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Editorial

Where have we journeyed and where are we going? As Allie Clemans notes, it is hard to avoid metaphors of motion when reflecting on the adult education process. In this edition of *Fine Print*, we take a broad perspective on the notions, learning needs and challenges that drive and shape the interconnecting pathways of our work.

Inherent in the concept of lifelong learning is the recognition that education is a process of self-transformation where 'becoming' has replaced the idea of 'arriving'.

Several contributors note that the traditional idea of educational pathways is no longer appropriate. Louise Watson describes the trend towards recognising lifelong learning's importance and its honouring by OECD and UNESCO as an educational philosophy that promotes economic survival and social stability. In Australia too, there is recognition that everyone needs to be a lifelong learner because of the pace of social and technological change.

Allie Clemans challenges traditional assumptions about pathways in Adult Community Education. Extensive research work with providers shows an evolving educational identity where a diversity of personal and vocational outcomes is available to students. ACE can absorb learning pathways and, for example, allow students to move into VET areas while remaining in their chosen environment.

Metaphors of landscape and journey are appropriate when reflecting on the professional environment of adult educators over the past decade. Funding policy changes have created a tougher, more competitive terrain where collaboration and connection with fellow educators is harder to maintain. Navigating career pathways, and committing to higher degrees is challenging for teachers in an impermanent environment. Jenny Angwin reflects on the changes, and considers how new technologies and the changing nature of students will influence future work conditions.

Meeting the needs of the increasing numbers of youth entering the adult and community sector is another theme. Isabel Prince describes how one ACE provider responded to this demographic shift in our student population. Anecdotal evidence tells us that early school leavers are a group at risk, and Richard Curtain notes that 'leaving school early and not acquiring recognised skills may condemn a young person to a life of limited earning prospects'. There has been very little research into the pathways and outcomes for school leavers in Victoria, and his statistical analysis of the work and study outcomes of Victorian school leavers provides interesting data.

An appropriate educational access pathway is important to those marginalised by early school departure, and is vital to those marginalised within the juvenile justice system where educational programs provide a means of rejoining the mainstream community. Students need encouragement and support in undertaking this journey which Sally Pardey aptly describes as shifting the direction of a young person's fate.

If an exciting aspect of learning is its possibility for allowing self-transformation, one of the most rewarding aspects of teaching is to witness this in students. When this doesn't happen, in spite of our best provision and our students' commitment to learning, we may seek deeper causes, as happened at the Donvale Living and Learning Centre. Judy Geiger-Jennings describes the search for a screening tool for learning disabilities, so appropriate learning processes can help students frustrated in moving forward.

From whatever perspective we approach learning—as a young offender in the justice system, an older student seeking enrichment, an early school leaver undertaking the CGEA, or a teacher embarking on further study—the learning experience can change us. Our life journey and our learning journey are inextricably intertwined.

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.

For its own sake: lifelong learning and education policy

by Louise Watson



Whether they undertake a parenting skills course at the local community centre or become involved in postgraduate research, two key factors in defining lifelong learners are motivation and a capacity to learn—with or without a teacher.

Lifelong learning is on the policy agenda of UNESCO, the OECD, the European Union and many western countries. Since the OECD labour ministers made a commitment to lifelong learning in 1996, there has been growing interest in lifelong learning in Australia. The Commonwealth Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Dr David Kemp said recently:

There is little doubt that the nations which will succeed in the 21st century will be 'knowledge societies'—societies rich in human capital, effective in their capacity to utilise and deploy their human resources productively and successful in the creation and commercialisation of new knowledge. In such a world there will need to be greater opportunities than ever before for lifelong learning—for preparation not just for the first job but for succeeding jobs. (Kemp 1999)

Lifelong learning is on the five-year plan of the VET sector (see ANTA 1998) and was put forward as a policy objective in the West report on Higher Education, *Learning for Life* (West 1998). What does this new interest in lifelong learning mean for adult learning in Australia? Can governments deliver on the promise of lifelong learning for all?

What do we mean by lifelong learning?

The concept of lifelong learning as defined by the OECD is to create a society of individuals who are motivated to continue learning throughout their lives—both formally and informally (OECD 1996). Australia's recent review of higher education defined a lifelong learner as a person who takes responsibility for their own learning and who is prepared to invest 'time, money and effort' in education or training on a continuous basis (West 1998, 43). Lifelong learners possess a particular set of personal attributes.

The individuals most likely to participate in learning, either formally or informally throughout their lives, (have) acquired:

- the necessary *skills* and attitudes for learning, especially literacy and numeracy skills
- the *confidence* to learn, including a sense of engagement with the education and training system
- willingness and *motivation* to learn (my italics).

(National Board of Employment, Education and Training 1996: 3)

There is little doubt that the nations which will succeed in the 21st century will be 'knowledge societies'

People can be involved in lifelong learning in different ways, and it encompasses formal and informal education and training. A person who attends a parenting skills course run by a community provider is as much a lifelong learner as a full time postgraduate student undertaking university-based research. Lifelong learning also includes work-based training that may not lead to formal qualifications. The key factor in defining a lifelong learner is not the type of education or training in which they are they are involved, but the personal characteristics that lead to such involvement. Lifelong learners must have the *motivation* and *capacity* to learn, in any type of setting, with any type of teacher, or simply by themselves.

There is no single factor motivating a lifelong learner. Motivations include:

- upgrading job skills
- starting a business
- learning about a subject or extending knowledge
- meeting new people
- developing self confidence
- community involvement and developing personal skills.

A study of Australian participants in adult education and training found that all the above factors motivated adult learners. The two most common reasons for participation were upgrading work skills (26%) and extending knowledge of a subject (26%) (AAACE 1995). In a study of VET participants from 'disadvantaged' social groups (Golding and Volkoff, 1998), classified participants into four

motivational categories: worker, job seeker, learner and contributor. In a learning society, the specific motivation of the lifelong learner is less important than the fact that the person is engaged in learning.

Why is lifelong learning on the government's policy agenda?

The seminal policy documents on lifelong learning are:

- the OECD report—Lifelong Learning for All (1996), which emphasises the economic rationale for lifelong learning
- the UNESCO report—Learning: the Treasure Within (1996), by Jacques Delors, which emphasises the link between lifelong learning and social stability.

These documents assume that in the 21st century, we are in what Peter Drucker calls the 'knowledge society' where people will need an education that prepares them for jobs which have not yet been invented, and which they may have to create for themselves (Drucker 1993). In a globalised market, the OECD expects economic rewards to flow to nations where workers are adaptable, flexible, skilled and capable of continuous learning. Such a workforce can only be generated by a society of lifelong learners—a 'learning society'.

The OECD has embraced lifelong learning as a determinant of extended growth in a knowledge-based economy. It is argued that the pace of technological change—particularly in the information and communication technologies—has so transformed both the nature of work and its output, that everyone needs to be a lifelong learner. In the new 'knowledge-based economy', workers need the capacity to *develop* new technology, to *apply* new technology and to *retrain* for the jobs that are created by new technology.

As economic growth depends more on 'knowledge industries', individuals without the capacity for lifelong learning are at risk of becoming marginal to the labour force. Highly skilled workers are earning increasingly higher salaries, and the gulf between the incomes of high skilled and less skilled workers is widening. The Delors report for UNESCO argues that people (and nations) who are not lifelong learners (or learning societies) are likely to suffer economic and social exclusion.

The major danger is that of a gulf opening up between a minority of people who are capable of finding their way successfully about this new world...and the majority who feel that they are at the mercy of events and have no say in the future of society, with the dangers that entails of a setback to democracy and widespread revolt (Delors 1996).

In Australia, there is evidence of a widening gap between those who are involved in and those who are marginal to education and training. The gap between those who are involved in and those who are marginal to education and training places an estimated 300,000 young adults at risk of labour market disadvantage (Spierings 1999:10).

The link between education and economic growth is not new. In the 1960s, economists noted that people with higher levels of education attracted higher salaries and therefore assumed that education made people more productive. However human capital theorists did not argue that education was necessary for everyone. During the 1960s—when human capital theory was developed—people with lower skills enjoyed relatively stable employment. The argument that *everyone* should be educated—inherent in the OECD policy of 'lifelong learning for all'—derives from the recent phenomenon of growing unemployment among people with lower levels of skill. The OECD and UNESCO believe that arming individuals with the capacity and motivation for lifelong learning is the best way to prepare them for an increasingly unpredictable labour market.

‘The Delors report... argues that people...who are not lifelong learners...are likely to suffer economic and social exclusion’

Can governments deliver lifelong learning for all?

The policy goal of lifelong learning for all differs from our existing national policy framework for education and training, which was based on human capital theory. Human capital is defined in terms of the achievement of formal qualifications (Schultz 1961, Becker 1964).

Lifelong learning, in comparison, implies that learning is intrinsically valuable, and need not be a means to an educational qualification. Although a qualification may be the end result of many types of learning, the activity of learning is more important than the qualification to which it may lead. Learning *for its own sake* now has a higher value, in policy terms, than in the past. Governments now believe that the indirect benefits of universal participation in learning will assist society to meet the economic demands of the 21st century.

Education and training has been a government-sponsored activity for over a hundred years in Australia, and our education and training system is fashioned in a way consistent with government methods of organisation, control and accountability. This has led to a system characterised by formal systems where standards of achievement are represented by qualifications and where outcomes are measured in terms of employment and/or access to further levels of formal education and training. Although this system has served the country well in the past, it may not be sufficiently inclusive to meet the policy objective of lifelong learning for all.

A focus on skills

Historically, most government support for education and training is channelled into the formal system that delivers outcomes such as qualifications or skills. This policy leads to government support for schools and universities—the bastions of formal education—in the delivery of academic qualifications. Governments also support the role of vocational education and training in delivering work-based skills that lead to employment. During the 1990s, the role of industry in vocational education and training has been strengthened, leading to greater emphasis on work-based skills. In contrast, educational activities classified as ‘recreational’ remained outside the government’s education policy framework. Government support for general adult education offered by community-based providers—the ‘Cinderella’ sector—tends to be ad hoc, unsystematic and unfunded at the national level. (Crowley 1997:25).

However, an education system focused on qualifications and work-based skills may be too narrow to deliver lifelong learning for all. To encourage participation in lifelong learning, education policymakers should honour the many motivations of people who learn. Our education and training system needs to become *inclusive* rather than *exclusive* of individual learners. This view of education has a long history, dating back to educational reformers such as John Dewey and Bertrand Russell, who argued that education should focus on the needs and interests of the individual. Most teachers would agree that the primary role of education is to develop a love of learning, rather than simply providing the skills to perform a narrow vocation (Mackie 1966). However, under the current system of education and training, governments provide more support to people enrolled in formal qualifications than to ‘recreational’ learners.

Although lifelong learning for all implies that support should be directed to the needs and interests of the individual, the sector that embraces this educational philosophy—Adult Community Education (ACE)—receives the least support from government for this part of its role. The ACE sector remains outside of the mainstream education policy framework.

ACE is marginal in many ways: marginal to policy, marginal in resources allocated, and marginal in being run by a largely volunteer and female workforce (McIntyre 1998)

The ACE sector provides ‘second-chance’ entry points for many people who are alienated by formal education, possibly because it ‘actively promotes to participants the goal of becoming self-directed and self-managing learners, rather than the pursuit of distinction through some form of assessment or examination’ (NBEET 1996: 10). However ACE

provision is most commonly funded by fee-for-service arrangements. In 1997, 66 per cent of total annual hours for personal enrichment programs were paid for by the clients themselves or by agencies on their behalf. In comparison, only eight per cent of annual hours of VET provision were provided on a fee-for-service basis (NCVER 1997:9). The ACE sector’s reliance on fee-for-service may be one reason why ACE providers serve predominantly better educated client groups (AAACE 1995).

A conflict of interests

The Australian government’s emphasis on funding skill-based training programs means the ACE sector is often diverted from general adult education to accredited vocational training and labour market training programs (Crowley 1997: 25). As the Commonwealth Senate’s Committee observed:

...on the one hand, (the ACE sector’s) vitally important business of general, non-accredited adult education remains undervalued and unfunded by the Commonwealth, while on the other hand, a small proportion of its programs not only receive Commonwealth dollars, but gobble up a disproportionate amount of administrative resources and ACE worker’s time through the need to tender for funds, track students, report on outcomes and maintain statistics (Crowley 1997: 25).

‘ Most teachers would agree that the primary role of education is to develop a love of learning ’

All state and territory governments and the Commonwealth recognise the role of Adult Community Education in supporting lifelong learning, and a national policy was recently revised by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. The national policy provides a framework that aims to ‘recognise, enhance and support the Adult Community Education sector’ (MCEETYA 1997: 3). The national policy contains three policy goals, one of which is to ‘diversify opportunities for lifelong learning’, and identifies indicators of progress towards the policy goals. The first annual report on progress claims that enrolments are increasing, funding for ACE has increased in the areas of accredited training and literacy, and more ACE provision is being funded in rural and remote communities (MCEETYA 1999). This national policy commitment is a small step towards recognising the role of ACE in the provision of lifelong learning.

A nation of lifelong learners is a society of individuals who are motivated to learn and have the capacity to do so. If governments want to achieve the policy goal of lifelong learning for all, they must ensure that the education and training system promotes lifelong learning. However the achievement of lifelong learning *for all*, may demand a new approach to education and training policy. This

approach would need to acknowledge the wide variety of factors that motivate adult learners, other than the goals of acquiring academic qualifications or work-based skills. Although the ACE sector is well placed to deliver lifelong learning, its role in providing general adult education is constrained by the current policy framework.

