaculars, casinos and high tech industries to attract globalised, high-roller, high-investor, capital flows. Instead it acknowledges that a civilised society:

> “requires the priority of social cohesion to be set alongside the priority of economic growth. It highlights the tension between the human need for identity and stability in everyday life and the dynamics of rapid change and discontinuity characteristic of the developing global systems of production and exchange” (Birmingham Assist:1998).

In schools, similar pictures emerge. In England, Lawn and MacAnGhaill's (1996) research indicates that primary school teachers deal with the loss of a public system of education by refocussing their efforts on their own school workplace and its local community. Self-management has meant that they all act as managers as well as teachers. They all monitor and supervise each other within the workplace. The school as a social space has changed. The old boundaries of the public school place and the private classroom space have been reworked. Classrooms have become open to collegial surveillance while the school has become both more privatised - with security fences and increased regulation on who can enter the premises - and more outward oriented as the principal, governors and parents cross the school perimeter more frequently as they engage in building community relations, work with employers and participate in school governance.

In Australia, too, school teachers remain circumspect about the pressures driving them towards empty self-management and they work hard to refill centrally required administrative and accounting procedures with meaningful local content (e.g. Leggett:1997). Anne Morrow's (1995) description of schooling at Ballajura Community College in Western Australia reveals a school staff working with and alongside the local community. In the process, they changed not only the character of educational practices in the school, but also the axis of learning which reaches from the school out into the community and back again. Connell, White and Johnston's (1991) evaluation of the Disadvantaged Schools Program echoes all these trends. A little bit of discretionary funding went a long way when educational practices usually directed at individual students' learning were redirected along a school-community axis and oriented to the development of communities and participating teachers as well as students.

Emergent patterns of education

As these illustrations suggest, teachers have responded inventively to the contradictions of the ‘clever country’ decade. While some developments over this period have undermined solid educational work, its meaning and the moral authority of

educators, there is considerable evidence, at a grass-roots level, to show that the changing context is driving teachers to develop distinctive innovative practices which both reassert teachers' identities as educators and reorient their knowledge and expertise to current economic and social imperatives. In these developments we can start to discern common elements in what it means to educate and in what it means to be a teacher.

Affirming education as capacity building

The common feature in the illustrations is the way teachers are committed to educational values but operationalise these in ways which not only accommodate the imperatives and demands associated with marketised self-management but also exploit opportunities in the new structures to extend educational opportunities. As an associate director in TAFE commented, we "do business with an educator's heart".

Bob Connell (1995) argues that this educational value commitment is the defining feature of educational work. He says education is a distinctive form of work because it is oriented to the "development of capacities for social practice". It is based not upon the work of teachers crafting students, but upon a joint labour process, a process of co-production which is realised through the work of learner and teacher. The outcome of this co-production is the development of capacities for social practice both for the individuals involved and also for the collectives (nation, community, occupation, tribe) to which they belong. These capacities become evident as individual development: as learners gain in knowledge, skills and attitudes; and as they increase their capacities to act as members of communities. More significantly, this process of learning enables individuals to learn-to-learn in an ongoing and expansive cycle of activity, reflection, insight and understanding. Education enhances students and teachers capacities to act not just once off but in an ongoing way. And, as a result, this work of educating enhances not only individual development but also the collective capacity to act, a capacity which is, itself, a significant form of collective property for the society, nation, tribe, community or occupation.

'teachers have experienced the clever country decade as a process of living contradictions between economic imperatives and their own educational commitments'

Pursuit and endorsement of self-management

Teachers are taking up opportunities for self-management in order to better pursue educational agenda. They are using the contemporary rhetoric of self-management to reassert teacher identities, define pedagogical projects with particular learners and reaffirm the cultural content of educational work. This suggests that the legacy of the community development wave of self-management in education did become and remains quite well established, despite the more recent heavy-handed regulation of teachers and their work. This content-full self-management, pursued since the 1970s, has provided a range of cultural resources, embodied by many of today's teachers, which enables them to manoeuvre around regulatory requirements in inventive ways which enhance opportunities for learning and teaching. These resources have developed as teachers' work has been reshaped by policy changes and marketisation. Market pressures to extend student numbers has encouraged curricular, pedagogical and assessment reforms. Accountability demands have been reworked to support learning. Discretionary funding has opened up educational options that were otherwise unthinkable. There are downsides in these reforms, especially impacts on access and equity for students and teachers, but these issues mark the real limits of reform and become sites for debate, dissent and further innovation. More and more, the role of government in education is being questioned.

The remaking of educational spaces and relationships

Many of these educational developments are proceeding in relationships which extend beyond traditional educational spaces such as schools, TAFE and universities. Practical connections are being established between teachers and external communities, even where teachers remain on site. This reconfiguring of education spaces reworks relationships, bringing communities and networks which previously inhabited relatively distinct social spaces into articulation with one another. The effect is to destabilise those pre-existing communities, but also to create dissonances, enhance the stock of cultural resources and generate learning and innovation. Hybridisation of individuals and communities is one outcome. The reassertion of distinctive identities is another.

These reconfigured educational spaces and relations can create new learning communities. As teachers move beyond the boundaries of traditional educational organisation, their educational knowledge and expertise encounters community-based knowledge-in-practice, creating considerable scope for professional as well as community capacity building. These learning communities are not just local communities; they are shot through by globalising forces such as TV, the internet, worldwide goods and services - the popular culture of contemporary living.

Revalorising teachers knowledge and expertise

The reconfiguring of educational spaces and relationships, and the engagement of teachers with different communities, provide opportunities for revalorising teachers knowledge and expertise as worthy of reward. This revaluing is not just in terms of traditional academic and vocational knowledge which may or may not be seen as a useful resource, but in terms of their knowledge-in-practice relating to capacity building. Teachers know how to facilitate students learning and, more importantly, their learning to learn. Teachers are also powerfully multi-skilled as knowledge workers. Teachers

cannot only teach, they are sophisticated producers, recorders, organisers, appliers, disseminators and brokers of knowledge. The growing numbers of enterprise-based teachers illustrate this point. They are often taken on by companies to provide staff training in the workplace, but commonly develop a brief which takes them beyond the role of trainer - they train, but also assist in organisational development. Their discursive skills, multiliteracies and information management skills mean that they can cross boundaries, talking with CEOs and shopfloor workers, facilitating the work of management and change and providing support and advocacy for workers lower down in the hierarchy (e.g. Down:1997).

Reprofessionalising teachers

These shifting practices, relationships and spaces of education promote opportunities for teachers' lifelong learning. Stepping outside the educational domain is challenging. It requires teachers to learn new skills and capacities to act across community boundaries. This kind of learning is confronting and time consuming, but often rewarding. More importantly, such lifelong learning, which teachers are already engaged in, can go hand in hand with the work of revalorising teachers' knowledge and expertise as worthy of reward. There is scope for a professionalising project that builds upon changes arising from the clever country decade, teachers inventive responses to them, and the clear economic and social challenges facing Australia. Recognising teachers contribution to the learning society is its first step.

Prospects for education and educators

Despite the difficulties of the clever country decade, it has repositioned education and teachers in significant ways. As this paper suggests, features of contemporary educational work flag, perhaps, emergent trends in education and what it means to be a teacher. It suggests a possible future for education in which teachers share a common commitment to building capacities for social practice in many different contexts. It suggests that teachers might be more diversified than in the past, encompassing:

- specialist teachers working in dedicated sites of foundational education and training (e.g. schools, TAFE, universities);
- generalist teachers for the learning society applying knowledge-in-practice related to learning-to-learn and capacities related to knowledge work across a variety learning communities; and
- knowledge workers for the informational economy, enhancing productivity and pursuing sustainable development that is sensitive to human need by linking learning, work and organisational development in workplaces and other community settings.

The critical challenge for educators is to work out how this repositioning of education and teachers might be used to further educational agendas. This means recognising the contradictory outcomes of the clever country decade as part of an ongoing historical struggle for social and educational justice and identifying ways in which the common concerns of educators might be drawn together not only to advance learning conditions for all Australians, but also to establish viable working conditions and recompense for those who maximise learning. Importantly, this means that the invisible pedagogical capacities that teachers bring to learning, alongside their more obvious vocational or academic capacities, must be recognised and rewarded.

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Working the Market:
Shifting Boundaries and Practices in VET

by Peter Kell

Here Peter Kell argues that the redefinition of the VET sector presents a number of challenges for the field and for society in general. He concludes that unless education incorporates the need for community building, we face the danger of an increasingly divided Australia.

Some background

Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Australia has been subject to a continuous process of unrelenting and profound change that has reshaped many of the publicly funded Technical and Further Education and Training (TAFE) systems in Australia.

In general a number of key changes have been imposed on the organisation of the VET system in Australia that have redefined TAFE.

These changes have seen:

- The application of competitive tendering as a means of facilitating a "training market" where private and public providers compete.
- The growth of private training providers in direct competition with TAFE.
- Shrinkage for funding available exclusively to the publicly funded TAFE system.
- The reorganisation and fragmentation of public administration of education into purchaser and provider groupings as a means of establishing internal market-based relations. This positions government as a "purchaser" of training from a mix of "providers" in market where TAFE is only one of a host providers.
- The application of national competition policy to public providers with the notion of "competitive neutrality" to develop a "level playing field" for private providers and the option of "regimes of access" to public resources for them.
- The introduction of "user choice" as a means of directing training funds to employers to select their preferred provider and the location, nature and timing of the training.
- A move from institution-based training to site-based enterprise level training which includes the development of flexible delivery options to meet the training needs of employers and employees in the workplace.

Accompanying these changes has been a shift away from the concept of civic and community benefit for the common good, to an individualised exchange relationship as the core purpose of education and training. Collective notions of purpose have been replaced by a view of public choice where education is conceptualised as a commodity to be purchased. This market-based view of education and training has largely enjoyed bi-partisan support from Labor and non-Labor parties in Australia (Marginson:1993).

The changes associated with VET have profoundly altered the nature and character of the sector which has historically been dominated and shaped by the publicly funded TAFE system. The changes can be considered to be irreversible, ensuring that a return to the type of organisations that typified TAFE in the 1970s and 1980s is unlikely. While the newly amalgamated NSW Department of Education and Training would suggest the notion of a large public sector organisation has been revived, there are subtle trends surrounding such an organisation which mean that teachers and administrators are dealing with a different set of circumstances entirely.

Some trends in VET

Several trends suggest that the climate and environment in which VET is conducted has shifted considerably. These trends are:

Commodification and marketisation of education.

The interface that VET has with the business and industry has ensured that the marketisation of education has penetrated the core functions and principles of the sector. The organisational structures associated with VET now incorporate high levels of subcontracting, competitive tendering and the application of cost pricing formulas such as student contact hours. The organisational behaviour associated with the allocation of training resources have included the 'auctioning off' of student places in Queensland schools. Increasingly, the rationale in the VET sector is determined by constructed views of the market involving a notion of individualised choice and exchange value.

Education and training has been commodified into new social and cultural packages. The social and cultural objectives associated with education have been repackaged into lifestyle options and choices in new and unexpected ways. There is less emphasis on collective notions of access and equity and a greater emphasis on securing individual positional advantage and individual vocational advancement. There is a new packaging and commodification of knowledge which links to the notion of

'lifestyle' options. In this context education becomes a product to facilitate the attainment of personal acquisition of positional advantage through the accumulation of skills and qualifications. Broader views of purpose are obscured and educational organisations are increasingly in danger of being seen as nothing more than knowledge 'cafeterias' where participants are engaged in 'knowledge shopping'.

Hybrid organisations

The commodification of education and training is also reshaping the structure and purpose of educational organisations to enable them to respond to the marketisation of education. Increasing numbers of public training providers, including TAFE, are entering into strategic alliances and consortia with private providers. In this context TAFE and universities are increasingly generating revenue from non-government sources. The emergence of the "hybrid organisation" has blurred the boundaries between the concept of the private and the public organisation. In more extreme cases, these hybrid organisations are establishing private business arms which facilitate the shifting of public funds into companies where differential employment conditions operate, an alarming trend for unions (Kell, Balatti & Muspratt:1997). These business arms are also vehicles for the future privatisation of public training institutions in joint ventures. Increasingly the new hybrid organisations involve alliances with private sector multimedia corporations that facilitate global delivery of education and training programs. Most organisations are now embracing a global role that spans the provincial and the local

Hollowing out of sectors

The recent amalgamation of Victorian TAFE Institutes with Universities is an example of the hybridity of organisational structures and the consequent blurring of sectoral boundaries that have traditionally characterised Australian education. The traditional boundaries between schools are being eroded and 'hollowed out' so that the transition from school to work and university is increasingly indistinct. This is recently illustrated well by the initiative involving the multisectoral campus in Western Sydney involving NSW TAFE, Mt Druitt High School and the University of Western Sydney. The blurring of sectoral boundaries involves such hybrid arrangements as:

- VET in schools that provides AQF level 1 to 3 vocational education in secondary education.
- The accreditation of TAFE Diploma Level courses of two years credit in four year degrees.
- The entry of school students into university in years 11 and 12 as part-time students.
- The incorporation of private training into high school VCE programs such as McDonald's training in Victoria.

