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Valbec 2021 Conference - “A Passage In Time - Changes in Teaching and Learning Practices”

This year’s conference is about the changing nature of teaching and learning environments. If you have something to share about your changing journey as a teacher and/or learner why not put your hand up to present at our conference? We would love to hear from you.

1. From the President

Last week I got the COVID vaccine. Like many, I was paying half attention to background static about scary blood clots and zero community transmission. I vaguely wondered “Where do I go for the vaccine? Do I choose between Pfizer or AstraZeneca? Should I leave more time between the flu vaccine I’ve just had and the COVID vaccine? Will I need time off work, and if so, when would be the best time to take the vaccine?” Many decisions seemed to be needed for something I thought was non-urgent. I had vaccine complacency.

While pondering these questions, a health professional friend shared an incisive infographic on social media. It laid bare the statistics about vaccination risks. That she



is a health specialist added extra weight to the information. The rapid rise in community transmission did the rest. I called the hotline, made a booking and got vaccinated.

You've probably seen the BBC infographic by now. It puts things in perspective and helps you make an informed decision. I shared it with my students and we discussed what the rates and percentages meant (like why is 'being hit by lightning' a thing?). I know misinformation and disinformation about vaccination is circulating everywhere, just like fear and indecision had been swirling around in my head. In so many ways, COVID has highlighted

the importance of literacy and numeracy education. And arguably health literacy is our most important focus right now. LLN educators around the world are vital in connecting learners to reliable statistics and information about vaccinations so they can make informed decisions about their health.

<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/book-your-vaccine-appointment>

Elizabeth Gunn

Valbec President

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2. Committee Contributions

The UN Year of Peace and Trust - Kerrie Tomkins

In the Year of Peace and Trust, the World Happiness Report 2021 provides context to why peace and trust are important to nations and communities. The report found that people with high social and institutional trust are happier and more resilient and this was a significant factor in the mental well-being of communities during the COVID 19 pandemic.

“Higher trust in nations supported the selection and success of policies that saved lives.” (p51, World Happiness Report 2021). The report also found that trust and benevolence are strong supports for well-being and that the preparedness of people to do benevolent acts demonstrated trust in action to others around them.

Social trust was deemed important in local communities as it not only reduced individual’s isolation it helped promote a sense of belonging. The impact of misfortune on a person’s happiness was moderated by the warmth and strength of the social fabric of their community, we have seen this demonstrated in the face of natural disaster in Australia over the last two years where communities have demonstrated significant resilience in the face of back to back natural disasters. The World Happiness report is a better measure of the success of nations than GDP as it finds that social trust and support is a greater factor in happiness than economic status.

[World Happiness Report 2021 | The World Happiness Report](#)

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3. Valbec Membership

Join or renew online.

<https://valbec.org.au/membership/>

Members receive:

- 2021 – the Valbec professional learning series of 6 workshops will be free to current individual members.
- Discounts for the Annual Conference and other Valbec statewide professional development.
- Three issues of FINE PRINT per year – a quality LLN journal for discussion and debate about good practice, theory and policy issues. Feedback and contributions are actively sought from members about content and issues.
- eVALBEC – our e-mail communication keeping members informed of professional development activities, general committee activities and more up to date policy changes.
- Free online numeracy resources.
- Focus on significant policy issues impacting on the field.

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4. Conferences

Reform of the adult migrant English program

Those interested in providing feedback are encouraged to read the Reform of the Adult Migrant English Program Discussion Paper and provide a written submission through the Department of Home Affairs' online form (deadline July 9).

If an organisation you represent is interested in attending one of the web forums, you can provide contact details through the online registration form. Valbec is looking at forming a group to work on the written submission registering interest to give feedback on behalf of Valbec. Members are encouraged to lend their expertise and support in this.

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-publications/submissions-and-discussion-papers/reform-of-the-adult-migrant-english-program>

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5. Upcoming PD

Valbec Webinar: Christina Evans will present the latest VALBEC professional learning session

July 23 at 12:30 – 1:30PM AEST

“Teaching Literacy to Adults with a Mild Intellectual Disability.” and more specifically, some of the activities, resources and teaching methods/ strategies I use with our students at Melbourne Polytechnic.

About Christina: I have been teaching adult students with mild intellectual disabilities since 2008. My first job was with La Trobe Lifeskills, teaching the Certificate I in Transition Education. After that, in 2009 I taught at the then Kangan Institute for three years, in their Foundation Studies, Work Education and VCAL Departments. All the while, I was teaching literacy to students with various disabilities. In 2013, I taught VCAL (Literacy focus) at what is now Melbourne Polytechnic's Heidelberg campus, as well as at Olympic Adult Education in West Heidelberg, as an Adult Literacy teacher. My next move was to Box Hill Institute, in their Work Education Department and then finally, I landed a job (in 2015) at the now Melbourne Polytechnic Preston Campus, where I am currently teaching a variety of subjects, including Literacy, within their Work Education Programs.

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6. Resources

ReadWriteThink

ReadWriteThink website offers an excellent collection of online student materials for teachers to support literacy learning in the classroom. These interactive tools can be used to supplement a variety of lessons and provide an opportunity for students to use technology while developing their literacy skills.

[Details](#)

BigHugeLabs

On this site you can create a range of materials such as movie posters, cards, magazine covers etc. These can be used for a variety of classroom activities such as using them to introduce a new topic.

[Details](#)

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7. Fine Print

This month the Fine Print editorial team welcomes new member Di Buckley to the group. Di is a new Valbec Committee member and has offered to join the Fine Print team as liaison between Fine Print and Valbec – it's great to have you on board, Di!

Our next committee meeting is scheduled for Monday 21 June – we usually meet via Zoom at 6pm. We're hoping to have the chance to get together 'in the flesh' later in the year, but for now, Zoom is how we organise the journal, gather ideas and generally get inspired to publish Edition 3.

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8. Digital Literacy

Digital literacy resource to personalise learning

It is important to know your learners' learning style to be able to reach the learners and impart the knowledge. There are many websites available on the internet. One of

them that I use is: <http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles-quiz.shtml>

This is a short 20 questions self-assessment which gives the results without having to provide the email address or subscribing. In my opinion, this is a great tool for personalising learning. Watch out for the links for the personalised resources in the upcoming E-VALBEC July 2021

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9. Unions

Australian Education Union

[Details](#)

National Tertiary Education Union

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10. Special Dates

- 5 June World Environment Day
- 14 June [Refugee Week](#) (until 20 June)
- 14 June [Men's Health Week](#)
- 15 June [Elder Abuse Awareness Day](#) (until 20 June)
- 20 June World Refugee Day

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eVALBEC

eVALBEC is the monthly electronic newsletter of (VALBEC) the Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council and is sent to about 1000 practitioners on the first of each month (other than January). It is also available in the 'News' section of our [web site](#)

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How to submit items: <https://www.valbec.org.au/evalbec>