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training simply because jobs continue to disappear from the Australian economy.

Above all there again seems to be a feeling of optimism across the field. On the national level, peak bodies are questioning the dominance of competency-based training as 'one size fits all' as recognition of diversity of contexts and learners is taken into account. At a state level, there have been changes within the community sector, with providers coming together to work collegially, after nine years in the competitive wilderness. More funding is flowing

to neighbourhood houses, IT development and Learning Cities to name just a few. Opportunities for teachers are opening up as their effectiveness in working with previously disengaged and unemployed people comes to be seen in partnership with other sectors of educational provision and more pathways for students are forged. The teachers are ready, willing and able to take up the challenges of the future, what ever they might be!

Jennifer Angwin's recent research at Deakin University focused on educationally disadvantaged early school leavers.

Metaphors of motion: pathways and Adult Community Education

by Allie Clemans



This article grew from a research project conducted about three years ago. Its findings challenge traditional assumptions about pathways in Adult Community Education and indicate significant changes in both society and the education sector.

Forging pathways—the project methodology

Funded by the then Office of Training and Further Education (OTFE) and the Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFEB), *Forging Pathways: good practice in community-based adult education* (Clemans and Rushbrook 1997) was undertaken in 1997. Its objective was to extend pathways between Adult Community Education (ACE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET). It worked on the assumption that ACE providers would benefit by offering learning pathways from its adult education programs to vocational and accredited learning opportunities.

The research sought to identify the features facilitating ACE to VET pathways in ACE providers. Methodology was determined by the funding agencies. We were to generate a set of case studies drawing on the work done by ACE providers around pathways that demonstrated characteristics, experiences and lesson that reflected the diversity of work in the ACE sector. To assist ACE providers more generally to 'institutionalise' learning pathways, a professional development package was to be developed.

Five ACE sites participated, reflecting small, medium and large provision in rural, urban and suburban settings. These were Merinda Park community house (Cranbourne), Coonara community house (Lower Ferntree Gully), Thornbury women's neighbourhood house, and in rural Victoria, The Centre (Wangaratta) and Apollo Bay community centre. Each provider shared experiences on how they responded to forging pathways between ACE and VET, raising issues and offering perspectives—why they were forged, benefits offered, the type of arrangements used to implement them, with the risks and drawbacks they posed.

We adopted a 'speaking back' approach in presenting much of the interview material as verbatim narrative text (Rushbrook and Clemans 1999). The Professional Development Package was developed in conjunction with ACE providers. It sought to give practical guide to systematic

“ We adopted a ‘speaking back’ approach in presenting ...the interview material as verbatim narrative text ”

thinking about pathways, drawn from lessons learnt from the case study sites and their applicability to the ACE sector. This was achieved through discussion with ACE providers.

Forging pathways—the research findings

Three findings emerged. The first found that learners who traversed learning pathways from course to course did so *within ACE itself*. This was significant because it challenged the conventional assumption that pathways meant external movement from ACE to another sector, usually TAFE.

The ACE providers demonstrated their development of a complex array of internal and external educational pathways. Some providers in the early stages of grappling with the complexities of VET provision worked with their local TAFE institute, which supported them to offer an accredited module of a larger VET program in ACE (often with a TAFE educator running the module in the ACE provider). As the ACE provider gained more experience with VET provision, they applied for approval to deliver their own modules, relinquishing their dependence on the TAFE. In some cases, ACE providers even offered VET programs to other ACE providers on an outreach basis.

This pattern indicates while ACE to VET pathways may have begun by encouraging movement beyond ACE, the objective was to redirect this pathway internally so that ACE to VET occurred within ACE itself. ACE providers seemed to be responding to learner demand to diversify their educational offerings while sustaining the learning environment. This included the pedagogical approach associated with ACE, its proximity close to learners' homes and other supports such as childcare.

The second finding was that movement between courses was not linear. All case study sites offered opportunities for ACE and VET through which learners gained a variety of outcomes. Learners did not necessarily move from adult education to VET programs when they were educationally

prepared, but rather wove an educational tapestry out of educational programs that offered a mix of personal and work related outcomes.

The third finding revealed a sector which embraced program diversification in the belief that it demonstrated more community responsiveness. The intrusion of VET into the ACE sector in the early 1990s was initially greeted with suspicion and derision, anticipating that the cherished tradition of the sector to provide general adult education would be eroded with the developing national obsession for work-related (and competency-based) training. Yet this research unveiled an educational sector in 1997 that had taken on the VET juggernaut and incorporated it as an extension of its traditional community practice. The ACE providers in the case study sites, and beyond these too, were adamant that offering VET in their own right did not mean they were mirroring TAFE. Instead, they were strengthening their community base by offering choice to local communities (who desired more of the same ACE approach), strengthening their resource base (VET courses attracted relatively more money per student contact hour than less credentialled programs) and thus protecting their local autonomy.

The intention behind our project methodology was to allow space for the experiences of ACE providers to 'speak back' to ourselves as researchers and to other readers. It would be foolish to try to collapse and generalise their experiences. However it is hard to ignore the fact that this group of adult educational providers held a place beyond that envisaged by those who conceived the project brief (nor indeed myself as a researcher). They showed evidence of evolving educational identities that did not adhere to conventional associations of ACE. As such, the conceptualisation and construction of pathways between ACE and VET reinforces a need to rethink the pathway metaphor and its applicability in adult community education currently.

The shifting identity of ACE

Surprisingly, our research on pathways from ACE to VET did not necessarily involve movement from ACE to TAFE. It shed light on internal pathways within ACE itself. Surprising, but not unexpected, ACE has come to incorporate a broad range of educational programs that attract specific but varied learners. A report prepared for the Ministerial Review on the Provision of Technical and Further Education in the Melbourne Metropolitan Area on Seamless Education and Training (Teese 1997) acknowledged the 'seamlessness' of Victorian ACE:

Within the community-based sector more narrowly, specific vocational training is a growing activity; however basic literacy and numeracy and other preparatory courses also have vocational outcomes.

Together this range of courses represents one of the most important elements of seamlessness in the Victorian education and training system. (Teese 1997:28)

Teese defined a seamless system as one in which an educational sector maintains:

...its distinctive purposes, has multiple points of entry and recognises both credentialled and uncredentialled learning through appropriate practices. Seamlessness places client need and prior learning experience ahead of institutional pedigree. (Teese 1997:1)

Could the internal pathways between ACE and VET say something about the distinctiveness of this educational sector such that 'clients' wanted *more* learning in the *same* community environment? This would confirm that ACE providers have the capacity to provide more than the further education outcomes for which they have built a well deserved reputation. Their diversification of courses that span credentialled and non-credentialled courses is proof of a holistic but differentiated approach to achieving a distinct educational purpose—contributing to a range of learning outcomes that address individuals, their relationship to communities and their capacity for productivity (paid, unpaid and underpaid). It also seems that the appeal of a community-based learning environment is that it generates a particular learning climate that is *integral* to the participation and successful learning outcomes of a range of learners who might not ordinarily be inclined or able to access TAFE.

Learner choices

While I am addressing the issue of learner choices for and in ACE, it seems necessary to consider their identities more specifically. Research conducted by the Adult Community and Further Education Board in 1993 of ACE learners in three states identified that courses with the largest proportions of people going on to formal study (within or external to ACE) were those in access and VET courses (ACFEB, 1995).

It is possible to talk in Victoria about the ACE as offering significant opportunities for women to pursue VET programs.

How many women access the path to vocational training—and who these women are—depends in no small measure on the community sector because of its geographical spread and client sensitivity (Teese 1997,30).

It was notable in 1995 (and this may still hold today) that less than half the learners doing ESL and basic education went on to other kinds of learning within or beyond ACE, compared to those in access and VET courses.

Surprisingly,
our research
on pathways
...shed light
on internal
pathways
within
ACE itself

Work done in NSW (McIntyre, Morris and Tennant, 1993; McIntyre, Foley, Morris and Tennant, 1995) validated the dominance of women in general adult education but as they looked deeper into this category, they found that the women were relatively advantaged in their employment and prior education status. More recent but as yet incomplete mapping of demographic trends and ACE participants conducted by McIntyre (2000) indicates that in Melbourne too, ACE participants do not simply mirror the conventional categories of disadvantage often associated with ACE. They flow between relatively advantaged and less advantaged learners.

ACE in NSW is not comparable to ACE in Victoria but these findings cut across traditional associations of ACE as the 'Cinderella' sector, providing second chance opportunities for disadvantaged learners. It appears that general adult education is attracting a relatively advantaged group of learners whose learning pathways could well be from university to ACE. The movement of learners in ESL and literacy programs into VET courses does not appear that strong.

The importance of the participation trends is that it alters the basis on which the identity of ACE has been constructed. Whether it flags a changing mix of learner characteristics in the Victorian ACE sector or signals entrenched participation trends is unclear. Unchallenged though, is the notion that whoever they are, ACE learners choose to develop a range of learning outcomes within the sector in the belief that it can deliver the mix of formal and informal learning programs using a favoured educational approach.

The literature on pathways does not pay attention to the way in which particular educational approaches may enhance educational participation. An OECD study of ten countries investigating pathways identified three assumptions on which a pathways approach was built:

- in democratic countries, policymakers have an interest in encouraging educational participation on the basis of its economic and or social benefits
- participation in learning depended on the attractiveness of programs to students based on their aspirations, needs and interests
- the desired pattern of educational participation could not be achieved through a laissez-faire approach, leaving things to the market (Raffe 1998,376-77).

I have not found any place in research given to the relationship between individuals and the learning environment they may seek. The rationale for increasing learner participation rests more on being able to satisfy their individual needs as consumers than educational needs as learners.

literature on pathways does not pay attention to the way... particular... approaches may enhance educational participation

Our research findings highlight the ACE educational approach as a key factor in encouraging movement between programs, strengthened by ACE's capacity to offer an array of programs that extend beyond what was once considered its traditional boundaries. The Diploma of Further Education

provides preparation towards and an introduction to tertiary study through a mix of subjects that can be undertaken in ACE, in TAFE and at university. Its delivery begins in ACE and is coherently structured to nurture the connection of an ACE learner to other more formal learning contexts. The Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGEA) has been successfully delivered for youth at risk (not a conventional target group for ACE) by ACE educators in schools and in ACE settings (Bradshaw, Clemans, Donovan and Macrae—in progress).

Extending the network

In the recent Ministerial Review of post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria (the Kirby Review), the report notes the growing diversification of ACE to cater for learners not conventionally part of the sector, in this case for youth, and its relationship to teaching and learning:

The Panel has been impressed with the acceptance by the ACE sector in Victoria of a role in the provision of programs for youth...ACE providers...have advantages of informality, confidentiality and security, and supportive adult relationships. Their teaching and learning approaches fashioned for adults with incomplete educational histories suit the needs of a particular group of young people (Ministerial Review 2000, 108).

The identity of ACE is now built on complex educational capacities and learning pathways. The programs it offers are similarly available in other educational sectors. What seems to drive learners to pursue them in ACE is the perception of pedagogical responsiveness. This was certainly evident in the findings of *Forging Pathways* and has become increasingly recognised within and outside of the sector over the last few years. While *Forging Pathways* demonstrated the contribution made by the educational capacity of ACE towards pathways, it also threw up questions around the very concept of pathways itself. The examples given of pathways and the ways in which ACE providers seemed to conceptualise them varied significantly from the patterns implicit in the pathways metaphor.

Slightly British but appropriate, Raffe (1998) discusses educational metaphors:

Educational discourse is full of the metaphor of travel. We talk of students' origins and destinations, and the itineraries that link them. We describe tracks

and streams, royal roads and alternative routes, one-way streets and dead-ends, and ladders and bridges. We apply terms such as 'parking lot' to schemes where there is little progress (Raffe 1998, 375).

Pathways keeps true to this metaphorical tradition by highlighting a linear and hierarchical journey through which skills acquisition unfolds, for example 'from ACE to VET', 'from TAFE to university', 'from general to vocational education'. Interrogation of pathways has been spurred by the complexity of societal change, the rise in unemployment and the related patterns of school to work transition for youth in particular. Evans and Furlong (1997) explore the shift in metaphors associated with educational transition in Britain. They argue that the dominant metaphors in the 1970s were 'bridges', 'routes' and 'pathways' in keeping with the time spent by youth in unemployment or in job creation schemes. During the 1980s, the metaphor of 'trajectory' spread. As the youth labour market collapsed and class, race, gender and educational attainment (rather than individual traits or inclinations) determined access to employment, trajectories were also determined by these structures. In the 1990s, the metaphor of 'navigation' began to emerge, relating successful movement towards the labour market on individual skill and capacity.

While our retention of pathways may expose us to an outdated concept, it seems that the ways in which pathways was discussed by ACE providers in the five case study sites give reasons to argue against its retention on more grounds than metaphorical currency alone.

The fact that the ACE sector could absorb learning pathways is testament to the increasing organisational capacity of ACE providers and challenges the hierarchical notion of the ACE sector as offering 'the first step' educationally. This has been supported by McIntyre et al. 1993, op cit) which found that for many women, the ACE sector was not a starting point but a terminus. The ACE sector did not emerge as a stepping stone from which those who had reached 'educational maturity' could jump. The wide range of programs it offered cancelled out the image of ACE placed low down on the hierarchical ladder of providers and programs, offering few work-related courses.

Learners who chose to pursue VET programs in ACE did not always do so in a linear fashion either. VET programs were not necessarily selected after the completion of more general and informal educational programs. Rather, learners selected their courses for multiple reasons, pursuing diverse learning outcomes that related to home and work simultaneously.