This intersectoral hollowing out has significantly eroded the traditional areas of TAFE provision, as private providers 'cherry pick' the most profitable areas of the VET sector, schools poach the pre-apprenticeship and entry level training and universities appropriate the para-professional and advanced diploma level courses. Under "user choice" apprentice training, the traditional core business of TAFE, will be captured by either single employers or clusters of employers and private trainers. There is a real danger that TAFE will be squeezed out of a major portion of post-compulsory education (Kell:1997a).

The gentrification of VET

Vocational education has traditionally been considered as the exclusive province of the working class or as an option for 'lower ability' students in schools. This has presented an image problem for TAFE and VET in being seen as the 'poor cousin' to the middle-class tertiary sector. In direct contradiction to the historic positioning of vocational education, ruling-class establishment private schools are increasingly resorting to vocational education and training as an option to broaden their market appeal.

Prestigious private schools across Australia are offering VET programs and dramatically restructuring their curriculum and studies programs to include such subjects as hospitality, engineering and computing. The appropriation of VET suggests that 'ruling class' schools are positioning their students for the discursive part-time casualised employment market and using VET offerings as a new form of 'finishing school'. These developments have seen a move away from VET associated with a working class apprenticeships to a wider catchment in service industries and occupations (Kell:1996). This gentrification is being reaffirmed by evidence that the bulk of the articulation traffic between universities and TAFE is actually from universities to TAFE as students seeks more practical vocational skills.

The deinstitutionalisation and deprofessionalisation of training

The policy settings associated with "user choice" shift training away from institutional classroom settings to enterprise-based delivery. The National Training Framework will use pre-produced and pre-packaged national training guides to meet industry competency standards that will be available at the cost of photocopying from a one-stop centre for training materials. Any registered training/assessment organisation will have access to these materials as well as any other publicly funded curriculum. The focus of training will be at the enterprise and will incorporate different forms of delivery such as coaching, mentoring and small group workplace project-based learning (Kell and Hill:1997).

Utilising the newly developed training packages, where both professional development and teaching and learning strategies are "unendorsed components", limits professional input to the assessment of industry competencies. Under these conditions, enterprise level training allocates a more critical role for site-based trainers without traditional educational qualifications (Kell:1997b).

The introduction of training packages and enterprise level delivery has the potential to dramatically change the nature of teachers' work and the professional qualifications required to conduct a more limited associated with instruction and assessment. Paradoxically, the moves towards deprofessionalisation are emerging at a time when the

rhetoric associated with the new technologies of learning are emphasising a more complex notion of learning facilitators and knowledge 'navigators' to work in settings where learning is conducted at the enterprise and in 'cyberclassrooms' (Lepani:1996).

From teacher to flexible trainer to sales rep.

The commodification of education and training ensures that the work of educational workers is subject to fundamental and profound change. Not only have the duties and expectations of teachers and trainers roles been reshaped by the training market, but the organisational and workplace relationships that teachers have with their employing agents been dramatically reshaped.

The role of education workers is split between meeting the demands of participating in education markets and delivering educational products needed for those markets. Marketisation has increased demands for teachers to be skilled brokers capable of negotiating and liaising the sale and delivery of educational products. This requires acute skills in negotiation, project management and mapping existing resources into customised packages or "deliverables".

> **'collective notions of purpose have been replaced by a view of public choice'**

These new roles have not replaced the traditional roles and interpretations of teaching, rather these new roles have been 'bolted on' to traditional roles of teaching. Instead of adopting new practices of teaching there has been an intensification of the work of teachers and education workers. The shift to new practices has been frustrated by traditional patterns and structures of organisation which are designed to control the work of teachers rather than facilitate and support their participation in new learning enterprises.

The patterns of employment in the education industry is also being reshaped by education markets. The demands for flexibility and responsiveness have led to the increased use of part-time and contracted employment of staff by public and private providers on short term contracts. In this context, the careers of education workers is now typified by "serial" and "simultaneous" employment with multiple employers. Issues of corporate loyalty, commercial confidentiality and the difficulty of a maintaining strategic long-term corporate memory in specialist areas assume a new and crucial role in securing market share (Kell, Balatti, Muspratt:1997; Kell, Balatti, Hill and Muspratt:1997; Kell:1997b).

The complexity of the employment patterns is also influenced by the tendency of providers to subcontract to each other and 'badge' courses through either private business arms or joint arrangements. Under such market conditions, akin to cartels, there is a tendency towards price fixing between providers employing teachers, which contradicts the rhetoric of the virtues of orthodox views of market competition.

The repertoire of skills required by education workers is increasingly contextualised by the need to effectively participate in education markets. Since the access to markets is commonly determined by individual networks and professional contacts, many education workers will have to adopt the behaviour more commonly identified with that of a sales representative seeking to make the 'big deal'. This is new territory for most teachers and requires capabilities and skills for which they have been poorly prepared.

Preparing for the new education model

The question of how to merge the skills associated with entrepreneurial teaching with aspects of flexible delivery is the subject of a recently completed ANTA funded *Framing the Future* professional development program conducted at Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE Workplace Communications Unit. Participants identified the need for a blend of skills and capabilities which facilitated level organisational capabilities and a broad repertoire of learner-centred practices. Participating teachers believed that success in the competitive training market was dependent on the ability of teacher to manage upwards within their organisations, establish covert coalitions and networks to find solutions, and solve organisational problems (Kell:1998a).

Teacher preparation and professional development urgently needs to incorporate opportunities and content to facilitate the acquisition of these entrepreneurial and political skills and capabilities which many teachers consider 'alien' to the culture of teaching.

These skills and capabilities are not new; teachers have traditionally required strong networking and political skills to survive in the bureaucratic maze that typifies many TAFE systems. However, the competitive training market reshapes teaching and learning into a more commodified exchange relationship and carries with it the danger of neglecting the social and cultural role of VET teaching.

Reformers need to be careful that social relations of teaching and learning are not collapsed into attaining measurable quantitative financial targets through narrow and decontextualised curriculum packages. The role of teaching is also increasingly in danger of being uncoupled from social and cultural transmission and is being viewed as an instrumental acquisition of the 'right skills' in disconnected fragments. There is a danger that both the quality of teaching materials and the teaching and learning process is being 'dumbed down'. There are already reports emerging in Queensland of employers 'shopping around' for registered training organisations to authorise their employees as competent without participating in any training. There are concerns that "user choice" could be little more than 'a flag of convenience' for shonky trainers and exploitative employers.

The reliance on decontextualised Training Packages could represent an instrumentalism and reductionism that does little to challenge and improve the status of training in industry and the community. As VET broadens to incorporate a greater diversity of student and client groups, there is an increasing need to be able to respond to the diverse learning needs associated with wide range of Australian enterprises in a multicultural community. Whether the packages will be robust and durable enough for multiple settings such as Yirrkala and Sydney is a big question.

Teachers, many of whom are suffering from terminal change fatigue, are also under pressure to utilise the new learning technologies associated with flexible delivery including on line learning and the 'cyberclassroom' with little or no professional development.

Toward a social and cultural agenda

Teachers are clearly aware of the need for a broader view of teaching which incorporates the social, cultural, communicative and micropolitical aspects of enterprise training. Key policy settings associated with the marketisation of education and training have also failed to develop a view of the community and link training to broader social and community goals.

The emphasis has been on conceptualising activity as areas to be managed to meet the needs of orthodox competitive 'markets'. These settings have ignored alternative views of economic activity which suggest that markets are the outcome of social activity that involves the building of alliances and securing of arrangements of mutual convenience. In such a community context, concepts of trust and reciprocity replace notions of competition and domination. Most importantly, this community view of markets provides a space for the members of communities and sees them as partners with other members of the community. Recent appeals for partnerships between schools, industry and local government are to be applauded, but they will only be thwarted by the tendency towards fragmentation if orthodox views of the market dominate (Kell:1998b).

Unless these demands for community building are met by the education and training system, there will be an increasing trend towards division, tension and fragmentation in the Australian community. Without a sense of cohesion and community there is little hope of an economy functioning productively and harmoniously.

In the light of the emergence of extremist groups such as One Nation, there is a need for education and training that does more than just skill workers; it needs to provide the foundations for the participation of the community in diverse harmonious, tolerant and productive workplaces. The current policy settings present the emergent inequalities of markets as immutable and natural and do nothing to contribute a greater sense of unity and direction. The challenge is now to recapture a broader view of purpose for education and training rather than the hollow visions presented by the disciples of the free market.

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Teacher education for adult literacy

by Rod Maclean

In this article, Rod Maclean discusses what sort of education teachers need in a time of rapid change. He suggests that we must continue to learn and reflect on our practice if we are to be part of a learning culture.

One sign of the professionalisation of ALBE has been both the expectation that teachers will have some form of specialist qualification and the increasing range of courses that seek to meet this expectation. These courses raise important issues not only for people like myself who have to design and teach them, but for the profession more generally. They challenge us to be explicit about the culture of adult literacy teaching, about what we regard as the characteristics of a good teacher of adults, about the relation of theory and practice, and about the way new teachers are inducted into the profession.

As Usher, Bryant and Johnston (1997) point out, our vision of what it is to be a teacher of adults is shaped by the contexts in which we as adult educators find ourselves. In many ways the context in which I work and which shapes my perceptions is similar to that of many ALBE practitioners. I teach adults vocationally relevant skills, I use flexible learning techniques, and I grapple with the best ways to use new technologies. I must deal with the conflicting demands of the conservative institution of which I am part, on the one hand, and a dynamic and fast-changing workplace culture for which I am preparing my students, on the other. And I am also trying to come to terms with those broader social forces variously referred to as globalisation or fast capitalism.

> 'our vision of what it is to be a teacher of adults is shaped by the contexts in which we as adult educators find ourselves'

My students enter a world where educational institutions play a less significant role in teaching and learning than the electronic media, communities and workplaces. In this world the literacy teacher is no longer the autonomous individual of adult learning or andragogy theory, but a team player, part of a network of employers, trainers and community workers. She is concerned not only with the learner, but with the learner's literacy context, working to ensure a fit between the two which initiates a process of ongoing change in a learning culture (Archer:1997; Gee, Hull and Lankshear:1996).

In this process it is my role to help people to become literacy teachers, and hopefully to have some influence over the sort of literacy teachers they become. Taking on a new professional identity is a complex and demanding business in which students are torn in many directions. I and my University colleagues are pulling them one way, experienced teachers in another, employers and policy writers in a third and fourth, and learners in a fifth. Judith Butler (1997), following a tradition of French theory, uses the term "subjection" to refer to this multifaceted process. The student becomes 'subject' to an organisation, must recognise its rules and disciplines, must learn to see the world in the same way as the group and to share its values. At the same time the student achieves recognition as a professional 'subject' who has power, who is authorised to make judgments which affect people's lives.

The process of subjection sets up many tensions. The values and disciplines people are forced to adopt as the price of entry into their profession may be in conflict with long established family or community values in a way that is documented by Roz Ivanic (1998). This conflict leads to anger and resistance (usually directed at the teacher educator) as students try to arrive at an accommodation between their new identity and their existing roles.

Another problem is coming to terms with the new authority, the new demands for public performance and for decision making that the professional role demands. As Stephen Brookfield (1995) points out, some teachers never get over a feeling of being an impostor, of not really belonging in their identities as teachers, and this can negatively affect their whole career.

Our teaching at Deakin

Our problem, in the work that I do here with my colleagues John Hodgens and Jennifer Angwin, is how to produce teachers and not just students, in other words, how to help my students to initiate or extend their professional identities as adult literacy educators, rather than merely to remain comfortably in their roles as university students.

The first step, especially for beginners, is to give them behavioural routines which allow them to get started, simple scripts they can follow in their roles as teachers. Butler (1997) (following Althusser) cites Pascal as claiming that the best way to achieve faith is to get down on one's knees and pray. Having to act in a role, however mechanically or artificially, is the starting point for establishing a identity. The action comes first, and the conviction later. Learning a new practice is always embodied, never just about words and ideas.

