

eVALBEC February 2005

This is the electronic newsletter of the Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council.

Best wishes for 2005

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1. Minimum Fees List Update

VALBEC has recently received a reply from the minister to our letter of concern that was sent in November 2004. In her letter the minister explains that this new policy is based on the principle that a student's financial contribution is tied to their capacity to pay. If you would like to read the minister's response in full, it is available on the VALBEC website <http://www.valbec.org.au/05/minltr.html>
Thanks again for the survey returns which ended up exceeding 1000 by the time programs finished in December. The final surveys are being collated and results will be sent to the minister. VALBEC will continue to challenge the policy decision and is interested in any anecdotal or statistical information you have on the impact to your programs or individual students in 2005. Please email info@valbec.org.au

2. Be part of the VALBEC Conference 2005 – “Portraits and Visions: keeping the learner in sight”

VALBEC aims to bring together Active, Informed, Committed Practitioners and to lead the theory and practice of ALBE in Victoria. Friday, May 20, 2005 at the William Angliss College, corner of King and La Trobe Streets, Melbourne.

The VALBEC 2005 conference is the main event on the calendar this year. While continuing to showcase recent research and foster debate, the spotlight will be focused on learners - their life experiences, their diversity, their goals and aspirations, achievements and future directions. We want to portray the richness and challenges our learners bring to adult learning and to illustrate innovative approaches and promising classroom practices. We want to discuss what works from various perspectives and give participants opportunities to creatively engage with ideas grounded in what is known about how adults learn and how language and literacy develop in a range of contexts.

Call for papers

Those interested and involved in adult education are invited to submit a presentation proposal for the Portraits and Visions – keeping learners in sight, VALBEC 2005 conference. Whether it is a portrait of a small project or successful curriculum or classroom activities or a larger canvas of research or policy critique, practitioners are invited to share their wisdom, technique, research and proven practices with others from across Victoria and Australia.

Submit your presentation proposal or encourage others to submit, keeping in mind that the presentation should:

- stimulate thought and discussion on relevant issues and practice
- describe and reflect on current practice and examples of successful work
- be interactive and encourage dialogue
- display innovation and flexibility in practice/research
- demonstrate effective practice in a range of settings
- exemplify adult learning principles
- critique changes in state and federal government policies and priorities

Workshops/Presentations will be of 20, 40 or 60 minutes duration

Copyright of individual workshops presented at the VALBEC 2005 conference remain copyright of the respective author/s. However, VALBEC reserves the right to publish papers and distribute information about these workshops for teaching and research purposes in Fine Print

Formats for the presentations will include:

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

The proposal form can be completed on the conference website

<http://www.valbec.org.au> or by downloading the file and submitting by

Email conf@valbec.org.au

Fax 03 9546 0421

Proposals to be submitted by February 27th 2005.

Presenters will be notified by March 13th 2005 of their inclusion in the Conference program.

Conference updates can be viewed at www.valbec.org.au

For further information contact Don MacDowall, Conference Organiser

Email conf@valbec.org.au

Phone 03 9546 6892

3. Twilight Forum - ‘Using Literacy As a Tool to Empower Women’

Speaker: Rosa Xavier

Tuesday March 15 at the North Fitzroy Star, 325 St Georges Road SOUTH, Fitzroy North

Time 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 March 11 as numbers are limited.

Buy your own drinks and stay and chat over dinner afterwards.

Rosa Xavier is the coordinator at GFFTL – The East Timor Young Women’s Association, who with the support of the International Women’s Development Agency (IWDA) is providing literacy training for women in East Timor.

As a newly formed nation, emerging from centuries of colonial oppression, East Timor is striving to educate its people, and address issues arising from dislocation of services including education during the period of instability. One legacy of the past is that East Timorese women are less likely than men to have been enrolled in school and 64% are illiterate (compared to 49% of men).

In East Timor’s highly patriarchal society women are generally excluded from participation in public life and in decision making at all levels. Combined with this is women’s lack of access to information, particularly regarding their rights and health.

GFFTL, the East Timor Young Women’s Association began as part of the Women’s Solidarity Council, becoming an independent NGO in 2001. GFFTL’s program focuses on literacy and associated program training to increase the capacity of women to participate in the development of the community.

GFFTL, with the support of IWDA has conducted a pilot project based on GFFTL’s literacy and social training program. It focuses on two districts to test a model of community organising for women. The aim is to engender self motivated and skilled local groups and networks of women who while increasing their own levels of skills and awareness regarding their rights will also be a resource and support for other women in their areas. This in turn will strengthen the literacy and social training program and increase the sustainability of the impact of GFFTL’s program. The model is based on similar successful work undertaken by in Cambodia and Thailand.

4. Emergency and Sessional Work

CAE (<http://www.cae.edu.au>) is seeking expressions of interest from qualified and experienced adult education teachers interested in being included on our emergency and sessional teacher list for 2005. Teachers may be required for CGEA Literacy (including ESL Literacy), Numeracy, Science, or GCO’s; and CESL Frameworks. Please email: lianeh@cae.edu.au for more information.