These choices challenge the artificial polarisation of life contexts—between school and work, work and home, work

and community that the pathways metaphor appears to uphold. Instead, it appears that ACE learners did not compartmentalise the contribution made by particular educational programs to their life contexts—they slipped in and out of courses depending on multiple and overlapping learning needs.

From pathways to...?

The *Forging Pathways* research project was itself normative in its intention—designed to encourage the individual quest for 'competence' and the 'vocational self'. For all its attempts to keep faith with the metaphor of movement, it appears that the concept of pathways is static. It makes assumptions about ACE learners and their quest for advancement beyond adult education which:

...[engender] commonalities...mask social divisions and invite assumptions that ...adults approach transitions in the same way, with the same resources, goals and needs (Wyn cited in Evans & Furlong, 1997).

It is encouraging that the Kirby Review signals the need to update and replace the concept of pathways.

The transitional journeys for many young people are diverse, dynamic and uncertain. For most, the essential ingredient for progress will be the knowledge and skills, and the associated qualifications, that will allow them to move to the next stage in the transition process. Pathways, therefore, are a series of learning platforms. This is a definition that is more suited to the concept of lifelong learning (Ministerial Review 2000, 77).

This paper has allowed me to re-search the findings of the *Forging Pathways* project for what they say about the pathways of, and in, ACE. It is clear to me that the identity of ACE has shifted and that it is not sufficient to see it solely in terms of the contribution it makes to 'second chance' education. Much of what it delivers now is also done in other educational sectors. It is *the way* in which it does so that marks its distinctive qualities.

For these reasons, many learners journey along multi-directional learning pathways within ACE. These movements do not sit comfortably with the rather restrictive connotations that the pathways metaphor carries. Learning programs, learners' needs and learners themselves cross the socially constructed, artificial boundaries between private and public. So too should our metaphors.

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“ In the 1990s,
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call for contributions

Fine Print
invites
contributions
to the 2000
Summer issue

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Coming issues *Fine Print* in 2000

In 2000, *Fine Print* seeks to examine a number of different perspectives on Adult Literacy and Basic Education.

The autumn edition considered the question of just what a community is, and how language and literacy help to create and sustain that sense of community, the winter edition focused on the place of science in ALBE and this spring edition looks at what pathways exist within ALBE.

And as the end of the year approaches, the summer edition will explore issues surrounding Indigenous literacy.

If you have ideas related to these themes and you wish to contribute an article which adds to the discussion, please see the details on the back cover about contributing to *Fine Print*.

Brave new words: changing lifeworlds for teachers in adult education

by Jennifer Angwin

The adult education sector has experienced many changes over the past decade, with many workers in the field feeling a diminished sense of belonging to a community of professional adult educators. But as the author explains, there are plenty of fulfilling challenges ahead.

A state of change

The past ten years have seen unprecedented changes on all fronts in the working environments of adult educators. Much of this is due to easy access to small, affordable computers, increased public access to electronic communications and the linking of industrial worksites, educational institutions and neighbourhood houses to the internet and email. While still in the developmental stages for many teachers, there is a growing acceptance that online resources will play an increasingly important role in our work in the future.

This is a time of expansion of opportunities for teachers in what was rather a marginal area which, along with much of adult educational provision, was seen as women's work. Increasing numbers of men have joined and continued to work in the field and contribute to the day to day work, as well as broader professional associations and debates. Whereas in the past women tended to remain classroom teachers, over the past ten years increasing numbers of women have risen through the field to take on managerial, professional and leadership roles locally, nationally and internationally. Some women have successfully formed their own provider companies and made considerable progress in leadership and management.

The numbers of adult literacy educators who have undertaken further studies and higher degrees is impressive, and today there are far more experienced adult educators available to undertake research projects and thus help inform future policy formation. As women's work, one of the driving forces within the field has been a commitment to social justice, in the development of educational programs and relationships with colleagues and students. As Paolo Freire's work reminds us, adult education remains a contested political site, and the quiet and persistent work of teachers has, without doubt, brought positive changes in life chances to many educationally and thus often socially disadvantaged adults.

“ This is a time of expansion of opportunities for teachers in what was rather a marginal area ”

While the past decade has been a time of professional opportunity for some, this cannot be claimed to be the overall situation. Above all, the rapidity of changes in direction on all sides has resulted in a feeling of fragmentation and dislocation for many teachers working in adult community education. This sector of adult education has experienced

unprecedented growth since the International Year of Literacy brought adult literacy provision in Australia more under the gaze of policy makers and funding authorities. As with all shifts in focus in education, there have been some gains and some losses in this shift in focus, with the field today being markedly different from ten years ago and, perhaps more to the point, still struggling to maintain its share of the educational dollar.

Changes and challenges

For all teachers there have been changes in language and discourses, ways of working, forms of employment and ownership of curriculum. For some, the past ten years have proved a time of unprecedented opportunity and challenge as opportunities for curriculum and professional development have abounded. For most, however, a sense of belonging to a community of professional adult educators has diminished and consequently attendance at conferences has declined and professional associations are struggling for ongoing viability, funding and survival. A core periphery model of professional association is now firmly established, with a central core having shared understandings of the policies, tensions and developing opportunities, with a growing periphery who are isolated in their workplaces and practices.

Professional lives

The impact of casualisation of the majority of teachers working in adult literacy over the past ten years has resulted in a shift of shared understandings and ways of working. In the past, most teachers began by working just a few hours each week with one provider in one location, across two or three programs. Within a relatively short time of an

'apprenticeship' teachers would find themselves offered a regular class of their own and, for many in the 1980s, shortly after followed a contract of at least one year and less frequently, the offer of permanency.

By the mid 1990s this pattern of employment had all but disappeared. The shift away from direct funding caused great uncertainty in the field, and providers claimed that as they were no longer assured of ongoing funding, neither could they provide teachers with ongoing employment. The field which had worked so hard to gain better conditions for students and teachers, now returned to employment patterns of the mid 1970s, with many teachers having to work at the same time for a number of different providers, in different venues and programs.

After years of moving from place to place, few teachers found that they were able to move any closer to permanent ongoing employment, and spent years moving from provider to provider and program to program. Rather than building up collegial relationships and professional networks, teachers found themselves continually being new to a program or venue, meeting new colleagues, and unable to develop long term professional relationships or become in research projects or administrative decision making. Every few months teachers were faced with the possibility of being out of work yet again. Their work took on the pattern of constantly being new—to a venue, a program, a curriculum and a group of colleagues.

Policy change

How and why did these changes come about? The late 1980s saw an unprecedented time of policy change, in terms of curriculum, organisation, and the attempts to create educational markets within the adult and vocational sector. Funding, curriculum, organisation and employment patterns have all changed radically over the past ten years, so that in many ways, those joining the field most recently no longer have any ways of knowing the long history and previous forms of organisation. As unemployment increased, education as usual was constructed as central to the problem. Since 1986 Australia's economic future has been linked to increasing skills in the workforce, as the demands of new technologies and the impact of globalisation, reduce the job opportunities for low skilled workers.

Creating markets in education

The shift to marketisation and privatisation impacted most extensively in adult education of all sectors of education. The shift away from public funding in the adult sector to tendering for program funding, led to the expansion of the private sector and the marked increase in the number of registered training organisations which are accredited to deliver training. In Victoria the affect was a shift from direct

funding of TAFE institutes, with a further shift away from direct funding in favour of a periods of intense tendering for funds, programs students and ultimately, teachers.

Tendering at the teacher level impacted most profoundly on the ways of working experienced by teachers in their everyday lives. Where previously the adult sector had linked committees of coordinated provision across a region, each provider now came to see the next as a potential competitor, competing for the same tenders and ultimately the same students. Collaboration was lost in favour of competition, resulting in the breakdown of previously long-held strong links which worked for the benefit of students, teachers and program development. Boundaries of provision blurred between programs for people already in the workforce, and unemployed people who were learning new skills in order to try to find new employment. Whether a socially just market can exist in vocational education and training remains contested within the field.

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Changing students

For many teachers still working in the field, there has been a marked shift in the student groups being taught. The students in adult community education programs for many years were women, long term resident migrants with low levels of English skills and some recently arrived immigrants and refugees. As globalisation began to impact on the Australian economy and the recession of the late 1980s hit, the profile of the classes also changed to reflect new patterns of employment and unemployment. Most recently, teachers have found themselves working with much younger students as the rate of early school leaving continues to climb and young people who have not completed Year 12 find it extremely difficult to find ongoing work or to access VET. Working with 15 to 16 year-olds who have often experienced failure and alienation within the school system can prove to be extremely challenging for teachers, but it would seem from the recent Kirby Review of Post Compulsory Education, the numbers of young people seeking access to ACE programs will continue to grow.

Developing a competency-based curriculum

During the 1980s there was great emphasis in adult literacy on the teacher as curriculum developer working within the notion of learner-centred, needs-based curriculum development. The professional development agendas of the time were based largely around developing these skills in teachers, so that regardless of student group or context the teachers would be able to easily develop appropriate curriculum for the students' levels and needs. The key curriculum development of the 1980s would have been the rise and rise of the competency-based curriculum, beginning in vocational education and training and spreading out, colonising almost all discipline areas in its path. The dominant

feature for language teachers remains a curriculum approach which predetermines outcomes, in a field which used to be perhaps the most open ended of all in education. At one level the shift to the dominant curriculum paradigm of competency-based curricula can be seen as the return of teacher-proof packages, which so dominated primary school reading schemes of the 1960s and 70s. A teacher is no longer expected to exercise professional judgement concerning student learning but rather to monitor student progress, as evaluation loses out to assessment.

Developing an accredited curriculum

There has been an extraordinary proliferation of curriculum packages which teachers are now teaching to all sorts of students. A major turning point for teachers and students in the adult literacy field was the introduction of the CGEA, which at the time, was strongly contested by many experienced teachers in the field. But ten years on more teachers are delivering a wide range of accredited curricula, in a wide range of settings, thus widening access to recognised education and training in ways not thought of before.

On the one hand teachers no longer are designing their own curricula based on their own needs analysis and professional judgement. But on the other hand, for the first time students have access to widely accredited curricula which are nationally recognised and can support students into learning pathways from sector to sector in ways which were not previously possible.

And what of the future?

So where are we now? What have the impacts of all these changes been on the field of adult literacy and basic education? What are the challenges that lie ahead? Employment patterns for teachers, while improving in the school sector, do not appear to be changing for the better in the post compulsory sector or the university sector. In fact there are few opportunities for younger people to move into this sector at all. The number of teachers continuing their own professional education in higher education has dropped markedly, but at the same time there has been a steady growth in teachers moving on to doctoral studies. Once again cuts in funding are taking place in the university sector, with the likelihood that postgraduate courses in education will become full fee paying in the future. At present in Victoria the desperate financial state of the TAFE institutes has been made public. Years of cost cuts and tendering for ongoing work have taken their toll on the institutions. This year saw several financial rescue packages set up but ongoing government funding of post compulsory education and training will continue to be contested.

Almost daily, reports are released which draw attention to the difficulties a growing number of young people

experience with formal schooling, resulting in early school leaving, diminished life chances and, for many, attempting to resume their education in the adult sector. The Kirby Review suggests major changes are needed in the school sector if retention rates are to be improved. According to the review, schools are no longer meeting the educational and personal development needs of many young people. The final two years of schooling should be opened up to a range of structures, settings and teaching arrangements in an attempt to encourage more students to complete Year 12 and thus have better lifelong chances in the labour market.

Going online

We will no doubt see a further huge development in online technologies coming into the adult field as increasingly there is a policy perspective developing that flexible delivery, being cost effective, will yet again be put forward as one size fits all. There is far more to education than merely putting a 'customer'

through their paces of what ever package might hold dominance at the time. Learners for the most part continue to resist a shift to fully teacherless pedagogies, particularly for students with little experience of post compulsory education itself. True, the Internet has opened up huge possibilities for those who, in Bourdieu's terms, have the cultural capital to utilise and critique these forms.

We must continue to encourage and fund the most innovative and challenging ways for students to learn with new technologies just as we need to remain on that steep leaning curve, because almost weekly there are updates and changes in workplace technologies. As with all new technologies, the gaps between the haves and the have nots at first widens, but with the rapidity of technological development, will there ever be a chance to catch up? Whereas community houses now have banks of computers with access to the Internet readily available, which was unheard of even five years ago, the drain on their meagre resources to maintain and update these expensive but essential teaching tools is as yet unresolved and will no doubt change again in the future.

In the global economy

The impact of globalisation on the workforce in Australia continues to disenfranchise many low skilled workers. In the redesign of employment services there is a clear link between success and the agency providing the service, with welfare agencies again proving to be most successful with some of the most disadvantaged groups of people within our community. New policies emerge suggesting that lifelong learning is the way for each individual to improve their chances in a declining labour market. Teachers will again need to continue to be vigilant to ensure that once again students in this sector do not miss out on education and

Continued on page 6

“ The number of teachers continuing... professional education in higher education has dropped markedly ”

Victorian school leavers: pathways and outcomes

by Richard Curtain

What pathways do secondary school leavers follow in Victoria? The author refers to the recent Victorian Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways, on which he worked as a consultant. Other analysis is from a paper on youth employment strategies commissioned by the UN's Social Development Division.

Overview

The transition from education to work for many young people is not simply a matter of leaving the educational system and entering the world of work. The transition process can extend for some time with neither an obvious starting point nor a clearly defined end. It may involve several steps back and forth between education and work. It may be interrupted by job search and waiting times, involuntary unemployment or chosen time off for leisure, travel or other activities (Müller and Gangl, 2000: 2).