In order to establish routines, we ask students to design and, if possible, teach units of work. This places students who are just entering the field of adult literacy in the role of a teacher and helps them to create for themselves a practitioner identity. They start off with a simple set of consciously directed procedures which allow them to carry out their task in a clumsy, slow and inflexible way. Our hope is that as they become more practiced the procedures become less conscious, more automated, more differentiated and flexible, thus allowing for a skilled and smooth performance.

But there is danger in letting this process of skill development occur in an unreflective way. It is easy for teachers to get caught in a rut, with a repertoire of skills which allow them to get by, but which do not allow them to develop as professionals. It is for this reason that my work, like that of most teacher educators, is guided by a view of the teacher as reflective practitioner which goes back to Donald Schön (1983). Schön argues that the professional is different, on the one hand, from the theorist because she can act appropriately according to the unique characteristics of a situation rather than relying on rules or generalities. On the other hand, the professional is different from the craftsman because she engages in 'reflection-in-action'. Like the craftsman, much of the professional's knowledge is tacit and expressed in her actions and decisions. Unlike the craftsman, the professional is not restricted to a limited repertoire of skills inherited from tradition, but is able to reflect on her practices and change them when necessary.

This reflective practice is not carried out in isolation, but presupposes the existence of a professional or disciplinary 'community' which has a language and a history of shared experience to serve as a basis for talking about and changing its practices. Professional associations such as VALBEC provide one kind of forum where this can happen.

According to Usher, Bryant and Johnston (1997), teaching is never a matter of establishing in advance a set of goals and then working out the most rational means of achieving those goals. A practising teacher deals not just with externally imposed goals but with her own and the learner's values and aspirations. Her goals and actions will change continually according to her interpretations of the learners and the learning situation. Teaching is a constantly changing series of actions, interpretations and reinterpretations as the teacher acts based on her understanding, succeeds or fails, and modifies her understanding accordingly.

Our challenge, then, is to help teachers to develop both a basic repertoire of routine practices, and the ability to reflect on, criticise and progressively modify and elaborate these routines as needed over time.

'an understanding by teachers that their practices are historically constructed makes it easier to contemplate change'

One way we accomplish this second aim is to attach teaching practices to an explanation of their historical and theoretical origins. In many cases the routines of practicing teachers are tacit and unconscious and have been detached from their origins. An understanding by teachers that their practices are historically constructed makes it easier to contemplate change. Therefore we ask students to read about the history of adult literacy, to look at old curriculum documents, and to interview long-serving teachers. These tasks help them to understand how the varied activities and practices sitting in teachers' filing cabinets and workbooks contain the traces of the often contradictory theories, policies, and fashions advocated over the last three or four decades.

Stephen Brookfield in his book *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* (1995) offers adult and teacher educators four ways of reflecting on their practice in the form of what he calls 'lenses'. These are:

(1) our autobiographies as learners and teachers,
(2) our students' eyes,
(3) our colleagues' experiences, and
(4) theoretical literature. (Brookfield 1995, p. 29).

I find it useful to think of what I do under these headings, and hope that I also have the courage to use them to reflect on my own teaching.

Our autobiographies

Brookfield (1995) points out that what shapes us as teachers more than anything else is our own experiences. Our memories of what it was like to be a learner affect us at an emotional, subconscious level far more deeply than anything we might consciously learn about teaching. For this reason many teacher education courses include learning biographies and autobiographies which try to bring some of these experiences to the surface.

But it is not only childhood experiences which are important. I found it much easier to teach first-year students after I had a daughter who was a first-year student, and was able to see what was going on to some extent from their point of view. Brookfield gives the example of learning to swim as an adult to show the benefit for teachers of experiencing again the fear and humiliation of learning a new skill as a not very talented beginner.

It is very difficult for established practitioners to undo their professional outlook, to remember what it was to be a learner, precisely because for them their knowledge has become tacit and embodied in routines. Any attempt to force skilled practitioners to remember what it was like for them to learn can make them much better teachers.

Our students' eyes

One of the hardest things to do is to track systematically how students are receiving our teaching. Often intuitions about what they are feeling are inaccurate, and their interpretations of the tasks they have to accomplish are wildly different from ours. As I found out recently, if one waits to the end of the course to correct these misperceptions, it is too late to retrieve the situation. There is nothing which provides such an immediate stimulus to change and reflection as a set of honest, anonymously collected, student appraisals of teaching.

A task we set our literacy teacher education students to encourage them to put themselves in their students' place is a case study of the literacy practices and learning experiences of an adult learner or a group of adult learners. This task is described more fully by my colleague John Hodgens (1996). It allows our students to appreciate the literacy knowledge of adults who lack traditional schooled literacy. It also gives students the research skills to investigate and document literacy practices in the community and workplace, a skill which, as I noted above, will be increasingly necessary in the future as the role of the literacy teacher changes.

Our colleagues' experiences

It is important for teachers to be part of a culture in which they trust each other enough to share the difficulties they have with their teaching, to deal jointly with problems which may defeat them on their own. An important aim in our teaching is to establish for distance students a sense of being part of a community of practitioners by sending them out into the community to interview literacy teachers. I know this can be irritating for busy teachers, but I believe that a program of contact between experienced and less experienced is enormously beneficial, even if, as happened recently, a student decided after this process that he should go and try something else.

'it is important for teachers to be part of a culture in which they trust each other enough to share the difficulties they have with their teaching'

For the same reason, we also try to get students to work together, in some units asking them to collaborate via e-mail in producing joint work. This establishes patterns of close collaboration with other practitioners, and models the emergence of a more team-oriented approach which we hope will carry over into professional practice.

Theoretical literature

Formal theory is not something that guides practice, but a source of ideas to help practitioners review and extend their own practice. It should challenge and enrich the informal theories which all practitioners use to guide their own decision making. It can also be a stimulus to new teaching ideas, even if a little work is necessary to put the theory into practice.

Usher, Bryant and Johnston (1997) argue that a non-engagement with theory entrenches practitioners in a subordinate position, and cocoons them in a private world of 'craft' knowledge which is safe but unchallenged, until they are overtaken by external forces over which they have no control. In a similar vein, Brookfield claims that theory can operate for teachers as a form of Freirean conscientisation, linking "their private troubles with broader political processes" (1995:38).

All educational theory contains within it an implicit view of practice, even when it tries to disguise the fact, and teachers must be aware of the attempts of theory to impose an ideology by stealth. This is a particular problem when theory is based on a view of practice which does not correspond with a teacher's daily reality. Teachers of Koorie students, for example, have this kind of problem trying to implement learning theories culturally biased towards a view of the adult as an autonomous, self-contained individual. Brookfield (1995) suggests ways in which we as teachers can read theory, using the same sort of critical literacy techniques we might advocate for our students in order to resist its seductive oversimplifications.

In our teaching we problematise the link between theory and practice, insisting that theory is not presented in essay mode, but that it is put to work, interpreting the results of case studies, or as a means of justifying teaching programs. We ask students to use practice to interrogate and critique theory, and theory as a means of interrogating and critiquing practice.

Conclusion

When preparing this article I was asked about emerging new ideas in teacher education. In my opinion the nature of a quality teacher education has changed little in the 20 years I have been in the business, although we now have better technical means to deliver that education. What we do have now is better theories about teacher education and adult education generally, as I have tried to show in my discussion, and these theories will hopefully allow us to avoid some of the mistakes of the past. The main changes I have seen have been in what teachers do once they are qualified, and these changes will continue at an even more rapid pace. Our challenge as teacher educators is to train teachers for a role which may be unrecognisable by today's standards in 10 years time. This can only happen if we stay up-to-date in our teaching but are not seduced by current policies and packages which will be forgotten in two years time, and if we strive to ensure that our graduates are part of a learning culture and a learning community.

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The 'Education' in ALBE:
Looking Back and Looking Forward

by Jill Sanguinetti

In this article, Jill Sanguinetti discusses the various discourses which frame our teaching, and the contradictions and dilemmas which many teachers are confronted with in the current educational climate.

Addressing the challenge

What does the 'Education' in ALBE now stand for? Provision of general literacy, numeracy and basic education is no longer supported by Commonwealth policy and has been severely reduced. Training packages, which some suggest are the future for teachers, reflect a narrow, functionalist notion of literacy tied to the performance of specific work tasks. Spaces for critical and creative educational practice are diminishing. The field of ALBE, as a distinct field of educational endeavour with its own discourses of good practice, its professional associations, networks, and its 'culture', appears to be under threat.

How can we act to defend our notions of 'good practice' and take our knowledges, expertise and commitments into an uncertain future? How can we participate in shaping that future?

The marketisation of Australian society is undermining all areas of social provision, creating winners and losers and widening the gap between rich and poor. Adult literacy, which is underpinned by notions of welfare, equity and public responsibility for marginalised communities, has inevitably fallen off the agenda. Current policy directs public training resources to support the profitability of industry and neglects the needs of communities and individuals at risk.

I want to suggest in this article that we are not entirely powerless in this context. ALBE teachers are culture carriers of rich educational traditions and theoretical knowledges. By reflecting on those traditions and knowledges in our day by day practice we can mobilise and reframe them in the process of developing new ones. Becoming more conscious about the discourses which animate our educational thinking, will help us to take a more deliberate approach as we transform these in the course of every day practice.

We need to look back and inward, as well as forward, to reflect on how the field of ALBE has been shaped historically and how we ourselves, as a community of educational practice and as individual practitioners, are constituted by that history. By reflecting on the past and being reflexive about our individual 'positioning' as teachers, we might find ways of creating new discourses of good practice and of working more confidently for the survival of the field. Now is a good time, therefore, to examine and speak about the meanings, values and practices - the discourses - which have constructed the E in ALBE, and to find ways of reconstructing those discourses in the new context.

A word about discourses

The notion of 'discourse' provides some useful ways of thinking about the challenges which the field of ALBE is now facing, and a more complex language in which to represent our educational practice and current dilemmas.

Discourses are ways of speaking, ways of seeing the world, ways of being in the world. According to Foucault (1980, 1981) and many other poststructuralist authors, knowledges, social relationships, conceptual frameworks, practices, subjectivities and perceptions of self are all constituted in discourse.

Discourses evolve historically and socially in societies and institutions, and reflect the power relations which structure those societies and institutions. Social and political contestations are reflected in contradictory discourses which offer alternative ways of seeing the world. We live out those contestations when we challenge dominant discourses and claim different meanings, different ways of describing the world. An individual's knowledge, values and beliefs are constituted in the midst of a multiplicity of discourses which blend and contend in our language and in our practice.

As professional agents constituted in a particular field of practice, by and within its contending discourses, ALBE teachers are the carriers of particular meanings, dispositions and educational practices. ALBE has a complex history which seeps down into our language and professional subjectivities and finds its expression in the ways we teach. That history forms the basis of the collective educational understandings which allow us to talk about ALBE as a 'field'. 'We' draw on, reproduce and transform the theories, traditions, value systems, world views - the discourses - which constitute us individually, socially and historically.

Performativity: the new meta-discourse

The French philospher Jean Francois Lyotard (1984) coined the term 'performativity' to signify the meta-narrative of the globalising state. He defined performativity as,"...the

principle of optimal performance: maximizing output (the information modifications obtained) and minimizing input (the energy expended in the process)". The functions of the performative state are viewed primarily as technical, and managed so as to achieve maximum technical efficiency, in the interests of power. Performativity requires the State and/or company to abandon the idealist and humanist narratives of legitimation in order to justify the new goal: that is, the power of financial systems (1984:44-46).

According to Anna Yeatman (1994:110-116), performativity has supplanted paternalism as the principle which legitimises the control functions of the postmodern state and the ways in which the state contains democratic and social claims. She writes that performativity subsumes and transforms the democratising claims of the community within a managerialist rhetoric. Instead of the state being the enlightened and paternal command of shared community, it must establish technocratic systems to maintain its own viability in the context of the globalised economy, information overload and increasing social complexity.

Colin Lankshear (1998) has described the changes in the field of ALBE as reflecting the rhetoric, the dictates and the practices of performativity. According to him, performativity involves creating the sorts of skills among learners that are indispensable to the maximum efficiency of the social system in order to service the needs of the global marketplace.

The notion of performativity as a 'meta-discourse' infusing all areas of public policy and colonising the discourses of the past, highlights the enormity of the change that the field of ALBE is now caught up in. So pervasive is the discourse of performativity that it becomes naturalised in our thinking as an inevitable law of nature, while the older idealist and humanist narratives (which were until recently the socially-agreed basis of our work) are being eaten away.

Teachers, like others, have to work within the performative regime and conform to its requirements - to a degree - but teachers can and do resist in small but important ways, in the micro-practices of their everyday work. Many identify themselves with a growing tide of reaction against performativity (seen as the social effects of economic rationalism or neo-liberalism) within adult education and elsewhere.

