

AVETRA News

From the President

Dear AVETRA member,



Stephen Billett and Sarojni Choy drew together a Queensland team to co-convene the thirteenth AVETRA National Conference and treated us to wealth of presentations, conversations and talk stimulated by international and national experts in researching VET.

Of course, as always, I made my way home with a cacophony of voices tumbling in my head and wondering what would remain with me once the realities of another teaching week washed through the thinking space I had created. Three days of non-stop interactivity and stimulation can very easily overload mind when we are detached from the stabilising influences of work and family. At each conference we venture into a new world where ideas are floated, experiences conveyed and notes hastily scribbled. What do we take away? Often chance encounters with colleagues may plant enduring ideas as readily as the concepts transported from other continents by key presenters. In the end our conference experiences are deeply personal forays into the collective mind of our community of practice. We each bring our current dilemmas and personal agendas, and they intersect with those of our colleagues and overseas visitors in strange and random ways. Like chance meetings, we can never be sure if as Forest Gump said, they were always 'planned to be our destiny', or if we are all just 'floating in the wind', catching words that have meaning for us, only at that point in time. Perhaps, the reality is somewhere in between. We make the thinking connections we are ready to make, at that time, and at that conference. Since the conference such conversations have continued between members of the executive to shape the focus of the new executive for the term ahead. I vocalised my commitment at the conference to serve, protect and develop the association in my new role.

Australia's need for skills, having departed the central stage late in 2008, are now back in the spotlight. The battle appears to be about how much we should import our capability, and how much we should build from our own people. Meanwhile, there has been a significant human cost for many young people who unfortunately began their skill development in apprenticeships, just as the world turned against them. What part should we be playing in this re-shaped VET world? As individuals we are part of AVETRA because we have a personal desire to find out how trainee experiences can be better. As a collective body, we are bound together by a desire to learn from each other, develop our capability and capacity, and promote our contribution, so it will be supported by the educational community.

I have been heartened to find that new researchers are not standing at the edge of our recent conferences. They are vocal at pre-conference workshops for new researchers, in evidence by presenting their first papers, and acclaimed in the competition for the best new research awards. NCVET has been a significant supporter of new researchers in VET, sponsoring the building research capacity scheme and the mentoring of new VET


researchers. It has been the interactions with new researchers as they grapple with their first conference experience and start to establish their VET research network that makes the atmosphere so refreshing. We old hands recognise that it is these new researchers that will make this a continuing and enduring community, and that the knowledge will continue to flow long after we had gone.

AVETRA in 2010 will continue the commitment to mentor and develop new researchers but intends to extend this initiative. We need collect, consolidate and display our knowledge about researching VET as a resource for all members and part of our website. In addition, we need to invest in the professional development of experienced VET researchers, extending our capability and perhaps our collaboration in the research field. These will be key themes of AVETRA activity this year.

Such development requires a sound financial base. The executive will generate a policy for investing in such developmental activity, while determining what reserves constitute secure base for the association.

We are also aware that there have been significant shifts in the VET research landscape over the past decade. Many have left our community, and many new institutional ventures have been formed across the nation. Now is an opportune time to re-map our national VET research sector and develop a strategy to engage with specific organisations that share similar interests to consolidate our political influence. We should also consider what steps might be appropriate to increase the status of our profession.

So in the end, the hours of listening and talking at Queensland, and since, has already created thoughts that will endure and help reshape VET research and practice long after the conference. We are after all, trying to make a difference to a significant part of education in Australia - something that affects all Australians, and our third largest export industry. While we take away ideas for our own projects and agendas from each conference, what we also take away is something more precious - the feelings of belonging to a community that unifies our purpose, trying to make VET experiences more effective for the learners. The conference was three days of talk and the executive will continue with even more talk - but it is that talk, the language, and the interaction that slightly reshapes us after every discussion within this community. We return back to work; and we work, but not quite in the same way as when we left.