Little is known about the pathways followed by secondary school leavers in Victoria. Standard labour market measures based on the official definition of unemployment fail to take into account the complexity of the factors involved in young people's education and employment activities. These official measures often provide an inadequate information base on which to assess young peoples' progress and to identify the nature and extent of the problems they are encountering. Inadequate measures can also produce inappropriate policy responses. The ability of education providers and other community-based groups to follow up and offer assistance to school leavers depends on the ready availability at the local level of comprehensive information on post-school student outcomes.

The unemployment rate is an inadequate measure of how young people fare in their transition from education to work. Its inadequacy stems from its partial coverage of the relevant young age cohorts, its cross sectional and hence static profile, and its somewhat arbitrary definition of job seeker. It is, therefore, often not possible to encapsulate all the aspects of teenage or young adult unemployment in a single measure. Alternative measures of young people's transition from education to work are required which are more appropriate in assessing the extent of the problem and the nature of policy responses (see OECD, 2000a).

This paper presents unpublished data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Monthly Population Survey to show, in a

partial way, the pathways undertaken by 1998 Victorian school leavers. Also presented are unpublished data on the education attainment of Victorians compared to the rest of Australia.

Post-school pathways

Compulsory schooling ends in Victoria when the student is aged 15 years and nine months. Most students turn age 16 years during Year 10. The post compulsory education pathways of young Victorians are shown in Table 1 (over). The data refer to the destinations in May 1999 of those who left secondary school in 1998. The school leavers are grouped by the year they completed at secondary school—Year 10, 11 or 12 or other year not specified. The latter may refer to those who either left before completing Year 10 or those who left after completing their 13th year at secondary school.

The table is a complex one because of the number of education and labour market outcomes it records for each year of post compulsory schooling completed. Looking at the education outcomes first, the table shows that outcomes are notably different for each year of completion. For Year 10 secondary school leavers, 42 per cent have chosen another education pathway. Table 1 shows that a third of Year 10 school leavers have gone onto TAFE to continue their education and nine per cent have gone on to business colleges, industry skills centres and other educational institutions.

For Year 11 secondary school leavers, the proportion still in education has dropped to 35 per cent with 21 per cent in TAFE and 14 per cent with other education providers. Amongst those who left secondary school having completed another year, just over half (52 per cent) are in further education. Compared to Australian data for Year 11 school leavers, Victorian Year 11 leavers are notably less likely to be still in education (45 per cent compared with 35 per cent).

The situation in Victoria

However, the education participation level of Year 12 school leavers in Victoria is markedly different. Fully three quarters

Little is known about the pathways followed by secondary school leavers in Victoria

Table 1: Persons aged 15 to 24 who have left school^a: Highest year of school completed, Victoria, May 1999

	completed Year 10	completed Year 11	completed Year 12	completed Other Year	total leaving school in 1998
Attending in May 1999					
higher education	0.0	0.0	52.9	14.2	38.9
TAFE	32.6	20.9	20.7	37.5	23.0
other ^b	9.1	13.7	2.2	0.0	4.0
Not attending in May 1999					
in f.t. work	13.5	21.9	6.4	12.9	9.2
in p.t. work	8.8	10.5	5.6	15.9	7.1
unemployed	8.8	25.5	7.5	0.0	9.1
not in l.f.	27.2	7.5	4.8	26.9	8.7
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number	6575	7411	48,609	4288	66,884

Source: ABS, 1999—*Transition from education to work, May. Catalogue 6227.0 (unpublished data).*

Notes

Estimates below 5192 and percentages based on such estimates are subject to high standard error and should be used with caution.

(a) comprises persons who attended school in 1998 and were not attending school in May 1999.

(b) includes business colleges, industry skills centres and other educational institutions.

(76 per cent) of Year 12 leavers have continued onto some form of further education. Over half of Year 12 leavers have entered higher education and 21 per cent have gone on to TAFE.

It is likely that many of those going to TAFE are also employed as apprentices or trainees. Data for Australia as a whole show that nearly half the TAFE attenders amongst Year 10 and Year 11 leavers are also full time employees. Another 21 per cent of Year 10 and 11 school leavers who have gone onto TAFE are also part time employees (ABS 1999, Table 16).

Year 12 secondary school leavers accounted for 73 per cent of all secondary school leavers in Victoria in 1998. This compares with 68 per cent of all school leavers who were Year 12 completers Australia-wide. Victoria clearly performs better than the national profile of school leavers. Of the remaining 27 per cent who left in a year other than at the end of Year 12, as many as two-thirds (68 per cent) did not go onto further education. What has happened to these school leavers who decided that, at this stage in their lives at least, they did not want to continue their formal education?

The labour market outcomes for each year of school completers are also notably different. Year 10 school leavers not in further education are the most likely of the four groupings of school leavers to be out of work. Some Year 10 leavers are actively looking for work (nine per cent) but a

significant proportion (27 per cent) are without work and not actively looking for work. Amongst Year 11 leavers, nearly a third (32 per cent) are in work compared with 22 per cent of Year 10 school leavers. A high proportion (26 per cent) of Year 11 school leavers, compared with the other school leavers, are actively looking for work. Among the completed other year leavers, some 29 per cent in work and 27 per cent are not in work and not actively looking for work.

As noted above, most Year 12 leavers are pursuing further studies. Only 12 per cent are in work with eight per cent actively looking for work and five per cent not in work and not actively looking for work.

A variety of pathways

These data suggest that young people in Victoria are pursuing a variety of pathways after compulsory education. In aggregate, the May 1999 data show that 40 per cent of the 1998 secondary school leavers are going onto higher education (compared with 33 per cent Australia-wide), 23 per cent are continuing their studies at TAFE (the same as the national share) and four per cent are with other education providers. Some nine per cent of those secondary school leavers not in some form of further education are in full time work, with seven per cent in part time work. Some nine per cent of school leavers not in further education are unemployed and nine per cent are not in work and not actively looking for work.

These latter two groups, representing 18 per cent of all post compulsory school leavers in Victoria in May 1999 are obviously the group of young people who are most at risk of entering a cycle of continuing joblessness and temporary work. Some among those school leavers not in education and in part time work may also be 'at risk' of being trapped in this cycle. The hard core 'at risk' group are the school leavers who have not completed Year 12 and who are not in further education or full time work. They are particularly prone to experiencing long term disadvantage in the labour market. In May 1999, they accounted for nine per cent of all 1998 secondary school leavers in Victoria. This proportion is the same as the national proportion of non-Year 12 completers who have not completed Year 12 and who are not in further education or full-time work (9.5 per cent).

Education outcomes: Victoria and rest of Australia

Victoria's levels of education compared with the rest of Australia, using May 1999 data, are presented in Table 2 (below). The data show that, compared with the other states and territories in aggregate, there are more people with degrees and postgraduate diplomas in Victoria. The data also show that Victoria has about the same proportion of the population compared with the rest of Australia who have completed their highest level of secondary schooling but do

not have a post-school qualification (18.6 and 18.1 per cent respectively).

However, in terms of qualifications below the degree level, Victoria lags behind the rest of Australia. In terms of qualifications at basic vocational, only 6.9 per cent have a qualification compared with 9.5 per cent for the rest of Australia. The proportion of the population with skilled vocational qualifications is also lower than the rest of Australia. The overall result is that the proportion of Victorians with a post-school qualification is no different to the rest of Australia (43.1 per cent compared to 43.9 per cent). These data suggest that while Victoria's education system has been successful in producing higher level qualifications, it has a less than noteworthy record at the sub degree level.

Nor has the situation changed for the most recent age cohort likely to have completed their initial education (25 to 34 years). Victorians in the 25 to 34 age group in May 1999 are more likely to hold degrees, higher degrees and other postgraduate qualifications compared with elsewhere in Australia (22.8 per cent compared with 19.2 per cent). They are also more likely to have completed the highest level of secondary schooling compared to elsewhere in Australia (19.4 compared to 18.2 per cent). However, a negative qualification gap between Victorians and the rest of Australia occurs at the basic vocational level (8.3 per cent compared with 10.9 per cent).

The gap for the proportion of the population aged 25 to 34 years holding skill vocational qualifications in Victoria compared to elsewhere in Australia has increased compared with the situation, noted above, for the population aged 15 to 64 years (12.5 per cent compared with 14.1 per cent). The pattern of a similar overall level post-school qualifications for Victoria compared to the rest of Australia, noted above, persists for the post initial education age cohort (52.6 per cent compared with 53 per cent).

From school to work

The transition from school to work is a turbulent and uncertain period for young people, even if many of them start on the right track (OECD 1998: 111). Longitudinal data for a number of OECD countries show the damaging effects of persistence in unemployment and inactivity in the first years of the transition process. In some OECD countries, such as those in southern Europe, even those who have completed tertiary level education are still at risk of considerable unemployment after entering the labour market (OECD, 2000b: 265, Muller and Gangl, 2000: 9).

Labour markets are increasingly differentiated by skills. Unemployment risks are unequally distributed among skill groups (Muller and Gangl, 2000: 5). This means that education attainment and young peoples' chances of gaining employment are intimately linked. Young people in most OECD countries who have not completed upper secondary

Table 2: Persons aged 15 to 64 years: educational attainment, May 1999, Victoria and rest of Australia compared (%)

Educational attainment	Victoria	Rest of Australia
With post-school qualifications	43.1	43.9
higher degree	1.9	2.0
postgrad diploma	3.0	1.9
bachelor degree	12.4	10.8
undergraduate diploma	4.7	5.1
associate diploma	3.2	3.0
skilled vocational	11.0	11.5
basic vocational	6.9	9.5
Without post-school qualifications	51.3	50.8
Completed highest level secondary school*	18.6	18.1
Still at school	5.7	5.3
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: ABS, 1999—*Transition from education to work, Australia and special tabulations for Victoria, May, Catalogue 6227.0, Table 10.*

*The data in italics on the proportion that have completed highest level secondary school are a subset of the row above.

education are more vulnerable to unemployment. In fact, data for 27 OECD countries show that completion of upper secondary education for young people aged 20 to 24 years reduces, on average, their unemployment to population ratio (that is, unemployment as a percentage of the entire age cohort) by about five percentage points, and that of 25 to 29 year olds by about four points (OECD, 2000b: 264).

Well coordinated institutional arrangements governing the school-to-work process in OECD countries make a difference. Longitudinal data reveal important national differences in how well the transition works. This is especially true among young people who do not go to university, regardless of whether they have completed an apprenticeship or not (OECD, 1998: 111).

Young people have fewer problems making the transition to work in OECD countries with institutional arrangements that encourage close links to workplaces during the education to work process, supported by coherent vocational education pathways (OECD, 2000a). Also, countries where young people combine paid work out of school hours with education also achieve better transition outcomes. Studies in Australia, Sweden and the United States all indicate that those who have had such jobs have a better chance of being employed and a reduced chance of being unemployed than those who have not (Lucas and Lammont, 1998: 45-56, Robinson, 1999).

Conclusion

Several general conclusions can be drawn with implications for public policy purposes. One is that youth employment prospects depend, above all, on overall employment growth. However, this alone often does not address the particular disadvantage that youth may face in the labour market. Differences in education-to-work transition outcomes reflect also the effectiveness of a country's institutional arrangements in facilitating or hindering the transition process. Where these institutional arrangements work well, mostly as a result of good coordination between major stakeholders, there is no need for a specific focus on youth as problem group in the labour market.

Another conclusion is that a focus on employment generation should be complemented by skills development, usually identified by level of education attainment as a proxy indicator of skill. There is near universal evidence of the link between education attainment and employment rates. However, the extent to which post compulsory education

providers can deliver the skills in demand is not clear. Much depends on the effectiveness of public policy levers in lifting the quality and responsiveness of education providers.

countries where young people combine paid work out of school hours with education... achieve better ...outcomes

The near universal link between education and employment also indicates an increasing bifurcation between young people with skills and those without. A new labour market dualism may be emerging where it may be impossible for many young people to move out of a cycle of low skill and uncertain employment, unemployment or informal sector participation to a high skill, relatively secure employment status. Leaving school early and not acquiring recognised skills may condemn a young person to a life of limited income earning prospects.

Richard Curtain (PhD, ANU) was consultant to the Victorian Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways, final report released August 2000.

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Finding the pathways: education delivery in the juvenile justice system

by Sally Pardew



Educators in the juvenile justice system play many roles—as vocational guides, as mentors and often as friends—while helping young offenders learn to make valid life choices.

Meeting complex needs

The educational pathways for students in the juvenile justice system can be described either very simply or in relation to a more complex interaction of needs, shapes, sizes and a shuffling of pieces until a best fit is found for each student.

Victoria's juvenile justice centres are provided with educational pathways quite neatly in a TAFE sector that also has to attend to the complex needs of the juvenile justice student group. Our student groups are at Parkville in the Melbourne juvenile justice centre (young men aged between 14 and 17), and the Parkville youth residential centre (young women aged between 14 and 21).

Students between the ages of 10 and 14 are offered schooling through the Department of Education, attached to the primary division, and the group of young men between 17 and 21 are at the Parkville senior youth training centre, at Malmsbury youth training centre for longer sentences, or at the Acheron youth training camp at Buxton.

The role of TAFE

Kangan Batman TAFE currently provides programs to the MJJC and SYTC at Parkville, the PYRC and the Acheron Camp. The Malmsbury youth training centre is serviced through the Bendigo regional institute of TAFE.

