

e-WAALC NEWS September 2012

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1. The Challenge

WAALC trialled a new means of encouraging attendance at the ACAL conference this year. Instead of the usual multiple small scholarships of \$400 or \$500 each, we offered one individual the opportunity to be supported up to the value of \$2000. Applicants were challenged to respond to a piece about addressing stigma and how to make a difference by participating in the conference. The process was very successful and attracted more applicants this year than any other year in the previous decade. Others were able to use The Challenge as an opportunity to discuss the conference with their managers and as a direct result at least one individual received full support to attend from their workplace.

Audrey McAlindon has been selected as the successful recipient of the scholarship, on the basis of the plans she submitted to raise awareness and promote discussion of the literacies stigma at the ACAL conference.

Thanks to all the applicants for their heart-felt and passionate responses to the challenge.

2. Report from WAALC conference

This year the Conference title was **At the heart of the matter – identity and trust in adult learning**. The intention was to place people – teachers and learners – at the heart of educational quality and ask the question: what makes learning work for people?

How did we go in achieving this goal? Judge for yourself: here are some quotes from conference delegates about the impact of the conference on them and importantly their future practice.

- It has to be reiterated that for another adult to trust in you, trust in learning and education, you **MUST** trust, respect and learn with them.
- Being able to relate to the identity of the learner and establish trust is crucial to the learning experience.
-how our institution meshes (or doesn't mesh) with student identity.
- I am going to deepen my interpersonal relationships with students to empower students how to retain their identity and to deal with/cope/explore the change in their identity. This will foster their trust in me and therefore their learning journey (hopefully).
- To understand and remember that differences between identity have potential to disrupt trust.
- It is important to know that new learning brings about changes to learners' understanding of themselves and their worlds. Teachers need to be aware and look for opportunities to support learners.
- Adults need to trust and value you and the organisation in order to learn productively. They have to have a sense of ownership in the learning and identify themselves as a learner – fully part of the learning environment and co-creator in the process.
- Thanks for the reminder that whilst many of us are using 'heart' in our practice we sometimes feel it is undermined by funding bodies, agencies' guidelines etc and a conference like this helps bring the importance of the 'heart' of the matter back to the forefront again. Cheers!
- I gained a greater insight into what learners/students bring with them and the need for trainers to be aware of this and have compassion. I found the issue of identity of the learner as he/she progresses through education very interesting. I had never really thought of learner identity before.

- My focus has made me reflect on my own bad experiences in learning. It has given me some strategies to assist learners heal and support them with the stigma. When learners are resistant to take on a new identity, with respect of their identity, I need to encourage, support them to explore new worlds.
- This year the theme was close to what I feel, what we often forget in the game of outcomes, certificates, reporting and paperwork - that at the heart of the matter we are dealing with human beings who are most often disempowered, and our role above all is to help them build confidence and empower them, help them to see and work from their own strength.
- Learn from your students. Listen to them. Express how you are learning from them.

3. Results of WAALC AGM

There was a good turn out to the AGM despite the meeting following a long day at the annual conference. After dealing with some updates to the constitution, a new committee was formed. Susan Bates undertook the role of Chairperson and Carmel Jennings became the Treasurer. Ann Murphy and Cheryl Wiltshire were re-nominated for and have taken up the positions of Vice-Chairperson and Secretary respectively. The remainder of the executive consists of Claire Anderson, Jane Macey, Emilia Biemmi-Beurteaux, Veronica Ribbons, Audrey McAlindon, Margaret McHugh and Theo Bekkers.

A vacancy on the committee will be filled at the next meeting. Any members who wish to be considered, please email info@waalc.org.au.

Thanks to all those members who are taking a break from serving on the executive this year. We hope you return at some time in the future. In the meantime, our best wishes for your current and future endeavours.

4. Foundation Skills Training Package update

Innovation & Business Skills Australia (IBSA) are doing further work on the draft *Foundation Skills Training Package*. It is now not expected to be completed until late in 2012 so implementation will be later in 2013. There has been significant additional work in the Numeracy units which will be available soon in draft form.

5. Result of scoping Cert IV delivery and assessment of Foundation Skills

IBSA received widespread feedback about the new Certificate IV qualification proposed for inclusion in the TAE10 Training and Assessment Training Package. As a result, they have decided that there is little support for an additional qualification to equip VET practitioners with skills and knowledge in the delivery and assessment of foundation skills. The project will now focus on additional electives for existing qualifications or a skills set.

A consultation paper and PowerPoint detailing the proposal can be accessed on the IBSA website. For more information on this project visit the IBSA website www.ibsa.org.

This proposal generated much discussion on the CGEA Network Google Group. If you missed the excitement, sign into your Google account and then click on <https://groups.google.com/forum/?hl=en&fromgroups#!forum/CGEA-Network> to catch up.

6. Welcome to new WAALC members

We are pleased so many of you have decided to make a contribution to promoting adult literacies as an important sector within the educational world by becoming a financial member of WAALC this year. Welcome!

WAALC membership also makes you an affiliated member of the Australian Council of Adult Literacy (ACAL). Let ACAL know on info@acal.edu.au if you would like to be on their mailing list.

7. Last chance! ACAL Conference 2012: Hobart

Joining the Pieces: Literacy and Numeracy - one part to the picture

Sept 19-21, 2012 Hobart <http://www.tcal.org.au/>

Keynote speakers are Susan Devereux, Branch Manager, Foundation Skills, The Foundation Skills jigsaw – how the pieces fit together; Pat Strauss, Associate Professor, Auckland University of Technology on Adult Literacy Practitioners – making our voices heard; and Anita Roberts, Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) on VET + LLN = Together Forever.

Registration is still open, flights are still reasonable and there is accommodation still available. So if you are envious of those who are going to Hobart, you have one last chance to scrape together enough funds. Otherwise, watch the next newsletter for the time and location of next year's conference.

8. CGEA update

The Certificates in General Education for Adults (CGEA) are being reaccredited during 2012/2013. The Victorian Recognition and Quality Assurance Authority (VRQAA) have extended the current course accreditation until the end of June 2013.

The reaccreditation will take into account any impact of the Foundation Skills Training Package, currently under development. Phase 1 of the reaccreditation process focused on research and consultation with key stakeholders via online surveys and focus groups and was completed in August. The project is now entering phase 2 which will involve the redevelopment of the curriculum.

The reaccredited curriculum is scheduled for publication on the Training Support Network website in April 2013. The first project steering committee was held on August 28th.

There will be further opportunities to provide feedback during the reaccreditation. The next few months will be the critical time to have input if you are hoping for an improvement.

9. Sharing the news

Who do you know that might be interested in WAALC activities? Forward this newsletter to colleagues who you think should be a member of WAALC. Or perhaps invite a prospective member to attend events like our conference and AGM to meet other members. We encourage all adult literacy and numeracy practitioners in WA to join WAALC now and be part of the renewed national action to have literacy embedded in adult learning at all levels: [join online here](#).

10. Issues? Contributions?

WAALC seeks to represent all adult educators who deliver adult literacy and numeracy programs in Western Australia. Let us know if there are issues that you think WAALC should take action on, or news to include in future newsletters. Vacancies, projects, new resources for sale or requests for input into decision making are all sought.

11. 'Contacts' update

Let us know if your address changes. If you don't want to receive this newsletter or wish to suspend it while you are away on leave, please email the WAALC secretary at info@waalc.org.au

e-WAALC News is the electronic newsletter of the Western Australian Adult Literacy Council. The WAALC Executive Committee prepares and sends **e-WAALC News** to members five times a year. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and contributions to the newsletter.

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