

A-NEWS

The Newsletter of the Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association



From the President

Greetings to all AVETRA Colleagues

As 2013 draws to a close I would like to thank you all for your continued support for AVETRA.

This year has been a challenging one for a number of our members as significant policy reforms impact on workplaces– but we have still been able to maintain a healthy engagement with many members across a number of events including a successful annual conference in Perth and a good number of events during OctoberVET.

Plans are well advanced for our next conference which will be held in Surfers Paradise next year which will also feature papers from our colleagues in Adult Learning Australia (ALA). This collaboration is a welcome one, and one that I hope will signal the beginning of a fruitful partnership between AVETRA and ALA.

Continuing on the theme of collaborations, AVETRA has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with TAFE Directors Australia (TDA). This agreement lays the foundation for cooperation on a range of activities which aim to build the capacity and research culture across TAFE institutions.

You will shortly receive information calling for nominations for the positions of President and members of the Executive. I would encourage you all to consider taking up the opportunity to nominate for these positions. Membership of the Executive offers opportunities for networking and to learn more about the VET sector and its operation from a national perspective.

On behalf of the Executive please accept our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year and I look forward to seeing many of you at the AVETRA conference on 23rd and 24th April, 2014.

Michele Simons

President of AVETRA, University of Western Sydney, December, 2013

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17TH AVETRA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Mark your diaries for the 17th AVETRA International Conference to be held on the 22 - 24 April 2014.

The 2014 AVETRA Conference *"Informing Changes in VET Policy and Practice: The Central Role of Research"* will be hosted at the **Outrigger, Surfers Paradise**.

Keynote Speakers:

Prof. Thomas Bailey



***Professor of Economics and Education,
Teachers College,
Columbia University
New York***

Prof. Erica Smith



Professor of Vocational Education, University of Ballarat, Australia

Dr Soon Joo Gog



Executive Director of the Institute for Adult Learning (IAL), Singapore

Visit: www.avetra.org.au

Register your interest now with the AVETRA 2014 Conference Secretariat – avetra2014@theassociationspecialists.com.au

For Conference Event Sponsorship, please contact: avetra2014@theassociationspecialists.com.au

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A MINUTE WITH ... Bobby Harreveld



I first got interested in VET research in the 1990s when working at TAFE.

Two people who inspired me most to conduct research

International Literacy Year in 1990 was a watershed for Australia as State and Territory government funded initiatives, including those focused on questions that I had at the time around adult education, people with disabilities, literacy and numeracy. From memory, Joy Cumming was one of the people who mentored me through that research project. That was the first time I was inspired to undertake research. From there on, it has always been the availability of funding for research that has made it possible for to develop research projects while balancing teaching and administration commitments.

The areas of VET research that interest me most are the interstitial spaces where governance of the VET system, engages its curriculum frameworks, pedagogical principles and practices.

Methodologies that I have used are qualitative. Sometimes I have been involved in projects that use mixed methods. However, my contribution is always with the qualitative methodologies and methods of, for example, action research, case study, discourse, ethnography.

The most interesting piece of VET research I conducted was an investigation into the virtual flexibility of adult literacy and new technologies in remote communities. It was commissioned in 1996-1997 by the Queensland Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy (QAELN) Council, and was the first time that I 'walked the walk' of being a researcher and member of a research team from the conceptualization stage to the submission of the final report. It was interesting because the findings foreshadowed many of the principles of flexible, online, blended, technology assisted learning and teaching that are espoused today. Also from that project, emerged further questions about educators brokering educational change, which I then explored in my PhD study.

Currently I am researching the deschooling of learning and earning (l/earning) and the role of educational brokers at the interfaces of education, training and work. This research is occurring through a number of projects, in which the contexts vary from senior secondary schooling, to teacher education, vocational, adult and community education.

Each edition of AVETRA News will feature a special interview with a VET researcher. If you are interested in being featured or you know someone who might – please get in touch with either Sarojni Choy or Sinan Gemici.



OctoberVET update – Steven Hodge and Linda Simon

2013 has been another good year for OctoberVET, an annual series of local events to showcase VET research. OctoberVET events are an opportunity for practitioners, researchers and other stakeholders to come together to learn about the latest VET research and bring issues to the attention of researchers. Seven OctoberVET events were initiated and coordinated by local convenors.

The first events in 2013 were at University of Ballarat in Ballarat and at Charles Sturt University at Wagga Wagga on 18 October. The theme of the Ballarat OctoberVET was 'The Variety of VET: Research into policy and practice for schools, training providers and workplaces', and 28 people attended the university's historical Ballarat campus to participate. At Charles Sturt University the topic was 'Research & Evaluation in Vocational Education: The role of evidence/Engaging & Supporting Distance-based Learners in the Workplace'. The Western Australian OctoberVET took place on 25 October at Edith Cowan University, Mt Lawley Campus. Forty-one people came to learn about 'What is happening in WA VET research'.

The 31st of October saw three widely dispersed events. The Tasmanian 'Engaging adolescents in Education: A gathering of minds and experiences' OctoberVET was staged at TasTAFE in Hobart, while at St George TAFE College, Sydney another event on 'Building research capacity and culture in VET' was attended by 30 participants. Up in Queensland, Southbank Institute of Technology, South Brisbane, hosted the provocatively titled 'Reflective practice in VET – why bother? How does it enhance business?' The final OctoberVET of 2013 took place 22 November at the WEA of SA in Adelaide. Ten participants enjoyed presentations and discussions around 'Exploring the relationships between the ACE and VET sectors'.