TAFE provides the largest part of the educational programs as vocational education to the juvenile centres at Parkville and at Malmsbury. TAFE has been an attractive choice for this purpose because many of the students have had problems in their schooling. The TAFE sector neutralises some of the personal baggage the student might have, making it possible for students to return to education with some self esteem as well as personal and vocational development because their TAFE enrolment has an 'adult' status.

TAFE is valuable also because it provides certificate courses from the National Curriculum Framework. This is a very important aspect of the juvenile justice educational

pathways because it ensures that any work completed by students at Parkville or Malmsbury can be credited after release towards certificate courses that may be taken up anywhere in Australia.

More than education

As a quick flick through any daily newspaper indicates, the young people in the juvenile justice centres are a complex group of adolescents who generally have formidable problems. The offending behaviour that placed them in a juvenile custodial centre is only one of these. Students often have a lot of anger that is not always well contained. This anger is not at all surprising when glimpses of their circumstances usually indicate chaotic backgrounds that would have most of us wondering how we could survive with any emotional maturity intact.

Our students are the human face of the issues that are perplexing the wider community—long-term unemployment and its social repercussions, despair, drug problems and unresolved anger that often springs from poverty, experience of all forms of abuse and grief in large doses at a very early age. It is no surprise that many of our clients have complex personal and behavioural issues. As an aside, our teachers, as their experience and insights develop have real cause to ponder the 'exactness' of the social definitions of 'criminal' and 'victim'.

And there is the rub! While students have such complex disadvantages, how can an education program in a juvenile justice centre provide a neat pathway to offer an 'easy' walk and jog to educational outcomes and social options?

An ongoing commitment

The juvenile justice centres in Victoria thankfully operate with an extraordinarily strong commitment to the clients' welfare. There is absolute recognition of the need for intervention to shift the direction of a young person's fate and promote the support to ensure a healthy outcome for the young clients in the centres.

“ The TAFE sector neutralises some of the personal baggage the student might have ”

Education provision sits within that view and adapts to support those intentions. Bringing positive and optimistic attitudes to our education provision is important to encourage our students to seek the pathway, using education to support them back to the mainstream community.

A major goal and responsibility for TAFE is to provide a modelling of class activities and approaches equivalent to mainstream classes. It is also essential to provide the needed support for students who have not had sustained success in school contexts. We want our students to be empowered with the skills and confidence to re-enter stable schooling on their release, when that matches their needs and wishes.

Not to offer such a possibility would be giving an unacceptable message that those who err are condemned to live outside the social group—a double-whammy of punishing and banishing! Not only would the young person have the difficulty of grappling with the difficult circumstances that might have caused their sentencing but they would also suffer a condemnatory message that would keep them on the 'outside', probably more angry and confused and certainly without hope.

How it works

In this context the Certificate of General Education is offered as a broad and flexible backdrop to measure the progress and needs of the students. When students first arrive at the centre an assessment framed in the CGEA levels is completed to identify the needs and possible strategies for each student. The CGEA then seeks to build literacy and numeracy skills and confidence, integrating skills for the vocational subject areas offered. For example, Hospitality and CGEA may work closely to complete module tasks in both areas. Similarly, topics of interest such as 'Learner's Permit', living skills or general knowledge are developed to motivate and support students.

Students then choose a variety of vocational subjects from automotives, art, computing, certificate of outdoor works, electronics, furniture making, hospitality, horticulture, multimedia, music, recreation and welding where the activities provide the beginning modules to full certificate courses.

For our young clients, creative areas like music, art and multimedia can be very powerful because they are able to be more directly individual and very expressive. It is so good to see confidence grow in the music performances each term. Our students have not usually been the types to benefit from performance and peer admiration in their earlier schooling.

Rewards and progress

TAFE and the centre staff strive to provide the variety of experiences and opportunities to help each client find

something and someone to sow the seed of the positive feelings needed by every confident person, especially a young person. It might be a new perception that grows from a conversation with the librarian, allowing the dropping of the usually surly style that is a common defence mechanism with our students, the relaxed half hour radio session or baking the best cake in the hospitality group.

“Our students have not usually been the types to benefit from performance and peer admiration in their earlier schooling”

Such interactions with our students ensure the students have stable and consistent reinforcements of progress when they deal with their frustration positively, perhaps seeking help instead of exploding. Unit staff and TAFE teachers both try to optimise moments that develop positive achievement, especially in personal management of difficult moments or being able to remain calmer and positive for longer frames of time. For our students small things can be a very big step.

With this aim, all of the class work and participation is tracked by the teaching staff to ensure students who may be released and unfortunately return to the centre are able to accumulate their achievements. This is much better than starting again with little chance of much progress and every chance of frustration and a reinforced message of there being no point in bothering.

Developing skills

Education provision must find good practice to assist support of the young persons' attempts at skill building, and there is an enormous sense of responsibility taken by the teaching staff to communicate very closely with the units and key workers who are tagged to each of the students. Our teachers are careful to pass on any concerns or congratulations for progress in the various subjects. A well-made CD rack in furniture making might well trigger the beginning of plans that are made for a student to enter a pre-apprenticeship course or work area after release.

The education provision focuses on providing a positive sense to the students that it is possible to achieve and build real options. Programs are run within the units by the Human Services staff who also affirm to the students that choices can be made, often connected to the education program for post release plans.

TAFE teachers and the unit staff promote the goal of return to the mainstream for all young clients and are intent on supporting a gradual and therefore viable and independent return to a community context after release. At any time a significant number of the young people in the centre may be on escorted or non-escorted leaves to school or TAFE courses.

Prerelease leave is a precarious and important phase for clients who want to do well. However, they might also have serious drug habits that have been for the moment truncated,

or personal problems with family or friends that could flare up at any time and shatter the stabilising strategies that have been built around the student.

Some clients might also be enrolled in distance education subjects, which is another positive way for a young person to take control in choosing and creating future options. Again, unit staff, TAFE teachers and the vocational counsellors demonstrate a commitment to shared information and support.

Magical moments

As successful teachers know, the moments that have most power in teaching are those very precious pieces of interaction where some real sense of the students empowerment occurs, whether it is acquiring a technical skill or intellectual growth—it is the moment of real pleasure and self esteem in the student who 'got it'. Those moments are the building blocks for the happy, healthy and independent adult, something most of us find in abundance through our own self development. It is necessary that our students accumulate more than fleeting experiences of such moments if a return to the community is to be possible for them.

Moderating the chaos, modelling stable options and motivating students must to occur while students are

supported in making their choices. These are the aims of the education provision in the juvenile justice system and sweet are the moments when it all comes together!

Finding a pathway can and does happen. To be assured of the best outcome requires not only the hand-holding and pathway provided in the TAFE structure plus the goodwill and cooperation between TAFE and Human Services staff in the centre—it also needs real and greater commitment to ongoing support in the vital and vulnerable post release phase.

More support at this stage will significantly increase the chance of ensuring our students make the difficult transition from offending and chaotic lifestyles towards work or school contexts that form the frame of more stable options.

Making a greater commitment to the cost of supporting these students at this stage is simply making a very sound investment, the paving stones, if you like, for the well being of our whole community!

Sally Pardew is campus coordinator of Kangan Batman TAFE at the Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre and Parkville Youth Residential Centre.

Continued from page 32

funding cycle as well as to recurrent infrastructure/core activity funding which reflects the real cost of delivering the community and educational objectives of the provider.

These issues are still under debate. They are not presented here as settled NTEU policy, but are a reflection of an emerging consensus.

Conclusion

There are opportunities for change that can be of benefit to the communities served by ACE providers and its workers, but conditions will not improve if ACE workers do not organise themselves to make a call for change.

For information about joining the NTEU contact Michael Pegg on (03) 9254 1930, email mpegg@vic.nteu.org.au, or PO Box 1324, South Melbourne Vic 3205.

Michael Pegg is assistant secretary of the National Tertiary Education Union (Victorian Division).

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Searching for signs: the development of a learning disabilities screening tool

by Judy Geiger-Jennings

When two experienced literacy teachers discovered that many of their best students fell behind as their classmates progressed, they set out to find out why. With the help of Judy Geiger-Jennings, an American special education teacher, a new approach was implemented.

Across Australia each week, thousands of adults attend classes designed to improve their literacy skills. Some of these students are new to this educational process, while others have been involved for months, even years. Success is attained by a percentage of the students, however there remains a significant number who make minimal progress, despite the sound teaching techniques of professional and dedicated teachers.

This realisation and frustration prompted two very experienced literacy teachers to rethink the issue and the impact it was having upon their own situations. Both women are associated with the Donvale Living and Learning Centre in Melbourne, Victoria.

Ros Butcher is an adult literacy teacher with many years of experience in adult literacy and in elementary education. She is currently one of the lead teachers at the centre. Karen Dymke, is also an experienced teacher at the Centre, as well as being the Adult Literacy and Basic Education coordinator. Karen Dymke is the mother of a learning-disabled son.

In the process of assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the literacy program at the Donvale Living and Learning Centre, both these educators knew that changes were needed. At first they were stymied. Why were so many of the students in their programs demonstrating intelligence, highly developed articulation skills, and able to have jobs, but seemed to need more help than was being provided in the normal literacy programs? Reading and writing tasks were extremely difficult for these students. As their fellow classmates progressed, they reached a plateau in their literacy skill level, or worse, never made it out of the starting blocks. Despite positive beginnings and feeling safe in their learning environment, these students often experienced discouragement and feelings of failure.

Looking for answers

Focused on ways to meet the needs of these students, Karen began to sift through educational research to find the answers.

She turned to the expertise of educational professionals (psychologists, special education teachers, and reading recovery teachers). In discussions with other literacy teachers, many of these educators shared similar experiences and concern about their own students.

“There remains a significant number who make minimal progress, despite the sound teaching techniques”

Gradually, a clearer picture began to emerge. Karen reflected upon the stress she felt when searching for resources for her young son. She and Ros recalled in years past, when several students had come to their classes proclaiming that they were dyslexic—although none of these students had been formally identified as having a reading disability. At that time, and for many years to follow, the term dyslexia in the literacy field had come to be somewhat of an excuse for not learning. However, Karen and Ros began to suspect that there might be some validity to this claim. They agreed that the primary reason

some of the students were failing could be in fact, due to presence of learning disabilities.

They eventually discovered that current research suspects more than half of all students enrolled in adult literacy classes are learning-disabled. In the minds of these two teachers this was an incredibly telling statistic! They wondered how they, as literacy teachers, could meet the needs of the learning disabled population, especially given the way adult literacy programs are currently structured.

Karen recounted her own frustrations when her son was evaluated for learning disabilities. The tests were extremely stressful and costly, and although they confirmed what she already knew about her son, she felt that they did little to offer any guidance or direction to help her son in his current educational situation. Relating this idea to a scenario of adult literacy students with suspected learning disabilities, was equally frustrating.

What can be done?

Supposing a teacher or student suspects that a learning disability is seriously impacting upon the literacy growth of

an individual. What happens then? A formal assessment by an educational psychologist, or other qualified professional is a commendable option, but not very realistic in most cases. The assessment would entail the administration and interpretation of different educational, vocational, psychological and neurological instruments. The process would be costly (starting at approximately \$350 per assessment or at a base rate of \$80 per hour). It would also be a time consuming effort.

Ros and Karen knew the unfortunate reality is that many of the adult literacy students come from a lower socioeconomic background and would not be able to afford the costly assessment evaluation. And if they could, of what use could the formal assessment be to teachers of literacy students? It seemed then, that a formal assessment would be a non-viable option for the majority of students.

Currently, when a prospective student makes an inquiry about enrolment in a literacy class, the practice is to conduct an initial placement assessment. This usually includes getting an indication of the student's reading, writing, oracy and numeracy skills so the individual can be offered an appropriate placement, or referred to another agency for help. Other general and personal details are also gathered for record keeping purposes, to get an idea of the person's past experiences and to determine the future goals of the student.

Ros and Karen were interested in looking further in the adult literacy field to determine how this initial placement assessment could be expanded to include a screening tool to identify learning disabilities. They were dismayed to learn that this issue had not been addressed in Australia, despite the knowledge that this problem was occurring across the country.

The need for a screening tool

It seemed logical then, that they began to envision the development of such a tool. They were confident that adult literacy teachers, who are trained assessors and practitioners, would have the skills to administer a learning disabilities screening—if such a tool were available to them and if they received instructions for its implementation.

At that time, The Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council of Adult Community and Further Education called for proposals under the Regional Council's 1999 Innovations project. Donvale Living and Learning Centre saw this as an opportunity to proceed, and Karen and Ros outlined the proposal. Their goal was to establish a screening procedure to identify more clearly, the needs of literacy students with suspected learning disabilities; and subsequently help teachers tailor learning tasks for these students.

They were confident that adult literacy teachers... would have the skills to administer a learning disabilities screening

The project officially began when Karen went back to the consultants they had previously contacted. These were the skilled practitioners with experience in the field of assessment and teaching—and more importantly, who were sympathetic to the nature of the issues in the adult literacy field. They all gave valuable input into the project, and helped the two Donvale teachers review the formal diagnostic tests and academic used to determine the current functioning of a student.

It was also at this time that they began to work with an American special education teacher, Judy Geiger-Jennings. She had recently moved to Australia, and after volunteering at the Donvale Centre, was offered a teaching position there. With a strong background in learning disabilities, she offered Ros and Karen an American perspective regarding the issues.