5. ALM12 & ACAL 2005 Adult Numeracy/Mathematics Conference - “Connecting Voices: Practitioners, researchers and learners” Sunday 3rd July (evening welcome) to Thursday 7th July, 2005, Melbourne, Australia

The international Adults Learning Mathematics (ALM) group and the Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL) in cooperation with the Australasian Bridging Mathematics Network are co-hosting a special adult numeracy and maths conference in Melbourne this year. As well as being the 12th ALM conference, it will be the annual ACAL conference for 2005.

We hope you will be able to attend this important conference, either as a participant or as a presenter. This is a chance to catch up on professional development, to share your experiences, to explore current issues affecting numeracy and mathematics education, to meet Australian and overseas practitioners and researchers, and to find out what people are doing across the globe.

Presentation options will include:

- * Workshops - hands-on and practical
- * Papers - theory and research oriented
- * Round table and topic group discussions.

The first two days (Monday, 4th and Tuesday, 5th July) will have a particular focus on numeracy within an adult literacy and ESL context.

Call for papers

The first Call for Papers is out now - see the web pages below to access the Call for Papers document. Closing date is March 18th.

Further information about the conference may be obtained from:

- * the ALM website <http://www.alm-online.org>
- * the ACAL website <http://www.acal.edu.au/>
- * or contact Dave Tout at: davet@cae.edu.au

6. ARIS Update

Readers will be aware that massive changes have taken place in regard to the support systems available to language, literacy and numeracy providers and practitioners. The transfer of the Curriculum Maintenance role for Further Education (encompassing the CGEA, Certificates in Science and the Diploma of Liberal Arts) from CAE/Language Australia to Victoria University took place mid 2004. At the same time, the contract CAE/ Language Australia had with ACFE for the ARIS Library and Information Service ended. This contract represented 85% of the financial infrastructure for that service. CAE endeavoured to maintain the services but has been unable to find an alternative source of funding.

Subscriptions for the journal Australian Language and Literacy Matters (ALLM) provide only a fraction of the funds needed for the maintenance of the Library (5%). The Workplace Language and Literacy collection and clearinghouse function is still funded by the Commonwealth and will continue – the remaining 10%.

As a result, a lending library cannot be part of the state’s infrastructure for language, literacy and numeracy except in relation to the WELL collection, which is available for loan.

There is probably little solace for practitioners in knowing that the collection of resources will not be lost!

In the short term, the collection will be retained by the CAE to support various elements of its work:

- language, literacy and numeracy teaching programs,
- assessment and testing in language literacy & numeracy;
- professional development programs in adult education – the full range from informal learning to VCE; online resource development,
- professional services in disability training
- postgraduate training for adult education professionals (the research collection).

Where are we now? What services will be sustained?

- ALLM will continue
- Online databases will remain available on the ARIS website with new items included such as the WELL resources
- Teaching and professional support websites (the CGEA, SciWeb, Learn2Learn, etc.) will remain available
- Professional Development workshops and seminars will continue – some on a funded basis where the activity is an ACFE project (Adult VCE, some non-accredited programs); some as fee-for service (the ARIS PD calendar); some as part of wider reference conferences.

Some readers will remember Robyn Hodge approaching them in the second half of 2004 enquiring about a range of issues in relation to non-accredited ACFE-funded programs. The precise details of the Professional Support focus are still in development and details will be made public as soon as they are finalised.

It is difficult to adequately express appreciation for the wonderful service that the ARIS team provided over the years. The whole

field is indebted to Robyn Hodge, Jenny Draffin and Corinna Ridley, along with the original ARIS team of Jan Hagston and Dave Tout, and the many people they drew around them for various special projects. Those who follow them have much to live up to in the new Professional Support Service that is forming.

Leonie Barber General Manager Language & Professional Support Centre CAE

7. Two funding opportunities (Federal Government)

'Local Answers'

Helps strengthen disadvantaged families and communities by funding local, small-scale, time limited [projects that help them to build skills and capacity to resolve issues and create opportunities. Ph 1800 050 044

'Volunteer Small Equipment Grants'

Organisations can apply for up to \$3000 to buy small equipment items that support the work of their volunteers by making easier, safer and/or more enjoyable. Ph 1800 300125

For both of the above grants - Application forms and Guidelines <http://www.facs.gov.au/sfcs>, closing date March 4

8. VALBEC web site

Our web site has a new look but all the old favourites are still there. Michael Chalk has been our long-standing volunteer webmaster for some years and the 'new look' site is a coat of paint by Don MacDowall over Michael's substantial work.

9. Can you deliver P.D. in ALBE?

VALBEC aims to make your expertise more widely available to the ALBE field. On behalf of ACFE, we have developed a database of individuals who can deliver professional development (PD) to the ALBE field.

This information is available at <http://www.valbec.org.au> and in hard copy, and forwarded to ACFE for their use.

If you would like to share your skills and expertise in ALBE professional development, complete the form at <http://www.valbec.org.au> and follow the links to 'Professional Development'

10. 'Contacts' update

VALBEC has updated the 'Contacts' database. It lists courses and programs conducted by neighbourhood houses and learning centres, TAFE colleges and like organisations and is available to the public electronically, in print form and via the web <http://www.valbec.org.au/05/contacts.html>. The project is supported by ACFE.

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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