OctoberVET is a critical initiative for AVETRA, allowing it to reach a wide range of practitioners and researchers. AVETRA would like to thank and congratulate the 2013 convenors who generously gave their time and ingenuity to make this year's OctoberVET events a success. More details about the events, including reports, photos and presentations, will be made available on the AVETRA website.



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NCVER Research Forum

Realising our potential: widening participation through education and training

3 April 2014 – Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

Education and training can transform people's lives, playing an important role in health and wellbeing, helping them connect with the community, and getting a job.

This one-day national research forum will showcase research that NCVER has commissioned to provide greater understanding of the role of education and training in supporting all learners achieve their potential. The forum will also provide an insight into the challenges and barriers to educational participation, completion and outcomes for disadvantaged learners.

Leading researchers from across the tertiary education and training sector will discuss aspirations and student participation, diversity and equity issues, and labour market outcomes.

For more information and to register at the early bird rate, visit
<http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/events/realisingourpotential.html>

23rd National Vocational Education and Training Research Conference 'No Frills'

Considered one of the best value events on the VET calendar, next year NCVER is delighted to co-host the 23rd National Vocational Education and Training Research Conference 'No Frills' with Holmesglen at their Moorabbin Campus, Melbourne, Victoria from 9-11 July 2014. Don't forget to mark the date in your diary.

New funding rounds: Post-grad research papers and PhD top-up scholarships now open

Applications are now open for NCVER's new round of post-graduate research funding.

NCVER is offering \$5000 grants to existing post-graduate students for research papers on an aspect of their post-graduate research.

Students set to start a PhD in 2014 are also eligible to apply for a PhD top-up scholarship, valued at \$5000 per year for three years.

Be quick! Applications close **Wednesday, 18 December 2013.**

For more information, visit: <http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/opportunities.html>

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55th ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH CONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPER PROPOSALS

The 2014 AERC Steering Committee is pleased to invite you to submit a proposal for the 55th Adult Education Research Conference scheduled for June 5-7, 2014 in Harrisburg, PA. Pre-conferences are scheduled for June 4th. We are pleased to announce that Penn State Harrisburg will host AERC next spring. We are accepting proposals for three types of presentations:

1. Papers
2. Research Roundtables
3. Symposia

The full call for proposals is attached and is also available online at: <http://adulterc.org><<http://adulterc.org/>>.

Singapore is hosting the 9th International Conference on Researching Work and Learning (RWL9) 9-12 December 2015

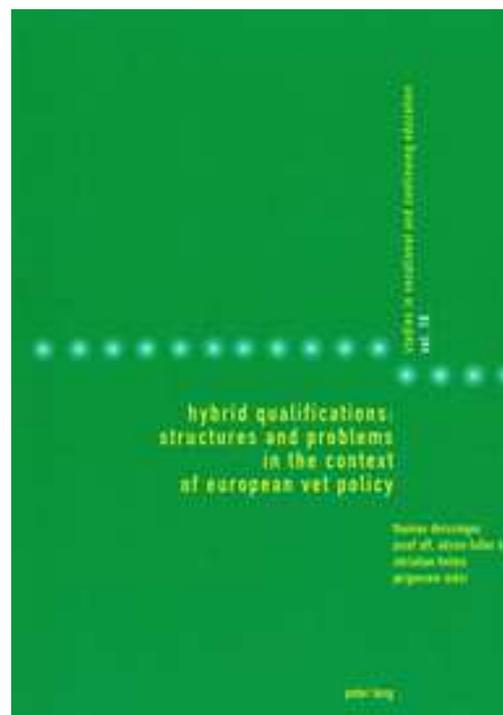
The Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) of Singapore is pleased to inform interested presenters to the conference that the theme has been finalised - "Work and Learning in the era of Globalisation: Challenges for the 21st Century".

Full details are available at rwl2015.com. To subscribe to the mailing list, send an email to rwl2015@ial.edu.sg or write to info@ial.edu.sg with your enquiry.

This new book on "hybrid" or "double" qualifications in the VET sector contains research contributions which have derived from a Leonardo Innovation Transfer project funded by the European Union. It was carried out between 2009 and 2011 by a consortium including the Universities of Konstanz (Germany), Roskilde (Denmark), Southampton (England) and the University of Business and Economics Vienna (Austria).

"Hybrid qualifications" (HQ) may be seen as an instrument to deal with the issue of permeability between VET and higher education which in recent years has turned out as a major focus of European education and training policies and also is an essential principle underlying the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). In this context, HQ may be seen as an interesting approach to tackle these challenges as they serve "two masters", i.e. by producing skills for the labour and

enabling individuals to progress more or less directly to higher education. The specific focus of this book is placed on conditions, structures and processes which help to combine VET with qualifications leading into higher education. This market volume assembles direct research results from the project together with articles from other countries including Switzerland, the Netherlands, France, Australia, Canada, and Scotland.



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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.

If you are interested in contributing to this newsletter please contact either Sarojni Choy or Sinan Gemici.