In order to provide validity for the use of a learning disabilities screening tool for adult literacy students, she began to research how this was being addressed in North America. Her efforts led her to a project, which had been established at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville in the US. Working with Tennessee educators and the Tennessee Literacy Resource Centre, the university project laid out an overview of what was entailed in a screening for adults with learning disabilities. The project also reviewed a variety of screening tools used for 'identifying and helping adults who find learning difficult', reporting strengths and limitations of each tool.

The major findings of the Tennessee project

- Teachers need informal measures to determine whether a student may have a learning disability.
- Most students cannot afford a formal assessment of learning disabilities.
- A simple screening is the first step in planning a practical approach to helping the individual meet realistic goals.
- The idea is to gather as much information as possible about the student through observation, interviews, self-reporting, the use of a screening tool, and a review of school, medical or employment records.
- After this happens, the teacher (who typically does not have specialised background in learning disabilities) can plan and execute an individualised program for the learner. The data collected can be used as a valuable introduction to the formal process of assessment, if that is to follow.

A literacy teacher can gain much valuable information if he or she knows what to look for!

- Does the student display signs of poor vision or hearing, or are there observable effects of auditory and/or visual processing deficits?

- Relating to academic performance, is the student having difficulty with reading (oral/silent) or expressive language (writing, speaking, handwriting, spelling)?
- Are there observed behaviour manifestations that can interfere with the learning process?

Benefits of an informal screening

- The screening sets the stage for the teacher to help the student understand their strengths and weaknesses and the reasons behind the difficulties.
- The informal nature of the process enables the teacher to include the student in determining appropriate instruction, using specialised materials and strategies.
- The screening enables the teacher to determine which strategies or interventions, if any have been previously tried.
- The screening also leads to discussions between the teacher and student about realistic goals translated into short-term objectives.

The Innovations Project Learning Disabilities Screening Tool was designed after careful consideration of information learned from the Tennessee project, as well as research from the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. Dr. Daryl Greaves, Director of Special Education, University of Melbourne, gave guidance and direction to Ros, Karen, and Judy.

A favourable reception

A draft of Part 1 has been published and has been favourably received by educators throughout the Melbourne region. Part 1 includes a screening questionnaire and observation checklist, which was developed by, and used with permission from the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. It also includes tasks designed to give literacy teachers information about a student's strengths and weaknesses in reading, writing, and oral skills.

Part 2, yet to be developed, will include tasks involving the student's processing skills in the areas of visual discrimination, visual memory, auditory discrimination, and auditory memory. An additional focus of Part 2 will be the development of teaching strategies, which can be implemented by the literacy teachers in their own classrooms.

A major aspect of the project has been the funding of a special two-hour class at the Donvale Living and Learning Centre, which meets weekly. This class is being taught by Ros and consists of a target group of six students selected from the approximately 200 literacy students at Donvale. These students were placed in this class based upon their general intelligence, articulation skills and success in their everyday lives—but with poor reading and writing skills, and limited success in the regular literacy classes.

The Learning Disabilities Screening tool was used to determine strengths and weaknesses, and Ros has designed her teaching materials and strategies to target the specific needs of each student.

Embarking on a journey

When the students joined Ros, they were told that they were on a journey together; and although there is no cure for learning disabilities, they were going to 'relearn how to learn'. It was to be a shared experience, and the better the students learned about their own strengths, weaknesses and learning styles, the more successful the outcome. Self-esteem and confidence are of paramount importance in the class.

At each session, students are given notes based upon themes such as cognitive psychology, dyslexia, long and short term memory, listening, reading and spelling strategies and left/right brain dominance. Discussion, games, puzzles, reading, and writing, listening and memory activities follow this. Students are given daily homework to reinforce the concepts taught during the weekly classroom session.

This pilot program has been operating for a year, and both Ros and the students are seeing a noted improvement. The shift in perception and confidence, and the dramatically improved literacy skills of the students, has been remarkable.

Ros, Karen and Judy are continuing with their teaching, and soon hope to begin developing Part Two of the Learning Disabilities Screening Tool. They remain encouraged by the positive results seen in the classroom, and would like to see the project implemented on a larger scale. They welcome comments and input from anyone interested in the issue, and can be reached at the Donvale Living and Learning Centre, 283 Springvale Rd, Donvale, 3111. Phone (03) 9842-6726 or fax (03) 9841-7757.

“ they were going to ‘relearn how to learn’ ”

Judy Geiger-Jennings is an American special education teacher with extensive experience teaching students with a variety of difficulties.

She has lived in Australia for two years, and teaches adult literacy in Melbourne.

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Foreign Correspondence

In its fight to eradicate illiteracy and strengthen opportunities for basic and livelihood-related learning, the Association for Non-Traditional Education in the Philippines (ANTEP) employs an impressive team of professionals, volunteers and community members in a variety of settings.



Eradicating illiteracy in the Philippines: field experiences in adult literacy and basic education

by Frank B. Lopez

Introduction

The education system in the Philippines is characterised by substantial demand and limited accessibility. The existing educational system focuses on academic curricula designed for schools, universities and colleges which are only accessible to the strata of the population having financial and intellectual means to progress through our traditional education structure.

Such a traditional structure poses the following challenges to the Philippine government:

- providing education and training opportunities relevant to the needs of the disadvantaged communities
- addressing poverty by increasing access and reaching the disadvantaged and under-served sector of our population
- increasing the accessibility to a broader spectrum of target groups
- providing alternative modes of delivery and building enhancing partnerships amongst local government units, private sector and the civil society.

After the 1986 People Power revolution Corazon C. Aquino—the then president of the Philippines—issued Proclamation No. 58, dated 11 February 1987 and known as the Philippine 1987 Constitution.

The Philippine Government, by virtue of the provision of this Constitution, Article XIV Section 2 the State shall:

- Encourage non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent, and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to the community needs; and

- Provide adult citizens, the disabled, and the out-of-school youth with training in civics, vocational efficiency, and other skills.

With an urgent need to deal with the inequalities, inaccessibility, inadequate training, declining quality of education and insufficient manpower required to develop rural communities, it can be seen that education's critical role in alleviating poverty and promoting social and economic progress in the Philippines is under siege.

The adult literacy and basic education situation in the Philippines

Several studies conducted by the government and private sectors revealed significant findings that prevail in the Philippine education scenario today:

- the government is not investing enough resources for education
- high dropout rates at all levels
- disparities in access to basic and adult education exist between rich and poor, urban and rural, political regions, high and low-income families and ethnic groups
- high achievers are the rich and those in urban and developed regions
- neglect of Muslim and other indigenous cultural communities, including special learners
- inadequate non-formal education programs for youth and adults
- adult education is not fully addressed in the educational system
- relatively low functional literacy rate of 83.8%
- increasing basic and functional illiteracy in remote and rural and urban targeted provinces
- lack of leadership and lack of national vision on adult education
- 2.4 million Filipinos are still basically illiterate
- the 1994 showed 7.8 million to be functionally illiterate.

What is ANTEP?

ANTEP—the Association for Non-Traditional Education in the Philippines—is a non-profit, non-government umbrella organisation. It has a network of more than 200 educational institutions and partners all over the Philippines, as well as international links.

Organised in 1986, ANTEP has evolved into a strong and dynamic organisation which actively addresses illiteracy, poverty and employment through non-formal alternative community based education and training that facilitates lifelong learning.

ANTEP's vision is to enhance the quality of life for all Filipinos. Its mission is to provide leadership, coordination and support to educational institutions to help them develop and implement innovative and high-quality non-formal and/or non-traditional education programs. These programs will meet the diverse needs of the socially and educationally disadvantaged, and assist in their cultural, social spiritual and economic growth.

The Association creates accessible community-based education by developing and strengthening the capabilities of volunteer teachers and community leaders in delivering non-formal education (NFE) activities, improving the access of disadvantaged groups to basic and livelihood related learning.

ANTEP conducts specialised NFE capability building, training and workshops on community building and leadership in rural and urban development, early childhood education, basic and functional literacy, livelihood skills, values formation, peace education, gender and development, migration, health and sanitation, environment programs, entrepreneurial and business skills, and agriculture.

To date, ANTEP has provided training to over 8000 volunteers all over the country. These volunteers in turn conduct training activities to the benefit of thousands of underprivileged individuals, most of whom are illiterate and early school leavers.

The ultimate beneficiaries are the Filipino children and youth, the urban and rural poor, unemployed and

underemployed adults, out-of-school youth, housewives, illiterate people, the indigenous cultural communities and the special-need groups which include persons with disabilities, those displaced by natural calamities, people in high risk areas and the elderly.

Functional Education and Literacy Program (FELP)

ANTEP in 1999 has managed and implemented a Functional Education and Literacy Programme (FELP) in partnership with the Philippine government for 61,682 non-literate youth and adult learners aged 15 and over in the poorest 545 barangays or villages in 15 municipalities in five provinces.

The project contributed to the eradication of illiteracy—an effective tool that opens the door to quality, alternative and relevant lifelong learning to enable them to find a way out of poverty. Results were significant, with training and workshops being held for the five team leaders, 77 trainers, 302 area coordinators and 1476 teacher/facilitators.

College graduates comprise 89% of these people, and the remainder are vocational/technical graduate. Other statistics show 83% are female, 62% are married, 44% belongs to the 25 to 35 age group and 43% belong to some cultural and ethnic group.

A total of 92 community-based literacy modules were developed in different dialects, and 64,024 non-literate learners participated in—and 61,682 completed—150–200 hour learning sessions in three to four months. There were 2560 learning groups of 25 learners, and 54% of the total number of learners had never been to school while 46% were elementary school dropouts.

More than half of the completers were female, and 69% were married. The 25 to 39 age group comprised 31% followed by 26% who were 40 to 49 years old with 24% in 15 to 24 age bracket.

Lessons learned, including best practices

Social mobilisation and advocacy—organising learners and the community as partners

The government cannot do it alone—a strong partnership with NGOs is essential. Networking and planning with local stakeholders provides them with a clear understanding of the literacy program's objectives.

Adopting innovative and non-traditional strategies help to convince learners to participate in literacy programs. Literacy campaigns also employ radio and print mediums as well as graduation activities, barangay (village) celebrations, weddings, fiestas and other special occasions.

Close coordination with local leaders and elders helps to intensify recruitment of learners and solve problems related to the conduct of literacy sessions. Regular communication and consultation with stakeholders is held at both national and local levels.



A typical ANTEP literacy session at night in Aginaldo, Fugao in Northern Luzon, Philippines.



Mothers like those in the photo had to bring their babies with them when attending literacy class.

Capability building of literacy trainers, monitoring personnel and facilitators

Facilitators are trained to use innovative teaching and learning strategies, producing learning materials with locally available resources.

Trainers, monitoring personnel and area coordinators are trained to conduct regular monitoring activities to provide feedback for informed decision making, and organise meetings of facilitators according to geographical proximity. Areas monitored include teaching and learning strategies, availability of learning materials, learners' progress, facilitators' performance and community developments that may affect the learners or the conduct of learning sessions.

Developing appropriate literacy curriculum and learning materials

An important element is the consulting and working with literacy facilitators and community organisers who have extensive literacy teaching experience.

Literary curricula are community and needs-based, culturally appropriate and written in local dialects with built in assessment so learners' progress can be monitored regularly. They include special issues relevant to the learners—environment protection, gender and development, women's rights, children's rights, health and nutrition, family life, values, drug abuse prevention, culture and heritage, sense of community, relevant livelihood skills, sustainable agriculture.

Learning materials utilise locally available resources. Use of recycled and other existing materials in the rural areas helps to introduce and cultivate innovativeness amongst learners.

Innovative and non-traditional teaching and learning methodologies

Projects and activities are interactive, participative and learner-initiated. The teacher is not regarded as the only source of knowledge, and non-literates are respected and

recognised as unique individuals with some forms of existing literacy.

Flexibility is important. Although there are modules based on a curriculum, facilitators are trained to respond to the immediate or more relevant needs of the learners. Special events are turned into opportunities for learning (fiesta celebrations, harvesting, farming). Home visits are also part of the program.

Flexible learning sessions

Learners and facilitators decide on the schedule and venue of learning sessions. These can be changed from time to time to accommodate different learning needs, as well as the various indigenous cultural practices of the group.

Learning venues can be changed and learners' houses can be used to foster a sense of community belonging, barangay (village) centres, chapels and vacant school rooms.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation

Quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the field during monitoring and evaluation are used to improve specific stages of program implementation, solve problems and to see if the program objectives are being met.

Monitoring forms, focus group discussions, informal meetings, assemblies, and assessment results are utilised. Data is then analysed and used as a basis for recommendations while lessons learned, including best practices, are identified and documented.

Literacy challenges for the new millennium

Increasing access to basic education is the major challenge of the 21st century, and ANTEP is adopting an integrated approach to poverty and illiteracy. This includes:

- improving basic education quality (curriculum, teacher training, learning facilities)
- early childhood care and education
- functional education and literacy
- job readiness and entrepreneurial development.

To sustain the gains of literacy programs means working with the learners, the community and other stakeholders. It means continuing education and lifelong learning for neo-literates (skills training), creating learning centres and integrating literacy activities into community life.

Equally important is the strengthening of the government, NGO and private sector partnership for effective implementation of integrated literacy programs. The resulting cooperation and complementarity of resources and capabilities will allow faster and effective implementation of programs with increased access of more people to literacy opportunities.

Frank B. Lopez is Executive Director of ANTEP.

Open Forum

Please feel free to respond to the stories featured in *Fine Print*. See the back cover for contact details.

In this edition's Open Forum, Ian Harris talks about his many years as a teacher in the corrections system, Jill Sanguinetti examines the latest research from ALNARC and Michael Pegg looks at the NTEU's campaign for a better-quality ACE sector in Victoria.