The discourses constructing ALBE could be described in an infinite number of ways. Here I will briefly discuss three discourses of educational practice. Each of them is vulnerable to performativity, and each provides essential ingredients for developing new discourses of legitimation and of resistant 'good practice'.

Liberal progressivism

Liberal progressivism is a broad social and intellectual trend which can be related to the historical development of ALBE on the margins of mainstream educational institutions. Adult education in its historical origins (going back to the mechanics institutes of the second half of the nineteenth century) was the product of the philanthropic vision of middle class benefactors. Later, the workers' education associations (WEAs), formed by an alliance between trade unions and university extension departments, were committed to the education of workers as part of the political struggle for improved conditions and rights. Adult education was seen as a tool for self-improvement and self-fulfilment and as a means for improving society. The progressivist vision was thus both philanthropic and politically idealistic. That is, it was imbued with notions of welfare and a charitable concern for the more disadvantaged members of society as well as notions of education as a force for individual advancement and social progress. Progressivism was the metadiscourse of the rising middle classes at a time of rapid industrialisation, expansion and prosperity, which in turn required a cohesive and literate society.

John Dewey (1916) was a classical liberal progressivist who saw education in terms of fostering individual development through experiential learning as preparation for participation in democratic society. Progressivist theorists such as Rogers regarded teaching as being about 'real' interpersonal relationships and providing conditions which would facilitate holistic, experiential learning by the whole individual. According to Rogers (1969:279), education should aim to produce the 'fully functioning person' who would know both freedom and commitment.

Adult literacy provision in the community sector and access departments provided relative institutional freedom for student-centred, progressivist pedagogies to flourish. ALBE's progressivist culture evolved therefore in educational settings on the fringe of the mainstream, and under the theoretical influence of progressivist educational authors. Pedagogically, it was expressed in a focus on personal writing and encouraging students to explore themselves in the course of becoming more literate.

The early days of campaigning and advocacy by members of ACAL and VALBEC reflected a humanistic concern for those who were marginalised by lack of literacy, as well as a concern to bring about a more equitable and just society through providing literacy education to all who needed it. Those humanist and democratic impulses continue, but are now muted by the need to work with neo-liberal policy-makers and to be seen to conform, at least to some extent, with their agenda.

Critical literacy

The tradition of social purpose of the workers' education associations were rekindled in the 70s and early 80s, when adult literacy was one of many movements for equity and social change, and ALBE was emerging and identifying itself as a field. Paulo Freire's theory of emancipatory pedagogy took root: the 'banking' approach to education was eschewed

in favour of 'cultural action for freedom' in which teachers and students enter into a shared project of naming the world, and developing through dialogue the language and critical skills needed to participate in changing the world.

In the 80s, critical pedagogy developed further as a discourse about literacy as social practice. Hallidayan linguistics and the genre movement further developed the notion of education and social change in terms of providing students with socially appropriate genres of written and spoken language which would enable them to access power and to deconstruct and demystify powerful texts (Halliday and Hasan:1985).

The discourse of critical literacy belongs to a metadiscourse of the post World War 2 period when the global boom and political movements for decolonisation and social justice produced an optimism about the possibility of organising for a better world. It constructs teachers who regard education as part of a radical project of social transformation and change.

'The marketisation of Australian society is undermining all areas of social provision'

Professionalism

The set of understandings, values, theories and practices which have evolved in association with mainstream educational institutions can be thought of as a separate discourse, entwined with progressivist and critical literacy discourse. Trained teachers who became involved in adult literacy teaching during the 80s brought with them an explicit awareness of issues of pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and teaching methods, and an awareness of teaching as a developing craft which involved the making of complex situational judgements (Preston:1996). Teachers also brought with them a sense of their own industrial rights and conditions and a sense of a teaching 'profession'.

The professionalist discourse constructs the teacher as one who is reflexive about her own practice while developing her classroom teaching as a multi-layered 'craft'. It constructs the teacher as having institutional authority and therefore power, as well as having a set of professional ethics about how that power should be used. It constructs the notion of teaching as a profession, and therefore the expectation of professional autonomy in one's own practice, of a career path, financial security, and a degree of status. The discourse of teacher professionalism is underpinned by assumptions about the centrality of a literate civil society and a sphere of specialist intellectual and pedagogical expertise required to ensure the reproduction of that society.

Reflecting on the big picture

Performativity and the effects of globalisation are crowding out images of the literate democracy and social cohesion which previously were necessary for the security and expansion of capitalism. The discourses of liberal progressivism, critical literacy and teacher professionalism have no role to play in the global political economy: the language of access and equity, social justice, welfare and compassion seems strangely dated; deregulation and the competitive training market have marginalised teachers and make a mockery of the notion of ALBE teaching as a 'profession' for all but a few; and teachers' educational autonomy is an anathema to performative systems of managerialist control.

What has been the role of teachers and the professional organisations in this process? By aligning ourselves with the policies of 'clever country' and 'human capital' during the NTRA period, have we in some ways helped to delegitimate the earlier humanist discourses of access, equity and social responsiblity for the most marginalised members of the community? By throwing ourselves into competency-based frameworks, accreditation, and training packages, have we contributed to the commodification and technologisation of curriculum, to the point that the ALBE teaching profession may no longer have a significant role to play?

Perhaps now is a good time to revisit the educational discourses which have constructed ALBE traditionally, as we struggle to develop our pedagogies and come up with new and powerful arguments for significant, general provision of adult literacy and basic education.

Reconstructing our traditions

Performativity is the discourse of the globalising state governing on behalf of industry, big business and international finance. It is colonising the traditions, values and knowledges which give rich meaning to the 'E' in ALBE. Those traditional discourses and traditions, live on, however, in the minds, souls and bodies of individual teachers and in the narratives and common understandings which characterise ALBE as a field and as a community of discourse.

It is no longer possible to cling to, or to resurrect, the discourses and practices of the past, but in order to for us to resist performativity, to feed into change and produce new discourses of practice from the current turmoil, we may need to revisit and reconstruct them. By naming them and reflecting on their positive and their negative effects in particular historical and political contexts, we might find a basis for developing new, hybrid discourses of 'good practice' and new discourses of that will legitimate ALBE as a necessary form of educational provision for the whole community.

By looking back historically, we can see how deeply our ideas and development has been shaped by movements of the past one hundred years. Large-scale social and cultural movements have produced particular educational discourses which have framed the teaching of adult literacy at particular times. By reflecting on our own practice in the context of that history, we can better understand how we have been

constituted discursively, how we deal on a subjective level with the contending discourses and how we are both working within and resisting the discursive effects of globalisation.

In order to defend and reconstruct the Education in ALBE, we need to demystify performativity in all its aspects and produce a more sophisticated educational discourse. We need to find ways of connecting our practices at the micro level of teaching with the macro context of performativity and the globalising state. The recovery of a literate democracy and belief in the possibility of a better world have never been more needed. By looking back and building on the educational discourses of the past, we might be able to do our bit.

Jill Sanguinetti has a background in ALBE and ESL teaching. She has recently completed a PhD thesis at Deakin University, entitled, "Within and Against Performativity: Discursive Engagement in Adult Literacy and Basic Education".

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Coming issues *Fine Print* in 1999

Autumn Edition: Theory and Practice - where do they meet?

As the discussion in this summer edition so clearly shows, the ALBE field is under considerable strain in the late 1990s.

Things are moving quickly, but it is by no means clear yet just where the field is moving.

In 1999, Fine Print will be seeking to keep up with, and make sense of, these shifts to try and understand what they mean on the 'ground floor' where teaching and learning take place.

To this end, the first edition of 1999 will take a long, hard look at the question of just where Theory and Practice meet.

Of course, all practice is based on theory, and all theory must find an expression in practice if it is to be of purpose, but it is sometimes easy to forget, as we constantly respond to pressures from outside the classroom, that this Theory/Practice question is still at the very heart of what we do.

If you wish to contribute an article which adds to this discussion, please see details on the back cover about contributing to Fine Print.

Learner Snapshots:
education reaches out

Education goes on everywhere. Fine Print put a number of questions to broad range of educational sites about their different learner groups: Alan Brooker tells us about BEAT's work with youth in need; Marg Simmonds about the learners in and around Horsham; Judy Eland writes of her Family Literacy group; Julie Bertram gives an account of YWCA's JPET program for young women; and Leisl Bruhn and Mary Hurley describe what's going on at Western Bulldogs Training Centre.

Why are your learners there? Who is the learner? Define the learner and their needs?

AB Bridging Education And Training (BEAT) is a youth specific education program with a mandate to provide a service to young people most in need. These young people (15 to 24 years of age) are often disassociated from society's normal support structures – family, school, and the community – with this social disconnection often displayed through homelessness, drug taking, and offending behaviour. There are very limited education and training opportunities for such young people, and hence BEAT's existence. The educational demands of the young person coming to BEAT are considerable and the demands vary from person to person, for although as a group their homology is 'at risk', they are individuals whose needs are diverse, polymorphous, and often urgent. Of-course, poor experiences with previous schooling is a common factor amongst these young people, and for many the first step to re-engaging with education is coming to BEAT to develop their literacy skills.

MS Our learners are with us for various reasons. I like to think of Dorothy when trying to define 'The Learner'. Dorothy was at the old CES office when I overheard her conversation with the counter staff. It appeared she had recently lost her job in a small country town's newsagency. She had worked there all her life and was now in her early 40s and so this was a devastating blow - to the extent that she had lost all confidence in her own abilities and would no longer drive her car, and was therefore confined to the town. Caring for her aging mother was also a tie. She could not attend regular CGEA classes in Horsham so she participated in the CGEA courses I devised for small groups in small towns. After 6 months, Dorothy went on to VCE English by a similar method of delivery and then went on to garment construction at Box Hill TAFE. She is now working in the fashion industry in Melbourne.

JE The aim of the course is to provide language and literacy education to people who are not your traditional TAFE clients. Our learners are mainly women, some with children, who have difficulty accessing mainstream courses because they are carers, they have family responsibilities, or they might be shiftworkers. There are about 16 adults in a class group, and some classes also have children present for whom a volunteer tutor accepts the responsibility of providing activities while the teacher teaches their mothers. The Family Literacy program seeks to enrich the language environment of the family and encourage its intergenerational transfer.

JB The YWCA Job Placement Employment and Training (JPET) for young women is in its second year of operation. It is the only gender specific program of its kind in Australia. Our learners are 15-21 year old, disadvantaged, homeless young women. They have a myriad of problems; they might be refugees, substance abusers, unemployed, early school leavers, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, or rural and remote young women who are isolated from mainstream services. Their needs are many and include: safe and secure housing; training and access to labour market information; employment; health information; financial support; legal advice; and general life skills. Our learners need a great deal of support and they visit the YWCA because they often have nowhere else to go because other services don't cater for their needs.

LB/MH Our learners at Western Bulldogs Training Centre (WBTC) are indicative of ESL/Literacy students anywhere. They need support, a relevant curriculum and much speaking practice. Predominantly our learners are here because they want to improve their communication and technology skills before they re-enter the workforce. They believe that improved communication skills will enhance their chances of being successful at their next job interview.

Our learners are both male and female and range in age from 20 to 65 years. Many are long-term Australian residents who have much work experience, but their experience has mainly been in factories from which they usually been made redundant. Many have been unemployed for many months or years since and their faith in the employment system has been well and truly tested. Some of our younger learners have yet to experience employment in Australia and they also face the battle of keeping motivation levels high.

We also have students who are survivors of trauma and torture and who therefore need much support and understanding.

How do you attract the learner to your program?

AB BEAT prides itself on being able to engage even the most difficult of young people through its individualised and holistic approach to education. BEAT has a mandate to develop programs around specific needs, and hence can connect with the learner through interest-based and negotiated curriculum. Because of the immediate needs of BEAT's core clientele, a Case Management approach ensures that issues such as

homelessness and drug-taking can be effectively identified and responded to. It has been our experience that unless these issues are dealt with, the young person's education program will not succeed. BEAT also operates within a safe and friendly environment, using small group and one-to-one tuition and offering each student 'open door' access to maximise the trainer/trainee interface.

MS Learners have been referred by other organisations. e.g. Job Match, Group Training, Community Care, Corrections, Drug and Alcohol Rehab, Commonwealth Rehab etc. They have seen our ads and have taken the plunge to contact us on their own initiative. Often they have a friend or family member who has given them a little push in our direction. In one embarrassing incident I chased two innocent Indian ladies down the street crying, "Do you want to do a TAFE course?", only to find out the next day that they weren't the actual inquirers! However they enrolled in CGEA for 6 months and went on to do a Diploma in Childcare! We find that advertising in local newspapers is an excellent form of attracting learners as is use of our local network of people in small towns. Word of mouth is still the best method, but of course it takes time.

