

eVALBEC August 2005

This is the electronic newsletter of VALBEC, the Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council, and is sent to about 900 practitioners on the first of each month (other than January).

This newsletter is also available in the 'News' section of our web site <http://www.valbec.org.au>

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1. VALBEC Professional Development

Twilight Forum – Tuesday, September 6 - Part of Adult Learners' Week

North Fitzroy Star, 325 St Georges Road SOUTH, Fitzroy North 6.15 pm for a 6.30 pm start

Fee: Free of charge but it's essential you register with VALBEC info@valbec.org.au by Friday Sept 2 as numbers are limited.

'Tests and ptarmigan'

Peter Lavender, Director for Research, Development and Information, NIACE.

Peter will present his observations about government targets in the UK and national tests in relation to the 'adult basic skills strategy' in England. The national targets have been designed for the best of reasons but there are unintended consequences and some poor effects.

He calls this 'the ptarmigan effect'. He will also draw a parallel with the 'Education for All' UNESCO program. EFA also relied on the achievement of numerical targets which have led to distortions in educational systems, as evidenced by Harvey Goldstein in a forthcoming publication. Peter will conclude with a call for a balance of ways of measuring achievement for learners and a more flexible use of opportunities that make a link between formative and summative assessment.

(What's a ptarmigan. See http://www.arkive.org/species/ARK/birds/Lagopus_mutus/more_info.html)

2. VALBEC Committee

The AGM in June elected the new committee for 2005. They are:

Co-presidents - Fran O'Neill and Lynne Matheson

Secretary - Pauline O'Maley

Treasurer - Ann Haynes

General members

* Jacinta Agostinelli

* Robyn Hodge

* Ron Munro

* John Radalj

* Yvonne Russell

* Debbie Soccio

* Sheryl Sinclair

* Jeannie Turnbull

A special welcome to new committee members Ron Munro, Yvonne Russell and Jeannie Turnbull.

3. Coming up, Spring 2005 edition of Fine Print

Songs and stories from the field by Beverley Campbell

The road to mobile learning by Caryl Oliver

Doing sums I've never done before by Ellen Lawson and David van Heurck

Urban Adventures in VCAL by Michael Cole and Michele Farrar

4. Call for Manuscripts: 'Assessment Practices in Adult Basic Education'

There's a call for manuscripts for a forthcoming publication entitled "Assessment Practices in Adult Basic Education." Some of the contributors will be invited to Canada (all expenses paid) to discuss issues in assessment.

Assessment Practices in Adult Basic Education is an edited book that will be published by Grass Roots Press in the fall of 2007. A national survey was conducted on assessment practices with 400 practitioners in the spring of 2005. The data from this survey was used to determine the content. The book will contain two main sections, with each section containing 4 chapters. The first section will focus on the different types of assessment tools while the second section will deal with critical issues and topics pertaining to assessment practices.

Submission of chapter proposal: September 1, 2005.

Details <http://www.nald.ca/WHATNEW/papers/2005/manuscr.htm>

5. Under The Big Top TAKEAWAY 2 Conference

● Friday August 12th ● 9.00 - 4.00 pm ● The Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading ●

Presented by the all new Language and Literacy Network!

Places are filling fast but you can still get in on the act – there are spots available for people who can direct wild animals, have a head for heights, a fine sense of balance, look good in tights (or a clown suit), have a sense of humour and want to DO real things in adult literacy.

More information at <http://www.bassinternational.com.au/takeaway/>

6. Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture:

Upcoming Training

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture provides direct services such as counselling, group work and natural therapies to refugees who have survived torture and other traumatic experiences prior to arriving in Australia. It also offers training to other service providers who have contact with refugees to increase the skills and knowledge of a range of practitioners, volunteers and community members who work and interact with refugee survivors of torture and trauma. Courses are scheduled for Dandenong and Brunswick in August, September and October, 2005.

VFST also provides training and professional development on an outreach basis, tailored to meet the needs of individual organisations.

For more information and to register, see <http://www.survivorsvic.org.au/>, or contact Rachel Wilson on 9389 8908 or

wilsonr@survivorsvic.org.au

7. Teaching Literacy and ESL: Blending the Theory with the Practice

A Professional Development Program for ACFE teachers

Victoria University's School of Further Education, Arts and Employment Services - Semester 2, 2005 and Semester 1, 2006 focussing on blending the theory and practice of teaching Literacy Methodologies and/or ESL Methodologies.

There will be two Literacy modules - Literacy Methodologies and Advanced Literacy Methodologies (76 hours) and 1 TESOL module - TESOL Methodologies (36 hours).

For more information about Recognition of Prior Learning and possible enrolment into one of the School of Education's Post-Graduate ESL/Literacy Degrees and costs, contact Debbie Soccio on 03 9919 8762 or Debbie.soccio@vu.edu.au

8. Research with your Weeties

Have breakfast with NCVER and hear about the initial findings of the 2005 national VET survey of Australian employers and a range of other research projects. In Melbourne on 11 November 2005 at William Angliss Conference Centre with Dr Tom Karmel
This Breakfast Briefing is aimed at decision- and policy-makers, in government and in training organisations, who wish to gain a better understanding of employers' perspectives on skilling their workforces.

Details and dates at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/events/employers/breakfast.html>

<<http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/events/employers/breakfast.html>>

9. 'Adult literacy and numeracy: At a glance'

A summary from the Adult Literacy National Project

Social, cultural and technological developments shape our understanding of literacy and numeracy, and as our understanding changes over time so do our approaches to developing these skills. This key message comes from NCVER's recently published 'Adult literacy and numeracy: At a glance', which provides a summary of insights from a body of research conducted in 2003 and 2004 for the Adult Literacy National Project.

Copies of this publication can be downloaded, free of charge, from <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1584.html> or ordered from NCVER Client Services on orderit@ncver.edu.au <<mailto:orderit@ncver.edu.au>>

'Adult literacy research overviews'

Another resource is NCVER's suite of 'Adult literacy research overviews'. These single page, double-sided overviews provide a comprehensive summary of the fourteen NCVER managed reports on adult literacy. Copies of the 'Research overviews' can be downloaded, free of charge, from <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1485.html>.

10. Next VALBEC Committee meeting

The next meeting of the VALBEC Committee is scheduled for 6.30 pm on Thursday, August 18 at the Royal Standard Hotel, Corner of William and Walsh Street West Melbourne. Members are welcome. Please confirm your attendance in advance.

11. Unsubscribe?

Just click this link <mailto:info@valbec.org.au?subject=eVALBEC_Unsubscribe> (no typing required!) and hit Send or, send an e-mail with the word Unsubscribe in the subject.

eVALBEC is the monthly electronic newsletter of (VALBEC) the Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council.

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