



Welcome

Associate Professor Erica Smith, Convenor – RIVET

With the final edition of RIVET News for 2006, we would like to wish all of our readers a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year and hope that most of you will manage at least a short break from work.

Continued changes in the VET sector make our lives busy, but interesting. RIVET members continue to be involved with developments in the VET sector: Ros Brennan Kemmis and Erica Smith recently attended the consultation in Melbourne for the continuous review of the Training and Assessment training Package and are confident that improvements to the Training package will lift the quality of VET delivery.

Within the university sector, the Research Quality Framework (RQF) which has finally been released will shape universities' approach to research over the next few years. Erica Smith is leading a working party of AVETRA, the Australian VET Research Association, that will examine the implications of the RQF for VET research. While the RQF directly affects only university researchers, it will have indirect effects among all those involved with VET research. These will be interesting challenges to take forward into 2007.

Next RIVET Research Colloquium

Welfare to work: Implications for teachers and trainers
Tuesday 13 February, 2007

With the support of the Faculty of Education Research Development Fund, RIVET will be holding a free half-day research colloquium at the Wine and Food Industry Training Centre, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga Campus. The colloquium, which is open to all interested people, begins at 9:00am and concludes with lunch at 1:00pm.

- **Dr Steve Johnson (Director, Policy Research Institute, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK)**

Welfare to Work Policy in the UK: Recent Initiatives and prospects for the future

Until recently, registered unemployment in the UK has been in long-term decline and the attention of labour market policies has switched to the 'harder to help' groups within the unemployed population and the 2.7 million people claiming incapacity benefits, of whom an estimated 750,000 would like to work. This presentation will describe and assess the UK Government's evolving approach to 'welfare to work' policies, building on the perceived success of the 'New Deal' programme. The Policy Research Institute has been involved over a number of years in evaluating welfare to work initiatives – including *Employment Zones* and a number of locally-based and European Union funded projects - and Steve will outline his personal view of the lessons learned and the likelihood of success of the UK Government's most recent showcase initiative, 'Pathways to Work'.

- **Professor Margaret Alston, (Director, Centre for Rural Social Research, Charles Sturt University)** will be discussing the initiative of the social work heads of school to monitor the implications of welfare to work for social workers having to potentially enforce the new regulations, and for vulnerable clients.
- Ros Brennan Kemmis of RIVET, and a speaker from TAFE NSW, will discuss the implications of these developments for VET teaching and learning.

To assist us with catering please register your name and contact details by Thursday 8 February by phone on 02-69332335 or email to vetresearch@csu.edu.au.

Report on RIVET/OctoberVET Research Colloquium October 2006

The seventh RIVET Community of Scholars research colloquium was held on the 20th of October 2006. The topical theme, *Apprenticeship: Research and current practice* attracted over 60 attendees from a range of different organisations. Some people had travelled long distances to attend.

Pedagogy and practice in apprenticeships: Dr Peter Smith, Deakin University, spoke about *how research findings improve training for apprentices*; Geoff Speers, Riverina State Training Centre, *how does national apprenticeship agenda play out at local level*.

Initiatives to improve participation in apprenticeships: Ian Balcomb, NSW Board of Studies, *The introduction of school based apprenticeships in NSW from 2007*; Tom Dumbrell, Dumbrell Consulting, *Pre-apprenticeships: Policy options in some key trades*.

About half of the participants stayed for afternoon sessions with the speakers. The results of these discussions and the speaker presentations are available on our website via the 'RIVET Colloquia' link.

Peter Rushbrook presents paper at Canadian History of Education conference

2006 *Canadian History of Education 14th Biennial Conference*: 'The educational past: from margin to centre', 26-29 October, Ottawa, Canada

Dr Peter Rushbrook has a strong research interest in the history of education and has published widely in the field. While he specialises in the history of Victorian adult and vocational education policy he occasionally works in the field of educational biography. His 1995 PhD 'Straws in the wind: the construction of technical and further education in Victoria 1945-1985' (Monash University) features biographies of all Victorian chief inspectors and directors of technical education. Separate brief biographies have been published of Victorian Director of Technical Education Jack Keper, one of the architects of the Australian TAFE sector, and Colin Badger, founder of Victoria's Council of Adult Education. Peter's biographical interests extend also to the work

of teachers and the significant contributions they have made to the construction of Victoria's public education system. Peter's Canadian paper, "Tranquilly honoured and respected by all": the extraordinary life and times of Johann Friedrich Walther (1831-1917), is one such example.