JE We make it easy for the learner to attend, and we can take the class to them if required. Activities for children are offered, as is childcare if needed. Participants can pay gradually if this suits ($40.00 per year). The host agency shares responsibility for recruiting course participants.

JB We have a number of strategies. We actively market the program using brochures, postcards, etc. as well as through media advertising on TV, radio and in newspapers. We get a lot by networking out in the community and many people hear about us by word-of-mouth. Through this networking, we also get referrals from organisations we have developed a solid reputation with.

LB/MH WBTC attracts its learners in various ways, but predominantly they are referred to us by word-of-mouth. Our current students, as well as former ones, have referred family and friends in similar situations. As WBTC is becoming widely known within the community, more of our learners simply walk through the door.

WBTC also uses the traditional recruiting measures such as placing advertisements in local newspapers and on ethnic radio, as well as having contact with the various job network agencies and employment consultants. We also make contact with other providers so e can refer students on and vice versa.

How do you keep them engaged? What teaching strategies do you use? How do you make your decisions about what to teach and how to teach it?

AB Some of this has been answered in the response above. BEAT's principles of client-focussed delivery and responsible, and responsive, management, support a dedicated teacher group whose task of working with a wavering and formidable clientele cannot be understated. BEAT pedagogy is very much about partnerships and as such to maintain a student's engagement with BEAT involves commitment, innovation, tolerance and patience (from the teachers) and a willingness to try (from the students). Of course, there are still programs with funky names and attractive outcomes for young people, but of equal importance are the processes undertaken along the way, for it is these that develop good learning habits amongst young people for whom educational achievements have been almost non-existent.

MS These questions can be rolled in to one. I do an initial assessment/interview with the prospective student and in that time find out their background their skill level and their fears and ambitions, and place them accordingly. Sometimes finding a suitable time for sessions can be difficult. Teachers in all programs are generally very experienced and are briefed about each new student. Our basic philosophy is that learning should be enjoyable. We also ask students to reflect back on their initial feelings if they become despondent with their progress. What we teach is dependent on the students needs, and may include reading, writing, spelling, numeracy, preparation for entry tests or whatever. How we teach it depends on the location of the student and what service we have available. Generally students are in small groups doing their own specific work. They may sometimes interact for certain tasks (e.g. hearing each others spelling), but generally it's an individual program.

JE Our approach is 'Direct-Adult, Indirect-Child', based on the premise that adults who become more literate positively influence their children's language and literacy skills (see Ruth Nickse's model of family literacy teaching). The style and content of each group develops in its own unique way and is influenced by the needs of the group, the space and facilities available and the number and age of the participants and children. ESL children develop vocabulary, language and school skills, and parents gain ideas about how to provide activities for their children at home. It is important to avoid the imposition of a narrow value system, to recognise individual parent's skills and knowledge, and to be careful to differentiate the methods used for adults as compared to those for children.

JB We deliver a positive, energetic, personable, informative, client-centred service with follow up support and access to a diverse range of services. Our client-centred approach is adult orientated and we find that using humour is an important strategy for keeping them engaged. Decisions about what to teach are generally made after individual assessment before they start in our training courses, and there is ongoing verbal or written feedback from clients.

LB/MH Our students are engaged mainly by making the curriculum documents we teach from relevant to their needs and by the students recognising their achievements - a sense of achievement throughout the course is vital for motivation.

Collective decision making by the teachers and learners about teaching strategies employed makes the curriculum

more learner owned and driven. We make decisions about what we teach by consulting the curriculum document, but we modify it to individual learner requirements. Where possible, real life learning situations are used to teach particular learning outcomes.

Our learners already have many skills that we can RPL. This frees up the curriculum so we can incorporate many other areas the learners identify as important such as going to see a movie, visiting the electoral education centre, visiting the zoo, etc. - all opportunities for the learners to participate in conversation and thus participate more fully in workplace situations.

How do they leave? What change has taken place in the learner? Where do they go next?

AB BEAT is funded to deliver only 26 weeks of training to its students. There is no doubt that, for many, this time is inadequate. Not all young people leave BEAT ready to take the next step with education, training or employment, and this is of great concern. But many do leave with a new attitude to learning, to school, to teachers, and with a belief that they 'can do it'. Some do not complete their course, yet they leave committed to continuing education. Others leave with a degree of frustration, for pathway opportunities are often minimal for these young people, and although their gains may have been significant, so too are the barriers to employment.

Statistically, BEAT can report that 25% of its students return to school, usually to attempt year 10 or VCE. With a bit more time, and a greater willingness from schools to enrol these young people, this figure would double. 15% of BEAT students articulate into training or further education, and approximately 15% enter into the workforce within three months of exiting the program.

MS Students leave when they feel they have accomplished what they needed; in other words, when their needs have been met. Some students find the experience so enjoyable that they continue in their program past their initial need base. Some learners feel they are now able to achieve whatever it was they wanted to do - maybe being able to take phone messages, read the menu in a restaurant, write to their child's teacher, get their drivers licence, or sit for entry tests for some area of employment. Many students go on to mainstream TAFE courses in Childcare, Fashion Art, the Welfare/Disabilities area or Business.

JE Adult participants achieve an increased confidence in their ability to assist children with homework. There is also an increased participation in wider community/political processes, and some have gone on to enrol in TAFE classes.

JB Our clients leave either voluntarily or when the desired outcome is achieved. More often than not the learner has achieved better communication and interpersonal skills - and these can be formally measured by the gaining of a certificate and a resume - but there are more intangible changes such as better self esteem and a more positive and confident attitude. Many of our learners move into TAFE courses, while others gain employment or enrol in traineeships.

LB/MH So far this year our students have only left if they have found employment or there has been a change in family circumstances which has required them at home e.g. childcare. The majority of students have continued studying right throughout the year.

Many of the students have given up on full-time employment and wish to return to WBTC in 1999, however the difficulty we face is that the types of course we have received funding for are too prescriptive for the needs of the ESL student. Many of the students are interested in attending 'old fashioned' ESL classes; they want to talk about current events, go on excursions, etc. They want to learn from each other and their teachers with some grammar and vocabulary thrown in - basically they want to participate in their community. Competency Based Training is limited and prescriptive - language learning is about all of the above and is not about "Is able to ..." statements.

How do you judge whether you have been successful with the learner?

AB 'Success' can be measured in a number of ways. Certainly for funding bodies (e.g. DEETYA) it is defined by the quantitative benchmarks - the number of course completions, the number of apprenticeships obtained, the number of drop-outs and so on. But for BEAT clients, actual attendance followed by a level of participation are early factors that indicate success. On-going connectedness is a measure of success, as too is attitudinal change, or perhaps an improvement to a young person's circumstances. Success for many of these young people might be framed in the immediate present - receiving peer approval for a piece of artwork for example - but it also lies in the future, and as impossible as it may be to measure, the impact of positive learning experiences upon the later lives of young people cannot be denied. This is the 'value-added' contribution of positive learning, both to the learner and the community.

MS You have been successful with a learner when there has been some positive outcome for them. Sometimes it's only infinitesimal; but at other times it's earth shattering. The trick is to recognise it when you see it and to work out whether you need to document it in some way

JE The program's outcomes are supported by research that indicates parents are strongly motivated to improve their own skills in order to help children, literate parents create literate home environments and positive attitudes to education, and parents are more confident when their own literacy levels are higher.

JB We are well aware of our success rate with our learners by keeping in consistent contact with them - we know if they have got a job because they tell us. Often we will receive a

'thank you' letter from a learner saying how much they are enjoying the course we paid for them to do.

LB/MH The completion of assessment tasks indicates student success, but we rely on student responses to our courses to judge if we are successful or not.

Natural attrition occurs in any course, however we can evaluate the success or otherwise of our courses by our student retention. The only students we have lost in both courses are those who have found employment, those whose home circumstances have changed and one student who 'disappeared'!

Another way we judge our success is through word-of-mouth. Feedback from the learners is vital and our learners tell us how they are feeling and whether or not lessons are helpful or otherwise. A highly valued former learner who is now employed by the WBTC also relays the thoughts and feelings of the group to the teachers.

Alan Brooker is the coordinator of BEAT, Marg Simmonds is Literacy Field Officer for the Wimmera, Judy Eland is in the Community Education Department at VUT, Julie Bertram is Programs Manager at the YWCA, and Leisl Bruhn and Mary Hurley are ESL teachers at Western Bulldogs Training Centre

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By-Lines, Appropriation and the Big E in ALBE

by Liz Suda

Liz Suda appropriates herself for the sake of Education

Bob Keith rang me a few weeks ago and asked me if I would like to contribute something to this issue of Fine Print on the 'E' in ALBE. Hmm, I thought, what have I got to say about this thing called Education. Haven't I already said enough? And didn't I have a similar conversation with a previous Editor of Fine Print on the subject of whether I had anything further to say? I said as much to Bob and told him about my monstrous timeline for the following weeks filled with: submissions to write, audits to prepare for, accountability forms to fill out, statistics and student satisfaction surveys, assessment tasks for moderation, data bases and my search for the perfect fire-proof box that we are required to have in order to "archive" our records. When in this job did I have time to read about Education and write articles about the 'E' in ALBE for goodness sakes? He was sympathetic, but tried to reassure me by saying that it may not be so hard because some of the things I'd said in the past fitted well with the themes the editorial committee wanted teased out in this issue. We talked a little more about the subject of the 'E' in ALBE and of course I got interested again in joining in the dialogue and then…well…maybe I could just tell a few stories and do a bit of a cut and paste.

Does this by-line ring any bells? Do you feel like you've read something similar? Perhaps Robert Hughes the reputable arts critic and I have got something in common after all. He got himself into quite a lot of trouble recently when he inadvertently borrowed the by-line of Patricia MacDonald, a lesser known art critic, when reviewing the same work she had reviewed months earlier. He apologised profusely excusing it as a sub-conscious error, an idea that appealed to him at the time and which thereafter floated like a tantalising morsel in his psyche before it emerged some months later as an inspirational introduction to an article about the exhibition of American landscape painters. It's funny how original ideas are so hard to come by these days. It's the post-modernists' perennial dilemma; to appropriate or not to appropriate, that is the question.

Helen Demidenko/Darville had no qualms about appropriating other peoples words, ideas and even identities. They gave her an award for it. So I'm not apologising to anyone for what I'm about to do which is nowhere near as bad as pretending you're Ukrainian, which I almost am, and a writer, which I'd like to be. I'm going to borrow some morsels from previous articles I have written in order to reflect on what it means to be a teacher, an Educator of Adults, a proponent of the discourse of lifelong learning in an environment where increasingly the words are the same but what they mean seems to be changing.

What does it mean when DETYA calls for research into "Lifelong Learning" or when OTFE talks about "Quality" but is only interested in student contact hours and how much it cost to get them. Is this appropriation of another kind? A new form of moving the goal posts but still painting them white? And where are the headlines saying, "GOVERNMENT CAUGHT IN APPROPRIATION WRANGLE WITH ALBE EDUCATORS"? And when are we going to hear a voice on the television reading the news item, "The minister for Education today apologized to the ALBE field for the misappropriation of key concepts sacred to the field in a bid to ward off attacks from the public." A science fiction writer I'm not. Perhaps a bit of Jungian dream analyst - symbolism is a powerful tool.

> **"where are the headlines saying, "GOVERNMENT CAUGHT IN APPROPRIATION WRANGLE WITH ALBE EDUCATORS"?"**

You see, I'm just walking the tightrope while juggling the variables, working the fringe, trying to keep all the balls in the air while the powers that be keep changing the length of the wire. I'm just a hard working practitioner trying to get on with the big E while all the time I keep being asked to quantify, evaluate, justify, keep good records and meet the requirements for Good Practice and financial viability. It's funny isn't how these words "quality", "good practice" and "pathways" are now being used to prevent us from actually getting on with the job of educating. It's not that I don't love a nice neat filing cabinet, chronologically ordered and ready for inspection at the drop of a hat. Don't get me wrong, my records are perfect (except I confess I haven't got that fire proof box together yet), it's just that the Education file seems to be buried somewhere - or perhaps it's accidentally been misfiled under 'H' for History.