Sentence reduced: confessions of a lapsed corrections education literacy teacher

I ~~was paroled~~ retired in December 1998 after 36 years' teaching. I spent 26 of these working in correctional settings. I loved it—the people, the work and the bizarre, depressing, illogical and very sad workplace. I left with a legacy of compassion, memories and a view of education, and myself as an educator, which I doubt I would have gained anywhere else. I wish to share this with you.

I suppose the greatest change that took place involved the attitudes and practices I cast aside. I have been left with an educational philosophy that I recently tried to sum up in an expanded CV thus:

Approach to teaching

- My concern, as an educator, is for learning, not teaching and I consider myself to be one of the learners.
- I believe that learning takes place in an atmosphere of success.
- Learners succeed when they value themselves and their abilities.
- I value the dignity and integrity of all learners.
- Learners own their own learning.
- Mistakes and misunderstandings are learning opportunities.

All learners should have the opportunity to fully share ideas and understanding without any fear of complexity.

I believe it is the role of an educator to enable students to learn. Students should be encouraged to accept learning as an ongoing part of life and to find it an enjoyable experience. They should have the right to set their own learning agenda and be aware of all that is happening. The educator's position is that of an adviser and mentor who should always be aware of his or her own learning. If I gained any particular expertise during my years in prison, it was the

ability to enable others to do things for themselves. I do not know what that means, but I know it happens.

But why prison? (I hear you ask)—Why indeed!

Despite the Dickensian nature of prisons, they force people to consider both their present and future and to reflect on their past. In many cases this led them to education. The reasons were always personal and were as varied as the individuals themselves. It was my responsibility to accept them for their reasons and not to give those reasons labels of my own. The education they undertook had to remain relevant to them without the intrusion of my values.

Many years ago I stumbled on an old Chinese proverb:

Everything can be learned
Nothing can be taught

It fascinated me. I thought about this proverb and reflected on my work in the light of it. It challenged traditional pedagogical values and made much sense to me. Prisoner students were often very dependent and looked to 'teachers' to do things for them. When I focused on their learning (and my own) they began to take responsibility for it and regularly made significant progress.

This focus on learning allowed students to achieve success despite significant levels of self-doubt. The success enhanced the learning, reduced the self-doubt and led to increased levels of self-confidence. This, in turn, resulted in the development of a positive sense of self which could be significant in the student addressing offending behaviour.

It is dangerous and misleading to generalise about any group of people. However, if I observed any one thing that prisoners had in common, it was low self-esteem. I believe that people who value themselves also value others, and are less likely to consider hurting them. It became an objective of mine, following the processes mentioned above, to encourage prisoner students to raise their self-esteem. When it happened, the effect was not only noticeable in their educational success but in their demeanour, their physical bearing and their approach to life.

An essential part of this process was acknowledging the abilities and strengths of each student. It began in the

counselling phase and it was my responsibility to encourage students to discover their strengths and abilities for themselves and to believe in them.

A key aspect of the role of an educator in prison (or in any setting) is to model appropriate attitudes and behaviour. If corrections educators (or any other, for that matter) are to be agents of change in student behaviour, I believe they can only be effective by demonstration. I found this to be the case during my career. I constantly admonished my staff to treat all staff and students with respect so that it would be returned. It was!

I have always insisted that all students own their own learning and that they are fully informed of its scope, intention and progress. I found that this resulted in students feeling valued and contributed towards enhanced self-esteem.

Many adult students find it hard to look positively at mistakes. Enabling them to see mistakes and misunderstandings as learning opportunities often has a profound effect of their approach to life. When they develop the skill of looking at mistakes and seeing the cause so that they can be avoided in the future, they can start applying this skill to all aspects of their life and relationships.

The complexity of life is one of its aspects which adults often find extremely daunting. I have made it one of my educational goals for years to challenge this. Complexity is part of much that we cope with as humans but it is not necessarily difficult. It is the thought of it that is more difficult than the reality. The acquisition of language and learning to walk are extremely complex but we achieve them as infants despite this. When we cease to be intimidated by complexity we are able to see beyond it and cope with the issues required.

I hope this makes sense to anyone who reads it. It makes sense to me.

I have lived it.

Ian Harris spent many years in the Victorian corrections system, including Beechworth and Ararat prisons—as a teacher.

Research update: Adult Literacy and Numeracy Australian Research Consortium

It is one year down the track, and the six Adult Literacy and Numeracy Australian Research Consortium (ALNARC) centres are in the middle of disseminating their 1999 research publications while embarking on a new set of literacy and numeracy research projects.

This year, ALNARC has published:

- six separate state-based reports on the inclusion of literacy and numeracy in training packages
- a national synthesis report which draws together the findings of the six reports
- proceedings of the ALNARC 2000 National Forum
- a collection of research papers and reports about literacy issues in relation to LANT, Mutual Obligation and other labour market programs.

In addition, there is a free leaflet presenting summaries of eighteen small scale research projects carried out on the theme of 'effective literacy and numeracy provision for groups with special needs'. These booklets are available for \$13.50 from Language Australia.

This year, we are again undertaking research projects that are part of two large national research projects. The first of these is to investigate the implementation of training packages in relation to the inclusion of literacy and numeracy in industry standards and industry training programs. The second national project is entitled Multiliteracies and Life Transitions. The two projects reflect the two main aspects of adult literacy and numeracy provision as we now know it—literacy in Vocational Education and Training (focusing on industry requirements) and literacy in community provision (focusing on learner needs, multiple literacies and notions of lifelong learning).

The Multiliteracies and Life Transitions projects are mainly practitioner-based. Centres have invited practitioners to apply for small grants for investigating and documenting aspects of literacy and numeracy provision 'on the ground'.

ALNARC's literacy and training projects for 2000 are as follows:

- Queensland is exploring the assumptions underlying current approaches to training and how well these assumptions articulate with practices on the ground.
- South Australia is investigating the practices and strategies set in place by senior management (within the horticulture industry) to promote a culture of training which is responsive to literacy and numeracy issues. As part of this, they will investigate formal and informal pedagogical practices and literacy support strategies.
- Tasmania is exploring the role of WELL (Workplace English Language and Literacy) in supporting literacy provision in relation to training packages. Tasmanian researchers will base their research on the seafood industry training package and focus on a WELL-funded interactive literacy and numeracy resource.
- NSW is carrying out a longitudinal study of workplace training, prior to and including the implementation of training packages, particularly in relation to generic skills development and literacy and numeracy. The researchers are basing the study on three RTOs in the

Hunter Valley, North Coast and ACT.

- Western Australia is undertaking research into organisational models of training package implementation which foster the successful integration of language, literacy and numeracy with vocational training.
- Victoria is carrying out an investigation into the place of literacy and numeracy in the assessment of industry standards. The research will examine how literacy and/or numeracy needs impact on the successful demonstration of competence and support strategies currently being provided by trainers and assessors. This project is being carried out by Linda Wyse and Associates.

Planned Multiliteracies and Life Transitions projects for 2000 are:

- Queensland is focusing on cross-sectoral collaborations to cater to the literacy needs of people moving into and out of employment. They are also commissioning three 'research into practice' monographs into the implications for literacy training of labour market and population trends, literacy and indigenous education, and literacy and the law.
- Tasmania is examining the ways providers respond to changing needs. They are also producing a professional development package of 'best practice' reports: a book featuring ten accessibly written, 'how-to' case studies.
- South Australia is providing a number of small grants to practitioners to conduct small-scale projects along the theme of Multiple Literacies and Life Transitions.
- New South Wales is investigating the impact of technology on at-risk youth at a number of regional and urban sites.
- Western Australia is providing small grants to practitioners to investigate the multiple literacies of youth in the context of social, technological and economic change.
- Victoria is carrying out a project especially commissioned by DETYA, investigating international trends in adult literacy policies and programs. The final report will include a number of case studies (gleaned internationally) of cutting-edge practice in literacy provision.

For further information about ALNARC's research program for 2000, and about the reports of the 1999 research (published by Language Australia) contact your state ALNARC coordinator or consult our website <http://www.staff.vu.edu.au/alnarc>. ALNARC directors and coordinators are presenting their current research at several conferences this year, and another national forum will be held in Adelaide in February 2001.

Jill Sanguinetti is the national manager of ALNARC.

Adult and community education: A crisis in staffing?

It is a proud boast in some circles that ACE in Victoria 'runs on the smell of an oily rag'. This is to the cost of those who work in ACE. As measured by pay and level of casualisation, the Victorian ACE workforce probably has the worst public sector working conditions. Staff of ACE providers are highly committed, skilled and report satisfaction with many aspects of their work, but continued exploitation of that commitment is not sustainable if we are to have a quality ACE system.

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) represents PACCT (professional, administrative, clerical, computing and technical) staff and teachers employed by some 500 ACE providers across Victoria and at the Council of Adult Education. This paper outlines how NTEU members are beginning to campaign for the changes needed to support a quality ACE sector in Victoria.

Issues for staff in ACE

The ACE sector in Victoria is weakly unionised. As a fragmented and feminised service sector workforce which is reliant on inadequate government funding, ACE workers have little bargaining power. Apart from safety net wage adjustments, conditions of employment have gone backwards since 1992. The teaching workforce is almost completely casualised.

When talking to coordinators, teachers and administrative staff in ACE providers across all regions of Victoria the key issues quickly emerge. These include:

- Poor pay—since 1992, PACCT staff have only had access to award safety net pay increases and there has been no increase for most teachers.
- Poor job security and widespread casualisation—casual work is not a lifestyle choice, it is the only option available for most people who want to teach in ACE. Many well-qualified teachers have worked in ACE for 5 to 10 years or more, sometimes across two or more providers at once. This work is often their only source of income and can consist of 10 to 30 hours per week, with no leave or other entitlements, no job security and regular lengthy unpaid layoffs. Many PACCT staff work for years on annual contracts that reflect the funding cycle, despite the basic ongoing nature of the work.
- High workloads—there is a sector-wide reliance on a voluntarist, 'caring' work ethic on the part of ACE workers who deal with some of the more disadvantaged members of the community. Many workers do regular unpaid overtime.

Good, experienced staff remain through dedication, but that commitment is being tested. There is little support for

professional development. Physical resources and facilities are often inadequate. Those committees of management which are genuine about being good employers, as well as delivering the best for their community, are bound by funding constraints.

Why are working conditions so bad in ACE?

Competition and the previous state government's failure to provide realistic funding exacerbates the situation. The lack of ACE funding is the biggest obstacle to enterprise bargaining for pay increases, but workers' conditions have suffered serious attacks by conservative governments during the 1990s.

State awards were abolished in 1992–3 and payroll deduction of union dues scrapped. PACCT staff in ACE were deemed to be on individual contracts, and entitlements like leave loadings were lost. There was no access to the benefits of skills-based classification structures through the award restructuring process (as occurred in most areas of the workforce outside the Victorian public sector). The union lost more than half its ACE members overnight and took years to recover.

Under the 1996 federal award obtained by NTEU for PACCT staff, award conditions were restored, but there was still no skills-based classification structure and no award for teachers. However, the NTEU was able to obtain safety net adjustments for PACCT staff.

In 1998–9, award stripping occurred under Section 89A of the Workplace Relations Act. Some basic conditions were lost, including disciplinary provisions and grievance procedures, through legislation introduced by Peter Reith.

From 1998 to 2000, there has been no successful enterprise bargaining to date in the ACE sector and state government funding provided for enterprise bargaining.

Opportunities for change

The question therefore arises—is there an opportunity for improvement with the Bracks government?

It is instructive to look at the initiatives in VET provision already underway in Victoria. The new Minister, Lyn Kosky, wasted no time providing an injection of funds to avert a likely crisis in TAFE. A number of consultative reviews during 2000 could lead to worthwhile improvements to quality and pathways for VET in Victoria. This record of consultation and a willingness to address issues, together with policies supporting the community sector and the promotion of lifelong learning, suggest the Bracks government may be amenable to a constructive approach in supporting ACE.

However, there are some harsh realities. Firstly, the government is financially conservative and hesitant to increase funding for the public sector above the level of its election promises. Secondly, ACE is just one of a multitude

of sectors competing for the government's attention. There is a danger that the voice of ACE will be drowned out by the voices of other parts of the public and private sectors. While there is cause for optimism about the consultative approach that the government might follow, it must be tempered by recognition that the sector faces many hurdles if it is to get the desired outcome.

What is the NTEU doing?

From the point of view of the NTEU there is an urgent need for workers in ACE to find power and a loud voice. This can not happen if the sector remains under-unionised.

Consequently, NTEU members in ACE have started building networks based around the ACFE regional structures, to build collective strength. It is early in the process, but a consensus has already emerged in the networks established so far that:

- we need to campaign for better and more stable funding for the sector
- we need to campaign for decent pay and conditions for staff
- if we don't campaign for these now, no one else is going to do it for us.

There are two objectives:

- Use the opportunities provided by the state government's commitment to consultation to have input into policy debates about funding for the sector and to seek a more realistic funding model.
- Pursue enterprise bargaining on a sector-wide basis to protect and improve conditions of employment and start to catch up on pay.

In order to succeed in these objectives, the networks have committed to build union membership and mobilise teachers and PACCT staff around the issues of realistic funding, pay, job security, workloads and decent conditions. Work has also commenced on developing a more detailed funding agenda.

Supporting a quality ACE sector

Although our development of proposals on funding for ACE has only begun, some clear themes have already emerged from discussions with members across a wide range of ACE providers.