*Llandis Barratt-Pugh
President of AVETRA, Edith Cowan University, June, 2010.*

AVETRA 2010 AVETRA Conference papers now available

Papers and presentations from our 2010 annual conference are now available on the AVETRA website at www.avetra.org.au/publications/conference-archives/conference-archives-2010/2010-papers

Mentoring New Researchers

We are pleased to announce that Dr Sarojni Choy of Queensland University of Technology will be assuming responsibility for management of the mentoring scheme under the Building Research Capacity program. More information about the program is available at www.ncver.edu.au/research/opportunities.html

Llandis Barratt-Pugh

Supporting the experienced VET researcher - An AVETRA development strategy

A group of 7 members has been working on the initial stages of a strategy to develop the personal capability and a collaborative network of experienced VET researchers. At the Executive meeting in June, some proposals for further work were agreed and we would like to invite other experienced researchers in AVETRA to participate, if they wish. Eight themes are proposed for action and people in each theme will work at its own pace to develop activities or products that will be of benefit to experienced VET researchers and particularly AVETRA members. The 8 themes and brief descriptions of their purpose are given below.

Please note that expressions of interest are to participate in the work developing the theme - later on we will call for participation in the activities that the theme groups develop.

Please contact Erica Smith at e.smith@ballarat.edu.au or (03) 5327 9665 if you would like to join one of the theme working groups.

Theme 1 - Professional development events: To provide professional development and other events that improve the research capability of experienced VET researchers and also help to advance thinking in the discipline.

Theme 2 - AVETRA research publications: To draw together research knowledge that has been developed by experienced researchers in the VET research field into publications such as a handbook for VET research or scholarly books from AVETRA conferences.

Theme 3 - Awards for VET researchers: To broaden and deepen the awards given by AVETRA for VET researchers.

Theme 4 - International links: To document and share international networks for the benefit of Australian and international VET researchers.

Theme 5 - Applying for ARC grants and publishing in top tier journals: To develop support and collaborative networks for those aiming at ARC applications and top-level scholarly publishing.

Theme 6 - Mapping the VET research field: To map the main institutions and activities of the 'body' and landscape of Australian VET research.

Theme 7 –VET research quality and esteem: To record and showcase the quality of Australian VET research.

Theme 8 - Map/improve processes for external ethics approvals (e.g. TAFE) required for research: To expedite the external ethics and other approval processes for VET researchers.

Erica Smith

Research and VET News

OctoberVET 2010

AVETRA's OctoberVET program has been increasing in strength each year and we hope there will be at least a dozen events around Australia in 2010. Details of 2010 events will be available on the OctoberVET web pages progressively, with two events already announced, in Newcastle on 14th October and another in Ballarat on 21st October. If you would be interested in mounting an event (large or small - it's your choice!), have a look at the convenor information on the web site. The web site also provides information about the aims of OctoberVET, to help you decide if you would like to mount an event. Please feel free to contact the national convenor, Erica Smith if you need more information (03)5327 9665 or e.smith@ballarat.edu.au. OctoberVET web pages start at <http://avetra.org.au/octobervet>

Erica Smith

Joint TDA/Universities Australia statement

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) and Universities Australia (UA) commissioned a project in September 2009 designed to support a more cohesive national tertiary education system. The joint TDA/UA project sought to identify how the two organisations could facilitate an enhanced range of student pathways to support the attainment of the participation targets proposed in the Bradley Review of Higher Education and endorsed by COAG.

One of the key proposals by UA and TDA is that:

'Tertiary' education qualifications are those at diploma level and above, including where these qualifications may embed pathways from the qualification level below.

The report argues that this is generally consistent with the OECD's ISCED definition and describes the point of intersection between the vocational education and training and university sectors. Additionally, the definition is compatible with the Government's aim to increase the number of Australians with tertiary level qualifications.

The joint statement can be accessed at:

http://www.tda.edu.au/cb_pages/Newsletter_20100426.php

New chief researcher for NCVER

Dr John Rice has been appointed Chief Researcher at the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

John will join NCVER after four years at the University of Adelaide. He has previously held academic appointments at a number of Australian universities, including the Queensland University of Technology, the University of Canberra and the University of South Australia.

The media statement can be accessed at

www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/mediareleases/mr_41.html

Conferences and other Events

VET Network conference, 'Creative Futures: the changing landscape', Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide, 15 – 17 Sept, 2010

This event is designed for all those involved in vocational education and training in schools. For further information go to

www.vetnetwork.org.au/01_cms/details.asp?ID=114

Tertiary Education Management Conference, Crown Convention Centre, Crown Promenade Hotel, Melbourne, 3 – 6 October, 2010

The theme for the 2010 Conference is Future Directions and promises to be an exciting and unique opportunity to see what the future might bring. Registrations are now open.