The thing is I went off searching under 'H' for Education and came up with the name Harris - a fellow educator who had some interesting things to say about Education and big and little 'e's. I quote from an article in Fine Print some years ago where I was asked to review a book that had influenced my teaching practice - it was Kevin Harris' book *Teachers and Classes* (a perennial favourite with a quotable quote on every page) that I thought provided a solid theoretical framework for theorising about teachers work:

"I suspect very strongly that the propensity for teacher failure, while it might vary slightly according to particular contingencies, is deeply inherent within the very structure of schooling under capitalism, such that teachers, by and large, are destined to fail." (Harris:1982)

Harris argued that education in it's truest sense was not available to everyone - that it wasn't in the capitalist system's interest to have everybody educated. He provided a Marxist analysis of schooling within the Capitalist system. These ideas are quite dated now as economic rationalism has superseded capitalism with a kind of meta-capitalism that makes everything that went before seem like revolutionary socialism. It's Ironic that at a time when industry seems least interested in maintaining a workforce, it appears to be far more interested and actively involved in what goes in schools, universities and TAFE colleges than it ever was when it actually required a workforce. Some may think Harris belongs in the history file along with Marxism, but I find myself returning again and again to his concept of big 'E' Education:

"Education, he theorises, serves an explicit utilitarian socialisation purpose as well as the more altruistic goal of the development of individual human intellectual and ethical capacities which he distinguishes as Education with a capital E. He argues that what happens in schools is schooling rather than education and that "schooling is antagonistic to, rather than compatible with Education". The "failure to Educate" is as a result of this hidden curriculum of compliance with the dominant order. So whilst we have been trained as teachers to believe that our role is to Educate, in practice what we do is serve the needs of a system which regards productivity/ profit as its primary goal." (Suda:1996).

"these words "quality", "good practice" and "pathways" are now being used to prevent us from actually getting on with the job of educating"

In fact, going back even further into the history file, I recall the first tutorial I attended in the M.Ed. Course at Latrobe University back in 1986 when our lecturer asked us to distinguish between what it meant to 'educate' as opposed to 'train'. "They are interchangeable terms", a few ventured, after a few moments of stunned silence. "They're just different words for the same thing", a few others quipped uncertainly. Our lecturer was an educator from the old school who loved to explore ideas fully, turn them inside out, get to know them really well. I wouldn't have believed that you could spend two hours defining just two words, but we did, and they were two very illuminating hours I can tell you. The conceptual framework developed through this discussion has proved an invaluable tool in critical analysis on a number of occasions. For example, this quote from "By whose Authority do we speak?":

"Robin Shilton (1994) is right to be concerned by this quote from an STB discussion paper:

'The difference between informal learning and accredited training is that in the former, opportunities to obtain recognised competencies may occur spasmodically, and trial and error may hinder learners from making efficient use of those opportunities.'

Deconstruction of this statement poses a number of different problems. In particular the juxtaposition of "training" and "learning", "informal" and "accredited" provide food for thought for practising educators. The argument as stated is that it is much more efficient to "train" someone rather than to let them "learn" something. Well is it? One can train people in skills but one can't train them into having realisations, making connections and employing critical thought processes to ensure portability of skills in different contexts.

It is obviously more efficient for someone to show you how to operate a new machine than leave you to flounder for a couple of hours trying to find the right button through a process of trial and error. Who can argue with the 'efficiency' of such training? And it is true, there are many such competencies people can be 'trained' to do. But what about 'education'? The development of mind and concepts, the ability to adapt what one knows to different contexts, transferable skills?" (Suda:1996).

This argument is still very relevant in the current climate where the ALBE field is increasingly being asked to deliver training rather than education; where increasingly our practice is reduced to definable competencies rather than the broader and more difficult task of educating people to be independent learners with developed critical faculties and a body of conceptual knowledge that can be applied to a range of learning situations i.e. what has traditionally been referred to as getting educated.

The economic rationalisation of the education sector continues unabated and we are increasingly expected to do more for less in the name of Total Quality Management (TQM) and "cost effective project outcomes" based on the attainment of prescribed competencies. A recent paper from the National Training Authority evaluating the system of competency based reforms, highlights a number of shortcomings in the approach. The report, however, is only able to evaluate the reforms within the context of its own framework. The competency framework is not in question but "cost effective improved outcomes" are widely sought. One of the key problems, the report states, is that trainers have not understood competency-based approaches adequately enough to successfully implement them. The drivers are being evaluated here rather than the vehicle itself.

One of the fundamental underpinnings of the competency-based movement is the idea that if you can get someone to demonstrate competence in one situation i.e. through successfully completing an assessment task after a training session, that they are then 'competent' to perform this task in a multiplicity of situations where this skill is required: Joe was able to write a report using the proforma we spoon fed him during training, therefore Joe has "developed report writing skills"; Mary demonstrated the ability to work in a team during the simulation game, so Mary "can work in teams". So why is it that when Joe's back on the shop floor he doesn't demonstrate these skills at all? It must be Joe's fault, or the trainers, but certainly not the nature of the training package or the assessment task, or the idea that it is actually possible to 'acquire' competence through a couple of days of 'instruction' - we'll just pop down to the supermarket and get a couple of tubs of "working in teams" and "writing reports" off the shelf and all will be well.

And this of course is where we get back to Harris and the notion of Education. I mean, Robert Hughes is an educated man isn't he? A man of letters and high reputation. How did he learn to be a competent Art critic? Which 80 hour module did he complete to qualify as Art critic extraordinaire? And should he be judged incompetent because of one 'sub-conscious' appropriation of another's work? And did I just become a competent language and literacy assessor after doing a two day Workplace Assessor Certificate earlier this year? Mary Jane, who did the course with me, got the same certificate - except she's never done a literacy assessment in her life or taught a class of adults, or children for that matter, but somehow we are equally 'competent'. Well at least that's what the paper says. This is why I get a bit confused about what these words all really mean. You could be forgiven for thinking that you are on a Hollywood film set where the facade looks like the real thing but there's nothing substantial behind the neat glossy exterior - form without substance.

In my last article for Fine Print, "Life long Dialogue - Talking that's hard yakka" (Suda:1997), I was playing with the idea that lifelong learning is really a long conversation that we have with a whole range of people throughout our lives that helps us to order and build on knowledge and experience. It is the dialogue that helps us to connect knowledge and experience. It is the dialogue that facilitates the transferability of skills that we develop in both formal and informal learning situations. Becoming Educated is a lifelong process and it doesn't just happen in the classroom. It is an on-going process of development that involves "Multiplicity, Connectedness, Critical Intelligence and Transformation" (Bradshaw 1997).

"without the solid underpinning of the pursuit of Education they are unlikely to achieve "cost effective outcomes""

We are very fortunate, as a field, to have a conceptual artist of the calibre of Delia Bradshaw who's most recent work for the Adult Community and Further Education Board, *Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities*, is a blueprint for adding substance to the current VET agenda. This document appears as an illuminating gem in a sea of policy documents filled with empty rhetoric. It is a document which rescues all that is good about the 'E' in ALBE from the dustbin of History and places it firmly on the agenda for education in the 21st century.

Take heart fellow practitioners, all is not lost by a long shot, no matter how snowed under you feel with the barrage of glossy Hollywood sets. There is still much substance underpinning our practice. There are teachers in classrooms throughout the state Educating adults despite the bureaucratic nature of accredited curriculum, the restrictive nature of competency-based training and the empty rhetoric - people committed to making a difference. The powers that be can appropriate all the words of meaning and substance that exist in our field. They can talk about 'good practice' and 'life long learning' and even 'competency', but without the solid underpinning of the pursuit of Education they are unlikely to achieve "cost effective outcomes". On the contrary, a lot of money will be spent on Hollywood style sets that will look pretty shabby in new millennium.

Liz Suda coordinates the Flemington Reading and Writing Centre.

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Open Forum

In this edition's Open Forum , the Fine Print Editorial Group raise some questions from within the field about the funding for youth Language and Numeracy Training, Cathy Donovan takes a look at the language of "Quality", and Bev. Campbell offers us her reflections on ten years of VALBEC.

LANT: where are the students?

The new Literacy and Numeracy Training (LANT) program for unemployed young people has made a slow start. Many training providers in Victoria and other states are reporting that they have received very few or no referrals. In spite of this, they stand to receive millions of dollars of funding.

The LANT scheme is a plank in the federal government's mutual obligation scheme. Young people must participate in some kind of work or approved activity in order to receive benefits. They can choose activities including work for the dole, environmental projects, and literacy training. It seems that very few young people are opting for literacy.

> **some providers are frustrated by the lack of referrals but are proceeding anyway**

The AMES consortium, which successfully tendered to provide literacy training for hundreds of young adults across Melbourne, had received only three referrals by early November. Other providers, public and private, contacted by *Fine Print* reported similar figures - a number have received no referrals at all. As funding for the first year of the scheme is guaranteed, the providers still stand to receive millions of dollars between them. However, this is neither providing employment for teachers, nor education for young people.

When Employment and Education minister Kemp launched the scheme in July, the government claimed that $143 million would be invested so that 36,000 young jobseekers would receive literacy training. That figure now looks wildly optimistic.

DETYA, now headed by new minister Warren Truss, is at present refusing to state how many young people have been referred to literacy classes. The official response from DETYA is that it is too early to provide specific figures (the contracts began in July) but that referrals have taken place in all states. No doubt this is true, but the numbers are well below what was predicted.

Some providers are frustrated by the lack of referrals but are proceeding anyway. A provider in the western suburbs has started a class of three students. In Adelaide, a provider which tendered for over one hundred trainees is running a class of four. Providers who have engaged and trained teaching staff are now unwilling to employ them.

Some providers believe that there has been insufficient publicity given to the scheme and that Centrelink officers are unaware of its existence. It is clear that Centrelink staff, already overstretched, have been put under further pressure by the recent deep cuts to their personnel. Other providers believe that the guidelines for the LANT program are too stringent. Trainees must have been continuously unemployed for six months in 1998 to qualify for the scheme. If they were unemployed last year, but have done some work this year, they are probably not eligible. Of those who are eligible, it is perhaps not surprising that many young people would rather be involved in outdoor projects than literacy. After all, many of them have already been failed by the education system. Furthermore, there are few incentives to attend literacy classes. For example, young people on "Work for the Dole" schemes receive a travel allowance, but LANT clients do not.

While DETYA claims it is early days, it appears that the LANT scheme is in need of a drastic overhaul. One possible outcome is that DETYA will simply scrap the scheme after the first year. This would still leave them to answer awkward questions about spending so much money on programs with so few outcomes. It would be ironic if the literacy field, starved of funds since the end of SIP, and forced to account for its funding to the last cent, were to make the news because of excessive misguided spending. A more satisfactory outcome would be for the government to seek input from the literacy field about how best to put these funds to good use.

Suggestions received from providers have included broadening the eligibility guidelines so more young people could attend training. Another option would be to combine the LANT training with other programs, such as "Work for the Dole". In this way literacy training could be integrated with other activities. It is also clear that the program needs to be more widely publicised, and that Centrelink staff need to be educated about the program.

Fine Print will be monitoring the LANT program and will inform readers of future developments. We would also appreciate hearing from providers involved in the scheme. We would be pleased to publish your experiences and suggestions for improvements to the scheme.

Fine Print contacted providers of LANT training in Victoria and South Australia and the media liaison officer of DETYA to research this article.

Customer Delight

Quality

Quality terminology is creeping into our organisations, providing illumination about how to "delight our customers", how to look beyond the classroom as a place of learning and how to expand the purposes of learning so that it is "more than satisfying" for the myriad of student/customer needs – *could education become an entertainment industry?*

Quality Management discourse includes such terms as "customer loyalty", "customer advocacy" (where they spread good reports about you by word of mouth), "products" (courses), "change agents" (teachers and coordinators), "re-purchasing behaviour" (re-enrollments) and TAFE as a "brand name". This agenda is being driven by policy and linked to resourcing for the future.

OTFE is currently piloting a project with TAFE and some Community Based Providers, to validate them against a set of "Performance Measures" after they have undergone a "Quality Management Framework" self assessment. The reward for "best practice" on this validation will be "preferred provider status" and three year funding. Quality then, is becoming a powerful discourse from funding bodies.

Seeking to understand this discourse and to see how it might be useful and helpful to us in the ALBE field, I went along to the *Focus on Quality* conference on 21st and 22nd of October.

There were some stimulating and thought provoking workshops and speakers, but there were some (highly paid international speakers too) who were propounding revelations that were nothing new to those who have read Geri Pancini's *Learning to Learn*. I will highlight some of the better points.

Some of the key questions raised were: Who will our students be in 10 years time? What world will the children of the future encounter? What skills and knowledge and expectations will they be seeking when we greet them in tomorrow's world? What is our business now and how will we redefine our business to meet these futures? Keeping pace with change involves leadership in futuristic thinking.

At Hawthorn Community House our business involves teaching practices and courses (we hope) that 'empower', foster growth, lead to broader choices, develop literacy and language skills and build a sense of community participation, but will this be different in 10 years? Ten years ago students expected very little of literacy classes. They came and studied in small groups and wrote their personal stories. We had not yet begun to explore methodologies and theories such as critical literacy in the classroom. Pathways were not high on the agenda in curriculum planning.