The paper uses a narrative social historical and biographical approach to outline the life and contribution of an 'ordinary participant' to the development of institutionalised education in nineteenth century Victoria. Johann (John) Walther was born in Silesia, Prussia and emigrated to the Port Phillip colony of New South Wales in 1848 (from 1851, the colony of Victoria). In 1858 Walther commenced a thirty-five year teaching career as a Head Teacher in mostly one-room rural Victorian schools. The paper locates Walther within his German Lutheran community and explores its lifelong influence over his professional teaching practice choices. A particular focus is placed on the tensions generated periodically between his cultural identity and his work in mixed 'English' and German communities. Shifting bureaucratic structures and regulations represented by a series of education Acts inexorably separating church from state ('secular, compulsory and free') are argued as significant sources of these tensions. Walther's family life is considered also as a central theme in shaping his professional identity. Walther's wife Johanne Christiane (Christina) and their eleven children all played important roles in the day-to-day running of the small schools in which they worked – Christina taught sewing and the children acted as both students and pupil teachers (apprentice teachers). The paper concludes with a brief discussion of the methodological and theoretical positions adopted to construct the narrative, in particular the relationships between agency and structure, the ontological positioning of the individual in history and the place of narrative or 'storying' as a form of historical representation.

For more details about Peter's work, email him on prushbrook@csu.edu.au.

New research project for RIVET

Richard Pickersgill and Peter Rushbrook were successful in the last NCVET funding round with a nationally competitive grant (NR6016) to investigate *how regional training need and demand is communicated to VET providers*. A secondary component of the research will investigate how education and training contributes to regional sustainability.

The research will identify and trace the channels through which skills and training needs are transmitted to VET providers by focusing on how information is transmitted through the many networks of regional and local community organisations and representative bodies. The provider groups will include TAFE colleges, School VET placements, regional Adult and Community Colleges and Regional Group Training/Labour Hire organisations who are also Registered Training Organizations. Five regions in the Riverina region of NSW (Wagga Wagga; Griffith/Leeton; Coolamon; Narrandera and Tumut/Tumbarumba) will provide

case studies and within these localities significant community organisations and relevant representative bodies (for example, the local chambers of commerce, Service clubs such as Rotary and the regional school Compact representatives) will be the initial contact points.

The research will combine group process methods (focus group) with semi-structured individual and group interviews. These will be supplemented by the collation of descriptive level demographic, industry and training participation data for the selected sub-regions. A critical analysis of the recent literature on the contribution of education and training to community development will provide a context for the project.

NSW Board of Studies Consultancy

Erica Smith and Ros Brennan Kemmis have been invited to produce a literature review for the NSW Board of Studies to underpin its decision-making about introducing vocational programs into Years 9 and 10 in NSW schools. While vocational programs in these years are in existence for 'at risk' groups of students they have not yet been mainstreamed. Running concurrently with pilot projects, the literature review will draw on Australian and overseas literature and government reports from other States and territories. The review will be completed in March 2007.

RIVET international links

Over the past few years RIVET has established and strengthened a number of international links through visits, joint projects and publications. Some of these links are described below.

Germany: RIVET is a member of the INAP (International perspectives on Innovative Apprenticeship) apprenticeship research network, which is based at Bremen University in North Germany. INAP has members in many European countries and its web site can be found at <http://www.innovative-apprenticeship.net>. Erica Smith carried out the Australian phase of the first major INAP project and presented the findings in Germany earlier this year. She is currently co-editing a special edition of the journal *Education + Training* for 2007 which will include several papers based on the project.

Germany: RIVET has maintained close links with Prof Thomas Deissinger at the University of Konstanz in Southern Germany and Thomas was one of our international colloquium speakers in 2003. This year a paper written by Thomas, Erica Smith & Richard Pickersgill was published in the *International Journal of Training Research*, a comparative study of Germany and Australia's use of full-time vocational training as an alternative to apprenticeships.

UK: RIVET has established links with the research group Continuum at the University of East London and currently a comparison of pathways to building qualifications in England and Australia is being undertaken.

To be put on the RIVET mailing list, email vetresearch@csu.edu.au or write to
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Please help us keep our costs down by providing your email address!