To register, go to www.secureregistrations.com/temc2010

More information about the Conference can be found on

www.temc.org.au/2010/index.html

AUSTAFE Conference, Leadership, Innovation and Workplace Culture, Sydney, 2010 CITIGATE Central, Ultimo, 13 – 15 October, 2010

This conference organised by the TAFE NSW Managers' Association will investigate themes such as innovation, leadership and workplace culture.

Details to be announced later in the year at www.austafe.edu.au/events or for more information, email 2010austafe@conferenceaction.com.au

TAFE Directors Australia National Conference, Melbourne, 13 – 14 Sept, 2010

Details to be announced later in the year at www.tda.edu.au/events

ACEN 2010 National Conference, Perth, Curtin Institute of Technology, 29 September – 1 October, 2010

The Australian Collaborative Education Network 2010 conference is titled 'Work Integrated Learning (WIL): Responding to Challenges'. The theme of the conference is focusing on assessing and researching WIL, evaluating learning outcomes, partnerships and social inclusion. For further information go to www.acen.edu.au

IVETA – CPSC International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in TVET, Isla Ballroom 2&3, EDSA Shangri-La, Manila, Philippines, November 3 - 5, 2010

The theme of the conference is the role that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Vocational Education and Training is playing in setting new directions for Education for All (EFA). More information on the conference, including paper themes and registration details can be found at iveta2010.cpsctech.org

The World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics (WFCP) and Association of Colleges (AOC) 2010 World Congress, Birmingham, UK, November 14-15, 2010

World Congress is the leading international conference for providers of vocational education and skills training, drawing participants from over 36 countries with over 300 delegates from Colleges, Polytechnics or higher education organisations with a primary vocational focus.

The Congress provides a major platform to discuss key issues of the day such as how vocational education through skills and training can support the world economy, the role of Colleges and Polytechnics in providing skills for employability, as well as innovation,

new pedagogy, work based learning and apprenticeships, internationalising the curriculum, and more.

This year the focus will be on the role of education in driving global recovery. For more information on the conference can be found at:

www.aocmsevents.co.uk/aoc/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=89512&eventID=261&mode=preview&version=future&eventID=261

Recent Publications

Innovative Apprenticeships: Promoting Successful School-to-Work Transitions, Felix Rauner, Erica Smith, Ursel Hauschildt and Helmut Zelloth (Eds.), 2010

www.inap.uni-bremen.de/dl/inap%20conference%20proceedings%202009.pdf

This report is the proceedings of the third international conference of the International Network on Innovative Apprenticeship (INAP) in Turin on 17-18 September 2009. INAP was founded by small group of apprenticeship researchers that met at the University of Bremen in 2006 to discuss the findings of a collaborative research project on apprenticeship, spanning several countries.

Skills and competences in a knowledge economy, Agnes Dietzen, Glasgow: European Educational Research Association, 2010

vetnet.mixxt.org/networks/files/download.7681

This paper discusses contradictory appraisals of the future viability of the system of vocational education and training (VET) with regard to the challenges associated with a knowledge society. The contrast in the positions is due to differences associated with the meaning of forms of knowledge, as the juxtaposition of knowledge-based and experience-based understandings of competencies makes clear. The paper attempts to identify indications of a possible shift of meaning occurring among various forms of knowledge and competences using empirical findings relating to changes of occupational work and skills requirements.

Work-based learning, identity and organisational culture / Linda Ahlgren and Lyn Tett, Studies in continuing education. Vol. 32, No. 1, March 2010, pp. 17-27

This paper discusses the ways in which employers view the contribution of work-based learning, how participating learners' experience the provision offered to them and how far work-based programmes can contribute to changing the discourse about learning from one of deficit to one of strengths. It draws on two complementary studies of work based learning undertaken by those regarded as having limited skills in order to discuss how the relationship between organisational culture, learner identity and learning opportunities impact in the workplace. It suggests that learner identity is not static but is shaped by the interaction between the individual, the workplace culture and the activities in which people engage. It concludes that employers can influence the workplace culture positively as well as negatively and that it is in their own longer term interests to see the value of developing their employees' capacities so that all can benefit from the new knowledge that is created.