So how do we ensure that our current quality is maintained in the future? Quality is about measuring whether what we say we do is what we actually do, and whether what we say we do is meeting the needs of the customer/student. So who decides the needs of our students? Adult Learning Theory advocates a collaborative approach of negotiated learning with linking of personally relevant experience to new and abstract concepts, but it has long been debated by literacy practitioners just who is in control of the learning, who is in authority and how the text positions us. This leads to the question of how we really find out what our students/customers want/need.

The challenge we as ALBE teachers face is to let go of established methodologies and curriculum planning which meets 'perceived' needs and to research the newer, changing needs of our students to encounter today's and future expectations. This challenge is not a new one to the ALBE field; we have been incredibly flexible over the last five years, and turned ourselves inside out to align literacy with increasing demands for vocational, technological and flexible delivery options. *Are we not already "change agents", both customer and future focussed?*

Much was said about the "customer" and "customer focus", "repeat buyer behaviour" and "customer retention". Our goal, it seems the funding bodies are telling us, is to not only satisfy our students, but to create loyalty in their custom (to us, to TAFE "brands") and predict pathways that will encourage them to continue to seek out learning all their lives.

> **"so how do we ensure that our current quality is maintained in the future?"**

When our students come to our Centres or Colleges for the first time, and every time thereafter, they perceive us through a series of encounters. Perceptions are vital – what people see, they believe. Our people are the key. If you have a great "product" (course), but your staff are unable to deliver due to lack of resources and administrative support, then you won't be able to deliver satisfaction. *Is there a message in here for competitive tendering and cost cutting?*

Marketing as opposed to selling.

There is a current perception in the community that TAFE is where you go if you are not smart enough (or rich enough) for University. How do we change that perception? Marketing was discussed as the tool for such change management.

In selling we decide what courses students need, package them up and 'sell' them to prospective students. The product is given. You establish the benefits of the product and convince your customer they need them (e.g. curriculum that is set). However, selling is costly (we have to advertise, promote, network) and energy consuming. It is not always successful because students may not always want to buy our courses – what we think they want.

Marketing, on the other hand, is about researching and developing what is meaningful and relevant to the student. We need to find out exactly what they want and produce a product to satisfy them. (e.g. the flexibility of a framework such as the CGEA to develop relevant curriculum). In determining this we are advised to be aware of where we are in the 'food chain', who our competitors are and where we fit in, and we need to offer unique things to students within the bigger system. We need to know what is unique about what we offer to our students and how we establish an emotional connection to our students so that they will become "loyal customers". And of course, it involves adult learning principles!

There was general agreement so far. However, a note of heresy crept in when Ross Oakley, the STB chairperson, outlined how the customer doesn't always know what they want, even with the best of research. He said that the past will always influence what people say they want and research will only highlight a position of understanding from what is known in the past. For example, football research showed 75% of people surveyed did not want the AFL league changed to a national competition in 1986. In 1998, new research shows that 85% of people believe national competition is good for football.

So, who our students choose to learn with will ultimately rest upon our ability to scan our environment for change and shifts, to know our competitors, and to understand what is meaningful to our students. But what tools will we use for this research? We need to be careful that the 'measuring tools' don't drive our behaviour. The example given at the conference was of an airline which wanted to measure how quickly the first bag appears on the conveyer belt after the aeroplane arrives on the tarmac. It was observed that when the planes landed, a man would run quickly to the plane, a door would open and a bag would be tossed out. He would then run with this bag to the conveyer belt. Twelve minutes later, a vehicle would arrive at the plane and unload the remaining bags and put them on the conveyer belt. The moral of the story is that the questions we ask, the measures we use, will drive the behaviours of our practice.

Think about the changed practice of some teachers who use the assessment criteria of the CGEA to drive curriculum and methodology rather than using the CGEA as an overlay to existing good practice. What sort of thinkers will people have to be in the future in order to be able to cope with more than a third of businesses being conducted electronically online by the year 2001? How do we measure quality when introducing technology into the literacy curriculum?

A century ago, what you needed to know about technology could have been passed on by your grandfather. Now, the pace is fast and unrelenting. We are swept along by global trends such as a population explosion, resource depletion, rising expectations, interdependent economies, money flowing at the speed of light, uncertain supply (for we are not sure that the things we want will always be there) and there is an increasing gap between rich and poor.

We ALBE teachers know all this, of course! In this confusing and unfriendly environment we seek to assist our students to become active participants in society, in control of choice and accessing opportunities, rather than "passive observers frightened by the world around them" (Myron Tribus, Quality Counsellor, Fremont California). Myron advocated questioning what we should teach and what students should learn, and moving toward learning-to-learn. He said that central to students being empowered to gain work and participate in the world was for them to become competent in problem solving, using technology, working in teams – *sound familiar*?

So what is this "product" called literacy? What are the elements and attributes of literacy and what does the total product amount to? How do we measure its Quality beyond the student satisfaction survey? Answers to these questions will determine our marketing future.

As Meredith Sussex said, in opening the conference, "we need to delight our customers". We need to be aware that students are transactionally focussed and their relationships to us and emotive need for us should be nurtured. Finally, as Martin the ALBE student from Upper Yarra said, "I am a lonely customer ... I shop around, I want value for money, I need to feed the kids." We need to listen to Martin too.

Cathy Donovan coordinates the Hawthorn Community House and is a member of the *Fine Print* Editorial Group.

Images of adult literacy education

How to summarise ten years of professional involvement in adult literacy education into a short reflection for publication? It is not that there is too little to say, but too much. I write as one past president of VALBEC (1989-92) among many, and as an adult literacy worker who has worked in the sector for the last fifteen years. A collage of selected images evokes key events with different constellations of people, it also provides glimpses into just some of the developments in the last ten years which have contributed to major changes in adult literacy policy, pedagogy and practice at different points in time. Necessarily, in a reflection such as this, these images represent my own professional involvement and interests.

The Rialto Towers in Collins St., the office of Adult Community and Further Education 1989

1989 was a watershed year for adult literacy in Victoria. The creation of the state bureaucratic structure of Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE), with State legislation for the *Adult Community and Further Education Act*, placed adult literacy provision, along with further

education in general, on a surer footing than it had ever had in the past. At this time, terms such as 'ALBE has come of age' or 'adult literacy has come in from the margins' were frequently used to describe this transition period. The impact of the changes brought about by the emergence of ACFE was widespread, bringing a number of benefits: better resources, the dividing of Victoria into ACFE regions, the appointment of Regional Adult Literacy and Basic Education Officers (RALBEO's), better employment conditions for adult literacy personnel, and funding for attendance at professional development activities. The benefits gained were accompanied by changes not always wholeheartedly embraced: competitive tendering where once there had been collaboration, and greater accountability causing providers to adopt management models with which they had little familiarity and of which many reported as detracting from the core task of teaching.

'more challenging are the possibilities for teachers to re-imagine their roles as adult literacy teachers in the next century'

The movie, *Stanley and Iris,* starring Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro

This was Hollywood's contribution to International Literacy Year in 1990. The story portrays Stanley's achievement of the great American dream of wealth and security through his acquisition of literacy at the very time when such claims for literacy were being questioned from within the sector itself. To mark the year in Australia an ILY Secretariat was established in Canberra, with ILY committees in each state, to implement and oversee a national strategy for the year's activities. Funding earmarked for ILY generated important projects such as *The Pedagogical Relations Between Adult ESL and Adult Literacy, An Emerging National Curriculum: English Literacy for Adults Project* and the Coordinating Agency for the Training of Adult Literacy Personnel in Australia (CATALPA). The events of the year brought literacy into public awareness and, at a policy level, led into the development of the Australian Languages and Literacy Policy.

ILY Chair, Margaret Whitlam, opening a VALBEC mini-conference in 1990 at Northern Metropolitan College of TAFE

As the state professional organisation VALBEC has played a key role in a variety of ways: through lobbying, publications, conferences and other professional development activities. Just one of many activities organised by VALBEC, the mini-conference series and the Friday seminar program were important forums for teachers to hear about others' practice or projects as well as to participate in informal networking, always vital in a fragmented field such as adult literacy.

James Gee at a seminar at Deakin university, circa 1993, talking about the discourse of birding

Gee, with other international researchers has contributed significantly to the general theorising of the adult literacy sector which has taken place in recent years. Discourse theory has provided tools for understanding how adult literacy practices are shaped by different, sometimes complementary, often competing, discourses for literacy. This is only one of many theoretical fields giving a distinctive shape to adult literacy practice in the 1990s.

Literacy for public debate, self expression, knowledge and practical purposes

The four domains of literacy on which the Victorian Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Accreditation Framework (VAELLNAFF) was based and out of which the Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGEA) grew. Discussions about the need for credentialled courses for adult literacy learners had been taking place in Victoria since the late 1980s. The development of the VAELLNAFF marked a turning point in adult literacy teachers' understanding of their own practice. It offered a particular construction of knowledge with a theory of literacy which made explicit the domains of reading and writing in which people participate in daily life. This provided the framework for the adult literacy sector at a time when teachers were looking for new directions for their practice.

A Friday in May 1994

The Raceview Suite at VUT, Footscray Campus is full to capacity for the combined VALBEC, VATME, ALRNNV seminar, *The Pedagogical Interface between Adult Literacy and Adult ESL*. This seminar provided a public opportunity for adult literacy teachers and adult ESL teachers to come together and discuss some of the concerns preoccupying both parts of the sector at the time because of the changes in Federal government policy funding to adult ESL provision and the increase in funding to adult literacy provision. Was this a takeover of adult ESL by the adult literacy sector? Were the pedagogical similarities greater than the differences? What were the significant pedagogical differences? How did these similarities and differences impact on classroom practice? Teachers from both parts of the sector were able to begin to articulate the differences as well as acknowledge the complexities of the middle ground where both parts of the sector had a contribution to make.

A hot day in March 1996, in a tent on the lawn at LaTrobe University, Wodonga Campus

The Graduation Ceremony at which graduands from the Graduate Certificate and Bachelor of Education in Adult Literacy and Basic Education are being presented. The graduands are mostly women, particularly significant because it is a rural campus. These graduates are representative of many adult literacy teachers who have graduated from specialist courses offered by universities across the state. The early 1990s saw the rapid expansion, nationally, of university courses appropriate for adult literacy teachers, in part made

possible by National Priority Reserve Funding and Victorian Education Foundation funding. These innovative courses included combinations of studies in adult literacy education, adult ESL, workplace training and adult education. Beyond post-graduate possibilities, still others are taking advantage of higher degrees in efforts to frame their practice, pushing the boundaries theoretically and professionally.

ACAL Conferences

The 1984 ACAL Conference at MLC in Melbourne had over 600 delegates - a challenging mix of tutors, paid and volunteer, and adult literacy students. Fast forward to the ACAL Conference in Adelaide 1998 with 150 delegates. The contrast in profile of these conferences is dramatic. In 1998 many workshops are presentations of theorised papers and workplace and vocational education and training issues play a prominent role in the program; yet other teachers report on ways in which they are re-framing their practice to accommodate the impact of the new technologies. Plenary speakers are invited from other disciplines such as future studies and sociology which offer interpretations of broader global and social changes to give teachers a language to talk about the changes in the adult literacy sector. More challenging though are the possibilities offered by these ideas for teachers to re-imagine their future roles as adult literacy teachers in the next century.

This reflection has necessarily been selective, not to privilege some events and changes over others, but simply to give a flavour of some of the changes that a small sector has had to negotiate in the last ten years. The outcomes of these events have interwoven over time, with other equally significant trends, to create the complexities of the sector in the late 1990s. At the 1994 VALBEC Conference, Terri Seddon encouraged participants to “live and work the contradictions”. Over time, the contradictions and complexities of the sector have become more rather than less visible. Shifting alliances with school literacy, the vocational education and training agenda, adult numeracy, adult education, adult ESL, communication and others, leave me wondering what makes up the core that was once more easily identifiable as adult literacy education. Integration of theoretical influences from disciplines such as literacy studies, social theory and linguistic theory bring about more change as they are contextualised into adult literacy pedagogy and practice.

More change will occur in the next ten years, and in that process the role of professional organisations like VALBEC and ACAL, along with other key players in the sector, remain vital in the process of defining what is distinctive about adult literacy education. In that process of definition, do we become weary with battle fatigue or do we use these tensions creatively? And out of it all, what will emerge as the marking images of adult literacy education for the next decade?

Beverley Campbell is the Coordinator of the Adult Literacy Research Network Node for Victoria (Language Australia) and she was the President of VALBEC from 1989 to 1992.