Funding levels—the rate for student contact hours (SCH) is unrealistically low. In a competitive system there is real potential for exploitation of staff to be rewarded and for quality to be penalised. Also, the current funding model effectively ignores the cost of ongoing infrastructure and of core activities.

Funding stability—annual funding inhibits planning and innovation. Consideration could be given to a triennial

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Policy Update

The successful transition of young people from secondary education to further education, employment or training is not merely a school and family concern. As Ben Pollard explains, commitment and contribution is required from many sectors.

Leaving school early: a regional response to a social issue

In the Moreland area of Melbourne several projects have been developed with state and federal funding to help young people remain at school longer, and help develop clear pathways from school to work.

The Full Service School Project brought together six secondary colleges with Moreland City Council's Youth Services Unit to operate alternative curriculum programs for Year 10 students identified as being at risk of not completing VCE. This project finishes at the end of 2000.

A new Pathways Project is currently being developed by a new network. It is a progression from the Full Service School program, but it also provides an opportunity for participants to be involved in creating something new, since its design encourages the entry of new partners and ideas.

This report provides an outline of these two projects.

The context

Following the high unemployment period of the early 1990s, the retention rate for students completing secondary school through to Year 12 has decreased both nationally and across Victoria. While Victoria still has the highest state retention rate at 81.2%¹, this is not representative of the situation in Melbourne's northwest, where it is only 58.9%.

With the decline of unskilled employment opportunities and the declining appeal of trade fields, young people who would once have left school before Year 12 are under increasing pressure to complete the VCE. More stringent prerequisites for apprenticeships and employment in the armed forces, for example, mean that traditional training avenues for early school leavers are being closed down. Young people who do not complete Year 12, and particularly those who do not complete compulsory schooling, are likely to face long periods of unemployment².

Early school leaving is also discouraged by federal government changes to young people's income support entitlements. From January 1999, following the introduction

of the youth allowance in July of the previous year, people under 18 must generally be enrolled in full time education or training to qualify. Alternatively, they may sign an activity agreement requiring them to undertake a combination of approved activities including, for example, voluntary work, part time study and jobsearch activities.

The change of government in Victoria led to two reviews of public education and another into apprenticeships.

The recently completed Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria has several recommendations to be implemented in the 2001 school year. The Pathways Project originated from the review committee's recommendation that collaborative approaches towards planning and delivery of post compulsory education should be encouraged. The Moreland Pathways Project is a response to this recommendation and is discussed later.

The review also made recommendations regarding VCE examination. This is of particular interest to programs concerned with the design and implementation of alternative curricula such as the Full Service School program. The review recommends attention be given to recognition and/or accreditation of courses and qualifications that are broadly equivalent to the VCE.

The Full Service Schools program

The Full Service School (FSS) program is a federal government initiative designed to provide incentives for schools to enrol and educate young people affected by the introduction of the youth allowance. A two-year pilot program, it will report to the Prime Minister's Task Force on Pathways for Youth at its conclusion in December 2000.

The FSS program aims to encourage young people under 18 years to return to or remain at school if they are at risk of not completing Year 12, or making the successful transition to further education or employment. Personal development and vocational components are intended to compliment innovative teaching methods, curricula and/or activities made possible through the extra funding.

The program varies between networks and across states, but there are common component including:

- case management
- literacy strategies
- vocational learning
- personal development.

The Moreland FSS program consists primarily of two projects. These are:

Project 1: The implementation of potentially sustainable curricula based programs for non-compulsory-aged students or potential students.

Project 2: The development of sustainable relationships with non-school agencies and between the cluster schools.

Programs are run and coordinated by each school, independently designed to meet the needs of their current students or those they wish to attract. Program funding employs specialist teachers and purchases VET courses or extra resources. Apart from differences in structure, the main principles used by participating schools are the same. Programs are designed with the knowledge that to enhance the labour market prospects of students, 'homespun' education must attain validity and recognition beyond the originating school³.

Students work towards completing a vocational folio that provides evidence of the skills acquired including, for example, certificates in VET courses, first aid certificates, a bronze medallion, the Duke of Edinburgh Award and/or up to a year of work placement experience.

With few employment opportunities for young people leaving school at the end of Year 9 or 10, the successful completion of a Full Service educational program will hopefully better equip these young people for a successful transition into the workforce or into further education or training.

Schools in Victoria are under pressure to promote themselves to prospective students and students' families in a bid to increase or maintain market share. Excessive competition between schools, with an emphasis on individual 'consumer choice', has tended to undermine concurrent policy initiatives seeking to enhance the effectiveness of the education system for young people.

For example, some schools have been reluctant to release information on problems experienced by their students in order to avoid bad publicity. This is of particular concern in areas of low socioeconomic status where it could mean failing to recognise and publicise systemic problems going beyond the effectiveness of individual schools. This protective mentality has also meant specialist agencies have often not been invited to work inside or alongside schools in meeting student needs. There has been a tendency for schools to withhold information on innovative programs and teaching methods in their efforts to maintain a competitive edge. As a result, each school has had to research and develop their own strategies to common problems, wasting time and resources.

Schools participating in the Moreland FSS program realise that there are clear advantages in collaborating. With the assistance of a full time youth worker, schools in the Moreland cluster are working on both general education and addressing the needs of at-risk students.

This group of schools has spent the last two years developing best practice models of service delivery. They have learned

from each other's mistakes and programs, incorporating services from youth agencies and adopting a more holistic approach to schooling. This has required open communication where information is shared on both curriculum and welfare-based strategies. The program has evolved to include:

- further development of relationships between the schools
- seeking to apply for further funding
- establishing models of practice that are able to survive with private enterprise funding or no extra funding.

The relationship with Moreland City Council's Youth Services Unit has opened networks and access to service providers outside the school setting. Other anticipated outcomes include:

- increased knowledge by school staff of non school supports available to young people
- students able to make informed decisions regarding school, TAFE or employment options
- redesign of curriculum and practice
- students reconnected to the education system
- sustained cooperation by schools and agencies developed across Moreland schools.

While funding for the Full Service School program runs out at the end of December 2000, the cluster concept has become central to the development of a new program to start in September in 12 regions of Victoria.

The Pathways Project

The Pathways Project, not to be confused with Jobs Pathways Program, is the first significant commitment to come out of the Post Compulsory Review of Education. The pilot areas are identified as geographic areas of high need, where there are either existing or potential cooperative arrangements across education and training sectors.

Up until the 1990s, the partners in public education were the government—as senior partner—and parents as supporting partners. The last decade saw the government taking less responsibility while parents were asked to do more, both in terms of managing the school and paying for their child's education⁴. Management and leadership skills must therefore be developed in communities such as Moreland where parents are less likely to have the time and resources for this task.

If there is to be a lessening of state government support for education, the deficiencies must be made up by whole communities, not just parents. This means schools will have to make greater efforts to reach out to their local communities, and at the same time, consider ways to address community concerns.

The OECD estimates that the transition from the end of compulsory schooling to full time employment has now increased by two years to six in the last ten years in Australia⁵. This lengthy period in many young people's lives is one of considerable risk. The Pathways Program is based on the principle that education should be a community concern, and the governmental stakeholders in a young person's education should reflect that need.

Currently, the responsibility and follow up of a young person during the transition period may be deflected from Department of Education, Employment and Training as represented by the schools, to the Department of Human Services, represented by Centrelink. Disconnection from one area without proper support in the other may mean some young people fall between the cracks and are lost to the system at least until they are 18. Partnerships between schools, local communities, training sectors, industry and service providers must provide a comprehensive approach to a young person's education and transition.

DEET plans to have comprehensive coverage of Pathways negotiators within secondary schools across Victoria by 2002. Individual workers in schools will develop programs to suit student needs. This will require consideration of the skills, aspirations and interests of each young person in the context of their geographic location and socioeconomic background. The regional knowledge of these workers will determine their success in setting up realistic relationships between the school and the community, welfare sector and local industry.

The partnerships being forged in the Moreland area with the new Pathways Project will attempt to overcome some of the limitations of individual staffing by taking advantage of and strengthening pre-existing relationships. Direct service provision will be enhanced through the creation of standards across the region, as well as support structures for training and delivery.

The long-term goal of the Pathways Program is to negotiate plans for every secondary student before they reach a point where they are either choosing to leave, or have left, the education system. The pathways plans would be re-evaluated as goals are achieved or employment avenues are closed, so that each student is always working towards a clear and feasible goal. Pathways plans would be developed at an individual case management level by a pathway negotiator.

While differing according to the needs, abilities and goals of the individual, pathways plans will address multiple issues that impact on a young person's ability to remain at school and successfully progress from secondary education to further education, employment or training.

As a pilot project, resources are best focused to create pathways for students at highest risk of becoming lost to the education system and to enhance the support structures available to them while within the education system.

Conclusion

There are complex problems in Victoria's system of post compulsory education, employment and training. Factors which adversely affect a young person's ability to complete a stream of education to a level where they can move on to further training or employment, and the support necessary to overcome these, must be considered holistically. Yet service provision and research have historically been focused on secondary schools in determining and addressing these issues.

Truancy, disruptive behaviour, incomplete homework and subject failure are commonly used as indicators of a student's risk of early school leaving. However, these are often symptomatic of far greater problems than a student's apparent (in)ability to succeed at school. They may instead reflect past and present family, welfare or community issues.

Meeting the needs of students, therefore, requires a network of educational, welfare and community development services. These networks will be able to offer better and more innovative programs. Partnerships will include educators, parents, youth workers and agencies, industry and union representatives, government and community representatives.

Individual pathways for young people and case management cannot be provided in isolation from the broader network of supports, services and expertise. The resources required for successful implementation through transition periods must have the complete support of a body of knowledge and work capacity greater than the individual worker could ever offer.

Ben Pollard is the Full Service School Project youth worker for the Moreland cluster of schools.

1 'Creating New Student Pathways'. *Victorian School News*. 17 February 2000, p5.

2 Pinkney, S & Ewing, S (1997). *The Economic Costs and Benefits of School-Based Early Intervention*. Queen's Trust.

3 'Skills recognition: practically there.' *Education Age*. 26 February 2000, p2-3.

4 Townsend T, 'Partners point the way'. *Education Age*. 1 March 2000, p5.

5 Lynne Kosky, MP, Ministerial statement—Announcement of review into post compulsory education, employment and training in Victoria.

Beside the Whiteboard

Isabel Prince has worked in adult education for ten years. As coordinator of basic education at Colac ACE, she has seen an increasing number of rural youth involved in her programs, especially over the last five years. Here she talks to Katrina Lyle and reflects on the needs of this group of young people and how this has affected her teaching practice.

Could you describe the social demographic context of your work?

Colac, a city of approximately 11,000 people, has a higher unemployment rate and a lower household income than the state average. Students completing VCE and continuing into tertiary education move away. There is limited opportunity for unskilled full time employment. For many of our students, a realistic pathway will be part time employment or possibly a traineeship. There is no doubt that part of the reason many of our students attend is because they will breach their Centrelink obligations if they do not. Any teacher would acknowledge that this sense of compulsion could easily result in a nonproductive and unpleasant classroom environment.

How has Colac ACE responded to the needs of these students?

Around five years ago we organised integrated CGEA classes around such activities as woodwork, cooking, running a restaurant, automotive restoration, and horticulture.

The last three years have seen a rapid increase in the number of youth attending Colac ACE. Initially we had a few young people returning to improve their skills in literacy, numeracy or computers and hence their employment opportunities. Three years ago we placed a group of young students undertaking joint VCE/CGEA into a class of their own for twenty hours per week. Most of these students had left school, but recognised the need to improve their employment opportunities by returning to education. They undertook English, M and T foods, information technology, and industry and enterprise units 1 and 2.

The basic education sector at ACE now has a VCE/CGEA 3–4 youth group, and a CGEA level 2/3 group of 15 and 16 year-olds. Both groups attend 20 hours per week, usually over four days from 9am to 3pm. Class sizes range from eight to 14. As well as coordinating the basic education program for Colac ACE, I take the VCE 1 and 2/CGEA 3–4 groups for English.

What problems do these students face as learners?

The reasons that these students rejected secondary education are varied. Some struggled academically and

dropped out, but this is not the only problem. Some have the potential to be high academic achievers, but social or behavioural problems resulted in conflict and dissatisfaction—hence they left. Many are heavy smokers and this creates its own problems. Many live away from home, so both attendance and punctuality become issues.

What do these students respond positively to in a learning environment?

The challenge is in helping these young people to act as adults when in fact they are not adults. Much energy is spent developing a good rapport with each individual and establishing a supportive classroom environment. It is often a matter of balancing between expectations and tolerance. Comments such as 'it would be good if you were here at nine, but I'm glad you're here now', 'let me have a think about that', 'perhaps we could...' on my part and 'but is...', 'I don't think...' and 'can we/I...' on theirs is a constant part of our classroom dialogue.

My experience with these students has demonstrated that while you can develop numerous confidence building, motivating activities, the most successful way to improve their confidence is to help them achieve academic success. Although they have opted out of the traditional pathways, they recognise the value of education in improving their job opportunities. The numeracy class I taught last year, for example, when asked what they hoped to achieve for the year, overwhelmingly responded with 'a year ten pass in maths'. Allowing students to work at their own level in each subject area and so experience success has proved rewarding for them.

By far the most satisfying aspect of working with this young group is to help them develop into a cooperative, cohesive class where they do achieve some good academic outcomes while learning to support each other and interact positively with staff. To watch my class wait patiently, without one critical remark, while a fellow student reads a section of text—and for me to know that the student feels comfortable in attempting the task and has the support of the group, is indeed rewarding.