Defining Educational Research: A Perspective of/on Presidential Addresses and the Australian Association for Research in Education, Bob Lingard and Trevor Gale, Australian Educational Researcher, vol.37 no.1 April 2010

<http://www.aare.edu.au/10pap/Pages%20from%20AER%20April%202010%20Web-2.pdf>

This paper is concerned with the definition of the field of educational research and the

changing and developing role of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) in representing and constituting this field. The evidence for the argument is derived from AARE Presidential Addresses across its 40-year history. The paper documents the enhanced complexity and diversity of the field over these 40 years, including the emergence of a global educational policy field, theoretical and methodological developments in the social sciences and new research accountabilities such as the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) measure. Specifically, the paper suggests that the evidence-based movement in public management and education policy, and the introduction of the ERA, potentially limit and redefine the field of educational research, reducing the usefulness and relevance of educational research to policy makers and practitioners. This arises from a failure to recognise that Education is both a field of research and a field of policy and practice. Located against both developments, the paper argues for a principled eclecticism framed by a reassessment of quality, which can be applied to the huge variety of methodologies, theories, epistemologies and topics legitimately utilised and addressed within the field of educational research. At the same time, the paper argues the need to globalise the educational research imagination and 'deparochialise' educational research. This call is located within a broader argument suggesting the need for a new social imaginary (in a post-neoliberal context of the global financial crisis) to frame educational policy and practice and the contribution that educational theory and research might make to its constitution. In relation to this, the paper considers the difficulties that political representations of such a new imaginary might entail for the President and the Association, given the variety of its membership and huge diversity of its research interests.

Crediting vocational education and training for learner mobility, Sandra Walls, John Pardy, NCVET, 2010

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2249.html>

Reforms in the tertiary education sector place student transitions between vocational education and training (VET) and university at the fore. Informed by existing structures between Deakin University and three Victorian TAFE institutes, this report explores the notion of credit transfer in practice, as well as describing learning pathways available through enterprise-based training. Ideas for enabling learner mobility are identified, with both students and providers suggesting understanding and respect as key principles for success. A guide to credit transfer for students, career counsellors and those assisting students in the credit transfer process has also been developed.

Australian vocational education and training statistics: Historical time series of apprenticeships and traineeships in Australia from 1963, NCVET, 2010

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2245.html>

This publication presents a summary of training activity in apprenticeships and traineeships in Australia for the period 1963-2009. A timeline of major policy changes affecting apprenticeships and traineeships in Australia from 1901 to the present is provided to give the summary information context. The data tables which follow present in-training, commencement, completion, and cancellation/withdrawal figures by state and territory and trade occupation, separately, for the full period 1963-2009. For the period 1995-2009, more detailed information is provided, allowing for a comparison of training activity in trade and non-trade occupations. Finally, apprentice and trainee training rates are presented by occupation and state and territory for the period 1996-2009. In order to maintain consistency with historical source publications, figures on commencements, completions and cancellations/withdrawals are presented for the 12 months ending 30 June in all tables, while in-training figures refer to the number in-training as at 30 June.

About AVETRA

AVETRA is the peak professional association for VET researchers. Its ability to be a sustainable and viable association depends on its membership. Members are urged to continue their membership and to encourage their colleagues to join AVETRA. AVETRA services include:

- An annual VET international research conference
- Two editions of *International Journal of Training Research per annum*
- The quarterly AVETRA e-newsletter with the latest news in the VET sector as well as VET research.
- The new *Research Today* publication twice a year.
- OctoberVET workshops organised by AVETRA members in centres as widely spread as Perth, Darwin, Townsville, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.
- The AVETRA website with VET research links and information
- Awards for VET researchers including the joint award with TAFE Directors Australia, the Berwyn Clayton Award, The Ray Barker Award, and the AVETRA Best paper Award.

HELP AVETRA help VET research and join now if you are not a member. Full **\$160** (GST inclusive) and Student memberships **\$80.00** including GST are available.

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