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Policy Update

Yvonne Howells, Project Officer, Policy, Adult, Community and Further Education division, provides an example of the Managing Diversity Policy at work.

Widening Participation in Adult Community Education (ACE)

Policy background

The launch of the Managing Diversity policy in 1996 represented a significant shift in how Adult Community Education (ACE) providers view the diversity of local communities.

Informed by current legislative approaches to anti-discrimination, the Managing Diversity policy built on and extended existing equity strategies in training and further education. Importantly, it developed an approach to the management of diversity that is consistent with best practice in the public and private sectors.

Regional Councils of ACFE, for example, develop a diversity management plan and from it nominate outcomes and indicators by which performance can be measured. An agreed set of outcomes and indicators are incorporated in the performance and funding agreement. This plan forms part of the strategic directions for the region. To assist providers implement the new policy, the ACFE Board has allocated funds for various projects to improve planning, research and implementation.

The Angliss Neighbourhood House program for ESL learners clearly demonstrates that diversity works. It illustrates the value of a system wide approach to policy implementation. Their innovative program, English through Music, was a project of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board. The project's aim was to research and develop strategies to increase participation in ACE of people from language backgrounds other than English. There are more than 480 ACE providers in Victoria. Ten ACE providers participated in the project.

The story of the English through Music program encapsulates the six values embodied in the Managing Diversity policy. The six values are:

- Valuing Diversity
- Access to effective participation in vocational and further education
- An outcome focus on performance
- Responsiveness to clients with special needs
- Reporting on achievement
- Managing diversity as a corporate responsibility

The story

For over 12 months, the Angliss Neighbourhood House had been running English (ESL) classes for people who spoke Vietnamese; they used a bilingual approach. As a planned part of the curriculum, the teachers organised a social function at the end of each term.

The Angliss Neighbourhood House staff observed that many of their Vietnamese students were accustomed to very traditional educational methods, such as rote-learning from a blackboard. It was therefore important to explain the lessons fully so students saw which skills were being encouraged. Games and a social functions were organised each term to encourage socialising for women and other students who did not have many social contacts.

At the social functions the teachers discovered that many Vietnamese love singing, particularly at the end of a function. The custom was for people to be asked to sing. If asked, one could not refuse. So when the teachers were asked to sing, even though, "We can't sing for nuts", they agreed. When the students joined in their English-language songs, the teachers noticed that the students were very good mimics, and that they copied the teachers' intonation. Teachers began to introduce singing games into their classes, noting that the Vietnamese had few inhibitions about singing, and saw it as an enjoyable pastime for all. Even quiet students were willing to sing. Staff noted that students were more confident about singing than about talking. Staff discovered through discussion with the bilingual aide, who was Chinese–Vietnamese, that learning through music and poetry is traditionally valued.

A teacher who taught Vietnamese literature was also a talented singer. She took the initiative by bringing songs for the group to sing in Vietnamese, French, and English. Another student brought in a guitar. The bilingual aide also liked singing and helped the group to make up their own words for songs for special occasions. The staff then realised that wonderful language development was occurring through an inter-disciplinary approach, and they began to incorporate music wherever possible into the night classes.

A brother of one of the teachers, who was qualified in music therapy, explained how people learn the structure of language through rhythm, and learn intonation through simple rhymes. When the beat of a word finishes on a consonant, it helps them not to drop the consonant off, as they usually do in conversation. This method has been particularly good for overcoming blocks in English language development. Students who have been in Australia for some time sometimes cannot hear their own mistakes, and so they don't self-correct. Singing also improves breathing, which in turn helps speaking. Many other technical areas were discussed, and it seemed appropriate to the acquisition of language that music be formally introduced to the curriculum. Although Angliss Neighbourhood House had no music equipment for this program, it was able to borrow instruments.

At the neighbourhood house planning day, the proposal for English Through Music was formulated. Its purpose was the acquisition of language and cultural awareness by the following means:

- Writing: Composition skills, lyric development, translation of music from first language to second language, self-expression, and reflective responses to stimulus material.
- Listening: Interpretation of songs, music, lyrics, analysis of music considering cultural contexts, understanding of language in musical presentations.
- Reading: Vocabulary acquisition, analysis of lyrics, terminology used in music-specific areas, comparison of how music is used in different cultural contexts, grammatical structures.
- Speaking/singing: Pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, accent, colour, beat, breathing techniques, phonetics, audience, specific cultural pronunciation problems.
- Oral language skills: Intonation, accent, tone, beat, rhythm, audience, and presentation models.

Music allows for a larger group than a literacy class, and 50 people were expected to attend the class. The teaching group consisted of the two ESL teachers, the music therapist, and the Vietnamese bilingual aide. The aide played guitar to support the program, worked as a translator, and assisted with the music - providing pitch, tone, beat, and rhythm. He helped to translate a module on the history of music, and provided background on Vietnamese culture and history for the teachers. The aide also provided support to new members of the class, who drew comfort from having a Vietnamese person in the team.

The program ran in the evening, because the neighbourhood house wanted to open the course to people who work during the day. Despite this opportunity, students who were outworkers sometimes dropped out when they were busy sewing the next season's clothes.

The quality of the program was assessed using the following indicators:

- attendance at the course, and participation in activities
- student evaluation sheets
- cross-checking outcomes with objectives by the teaching team
- peer discussion with professional colleagues, and
- a review at a planning day with teachers and members of the committee of management of the Neighbourhood House.

Conclusion

A number of the 10 pilot programs funded in the project have the potential to develop new curriculum for the ACE sector. The project report, *Widening Participation in Adult Community Education (ACE)*, contains the individual reports from each of the ten ACE providers. Each story demonstrates the value of and the need for a multicultural approach to marketing ACE. The story from the Angliss Neighbourhood House was drawn from this report.

For further information about the project, contact Yvonne Howells, Project Officer, Policy, Adult, Community and Further Education division on 9637 2684. For a copy of the report, contact Adult Literacy and Basic Education Literacy Research and Information Services (ARIS) on 9614 0255.

Beside the Whiteboard

Barb Goulbourn has been involved in Language and Literacy education since the 1970s both in Australia and overseas. She talks here with Nick Gadd about the ever changing roles she has had and gives an insight into the possibilities within the field.

Could you briefly describe your background in adult literacy?

I started my teaching career in the early 70s specialising in the language development area in primary schools in the Brixton area of London. It was an exciting time in the language and literacy field: psycholinguistics, the Bullock Report, Goodman, Frank Smith, the Schools Council, lots of people saying language was significant in all educational contexts, not just the English classroom.

At some point I decided to give up my job and travel a bit, but arriving back at London airport couldn't help noticing the newspaper headlines, "Thatcher slashes schools funding". So I looked around for alternative but related employment and this is where my involvement in adult literacy began. My first job was teaching an evening class at a school in Gipsy Hill, next door to my house. The students covered a wide range of backgrounds and needs, including a Belizian Christian missionary couple who wanted to brush up on their bible reading skills, a Pakistani girl desperately trying to prevent an arranged marriage and a little old man who just came to the class to keep out of the cold! I then did an RSA course in 'Teaching Literacy to Adults' and rushed around south London, sessionally teaching to very diverse groups, and really enjoying it.

I moved to Australia in the early 80s. The adult literacy field was predominantly made up of voluntary programs at this point. It was 'pre' the Australian Language and Literacy Policy so there was very little funding compared to now. I did, however, manage to find interesting and varied work through the former Preston TAFE: teaching in a Koorie hostel for young men, a writing class in Coburg library (producing a magazine) as well as in on-campus TAFE classes.

From here I moved to coordinating the Coburg Library literacy program and coordination and professional development in the CAE literacy program. Next came working in Broadmeadows TAFE Language Studies Department - starting the first day the college opened. There was a strong sense of cooperation and ideas-sharing between ESL and literacy teachers as everything was so new. We developed and shared our own resources - to begin with, I think the only books we had for students were *Lost in the Jungle* (a plane crash survival story) and *The Drovers' Wife* - and there was a great feeling of camaraderie.

You worked for several years in adult literacy, now you are a training consultant. How did you build a pathway between the two?

I don't call myself a training consultant, although quite a bit of my work does involve 'consulting' and 'training'. I prefer something like 'educational project worker' because my work covers community and uni education as well as the TAFE and industry. And perhaps I'm influenced by coming from the literacy field where training was (is?) a dirty word and consultants are people who charge a lot of money to run workshops on getting in touch with the inner capitalist.

My adult literacy work led me to related project work in the literacy and language field, covering research, professional development, curriculum and resource development. This was mostly for state and nationally-funded projects such as the National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy (grandmother of the NRS) Professional Development project and the NALLCU (National Automotive Language and Literacy Coordination Unit) project. I liked the diversity of project work. My educational background prior to teacher education was art college then a sociology degree, so I felt I could bring together my research skills and visual art skills as well as my language education experience on these projects.

I then worked in the Kangan Batman TAFE Curriculum Research and Development Department for about 3 years on projects in many different industries, from agriculture to aerospace, and developing resources in a variety of media, but nearly always having some project which related to literacy.

Give us an idea of your work now.

Since setting up a small business, 'Curve Projects Pty. Ltd.', four months ago, my work has been as varied as it was in TAFE. It has included: developing a curriculum for accreditation for a women's neighbourhood voluntary program to support isolated women; developing an English for Business curriculum for delivery in Budapest; job redesign against national competencies for an organisation providing home care for people with acquired brain injury; national abattoir workers' communication skills resources; a training manual for a fast food chain and an English for Academic Purposes curriculum for overseas students in Australia. Now I'm about to start a project in the elderly care field. As you can see, the work is varied!

In what ways does your background as an ALBE teacher inform your present work?

A lot. My work is mainly writing for publication, so my work continues to be language work, whether the content is specifically about language and literacy or not. Twenty years of working with people from a vast range of language abilities always helps me to have some idea of the audience I'm writing for. All adult literacy teachers are used to developing most of their own resources rather than relying on text books. This experience has been invaluable in understanding how to develop learning resources.

What skills are needed to succeed in educational project/ consultancy work?

If you are setting up a small business you certainly need business management skills to bring in the work and to get it done in a way that satisfies you and the client: marketing, financial management and project management skills, negotiation skills and a good grasp of office skills like computer file management and wordprocessing.

For resource development you need a good knowledge of writing, editing and publishing processes, which for me includes electronic and audiovisual and well as print media. You need to be able to select suitable types of media for developing resources and to use a range of software, working with specialists when necessary.

For all project work you need research skills. Often this is very fast research without the luxury of time that's common in pure academic research. The internet and online library resources are very important. I also feel I need to maintain current knowledge of the fields of language and literacy, educational resource development and publishing, employment and training trends, adult and community education. This all requires a commitment to building professional development into your working week.

This issue of Fine Print focuses on the 'E' for Education. What kind of education is constructed by the present system of competency based training?

This question needs a longer answer than what you've got space for here! How do you define education and training? First, it's probably worth describing the new-ish National Training Framework system introduced by the Howard government. National competency standards are, after much consultation, drawn up for an industry as the basis of training. These competencies can be customised to some extent as long as the focus and spirit is not diminished. Under the previous system, curriculum documents were written from the competencies, then resources were devised to support the curriculum. The new system cuts out the curriculum document stage (unless, as in a few cases, an industry for some reason decides they must have it). Although industries develop resources from the competencies there's no compulsion to use them, and enterprises small and large can develop learning activities, resources and assessment tasks as they wish, as long as the competency standards are covered. National competency standards plus rules about who delivers and assesses plus any nationally developed resources (which you do not have to use) make up a 'Training Package' (which is not what would normally be construed as a 'training package').

Going back to the E for education .... I believe the new national competency standards that I've worked with are a lot better than previous standards. In their definitions of what people need to know and do in their jobs they attempt to describe more of the touchy-feely things to do with attitude and ethics and below-the-surface qualities as well as the tangible activities. The fact that they are customisable also should make them more relevant to specific contexts. There was also a conscious effort on the part of ANTA (through a project carried out by Lynne Fitzpatrick) to make sure language and literacy was 'built in, not bolted on'. (See new ANTA publications for more on this). In this sense, the content of training should better reflect what's needed to do a job.

Under the new training framework the method of training is, as I see it, rather laissez faire in the sense that it's left to enterprises to do their own thing, but this is not a new phenomenon. There's certainly more official emphasis on on-the-job training, but this reflects what has always happened, and it is often the best way to learn things of a practical nature.

Despite all government policies, some organisations place great importance on training and put money into it, some don't. Some training reflects values of conformity, standardisation and doing what you're told, other training is more educational in the sense of being transferable: encouraging innovation, creativity, thinking and sensitivity. For some organisations the bottom line is profit and for others it's providing a good service or product and breaking even.

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