



Welcome

Associate Professor Erica Smith, Convenor – RIVET

Welcome to the Spring edition of RIVET News. The past few months have been busy for us with two new members joining our group, and three applications having been submitted to the current funding round of the National Centre for Vocational Education Research. We are pleased to welcome two new Associate Members to the team and you will find details about them below.

The most important news is that our next Colloquium, which is on October 20th, is an endorsed 'OctoberVET' event. OctoberVET is an initiative of AVETRA, the Australian VET Research Association, that has been running for about four years now. It involves events all around Australia. Our upcoming event is the first that has been held in country NSW and we will be inviting VET practitioners from northern Victoria as well. We are very pleased that our event will be part of an Australian initiative that will involve over 500 people around the country this year. We have put together a program around the very topical theme of apprenticeships, with distinguished speakers, and we hope you will be able to join us.

Next RIVET Research Colloquium – OctoberVET: *Apprenticeship: Research and current practice* Friday 20 October, 2006

With the support of the Faculty of Education Research Development Fund, and as part of Australia-wide OctoberVET events, 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 1:30pm. You are also invited to stay for discussions, based on the key issues of the colloquium, with RIVET researchers and keynote speakers from 2-3pm.

The program, built around two key issues *Pedagogy and practice in apprenticeships* and *Initiatives to increase participation in apprenticeships*, will include presentations from Peter Smith (Deakin University), Geoff Speers (State Training Services), Ian Balcomb (NSW Board of Studies) and Tom Dumbrell (Dumbrell Consulting). These presentations will be followed by an interactive session.

To assist us with catering please register your name and contact details by Tuesday 17 October by phone on 02-69332335 or email to vetresearch@csu.edu.au. Please also indicate whether you are likely to stay for the afternoon discussions.

Report on RIVET Research Colloquium June 2006

The sixth RIVET Community of Scholars research colloquium was held on the 9th of June 2006. The theme of the day was 'Research into practice' and the four presentations developed this theme in a variety of ways.

The keynote speaker, Berwyn Clayton, presented a superb exploration of how internally and externally funded national research is utilised to inform policy and practice in the Canberra Institute of Technology. Her presentation was very well received and encouraged some interesting discussion.

RIVET researcher Erica Smith discussed how international research projects can improve practice using the ten-country *International Perspectives on Innovative Apprenticeships (INAP)* research project as an example. Lynne Stallard, TAFE NSW International Centre for VET teaching and learning (ICVET), drew from her experiences with the *ICVET VET pedagogy project* to show how research literature is informing TAFE teacher practice. Lyle Salmon then gave us an insight into a student practitioner's use of research in industry practice by applying language and numeracy research when teaching apprentices at TAFE.

These presentations were followed by an interactive session involving three break-out discussions. The results of these discussions, which were on *apprenticeships, assessment, and pedagogy*, are available on our website via the 'News' and 'RIVET Colloquia' pages.

New Associate Members for RIVET

We would like to welcome two new associate members to the RIVET team.

Dr Hilary Timma, who recently commenced working with the VET team at the Wagga Wagga campus, has a background in the Hospitality industry and she has taught apprentices and trainees at regional Institutes of TAFE and has worked as a workplace trainer and assessor in the North East Victorian Food Processing industry and, most recently, Hilary has been an education developer and coordinator in the healthcare sector.

Hilary originally trained in technical education and studied vocational education as part of her BEd and MEd. She has investigated ways in which front line managers in the Food Processing industry develop skills and contribute to organizational learning and has also explored the notion of identity construction, through assessment, work and learning, with food production workers.

Hilary's research interests include self-directed and adult/lifelong learning and workplace learning and assessment.

Dr Annemaree Lloyd is a lecturer in the School of Information Studies at Charles Sturt University. Before joining the School, she worked as a librarian and part-time teacher in TAFE NSW. Annemaree's area of research is information literacy and workplace learning. Her current research interests focus on exploring how people experience information in learning about the performance of work; the role of information literacy in embodied learning; information use and transfer of information skills from training to workplace contexts; information environments and affordance.

Her current research focuses on how fire fighters and ambulance officers experience and engage with information in the

development of subjective and intersubjective workplace positions.

Review of the Joint Group Training Program (JGTP)

RIVET is conducting a DEST funded review of the JGTP with Quantum Consulting of Western Australia. The JGTP is a federally funded program to support Group Training activities. RIVET members Erica Smith & Tony Bush have been undertaking consultations with Group Training Organisations, ITABs and State government staff in NSW, Victoria and the ACT. The project is due to report in early December.

Part-time work and high school student work permits in California

On his recent Special Studies Program (SSP) leave Peter Rushbrook visited the Grossmont High School District in San Diego, California to observe the implementation of the district's permit system for part-time student employment. Schools visited were Santana High School, Chaparral High School, El Cajon High School, Granite Hills High School, El Capitan High School and West Hills High School.

The school leaving age in California is eighteen and all students seeking part-time work must apply for a work permit that allocates hours worked according to an upward sliding age-based scale. The permit system is rigidly enforced and requires all employers to present appropriate documentation on request from labour law inspectors. Heavy fines are imposed for breaches of the agreed contract. Mr Rick Galyen, district Vocational Courses Coordinator, helped implement the scheme and reported that it works well in preventing the exploitation of school age workers. Students complete a standard permit form that is signed by both the student and employers and endorsed by the Vocational Coordinator. The permit is then kept on the employer's premises and must be produced on demand.

Evaluation of HSC Online Industry Curriculum Frameworks

Members of RIVET and two specialists in VET in schools Industry Curriculum Frameworks from CSU, Blair O'Meara and Rachael Randall, are currently undertaking an evaluation of the HSC Online sites. These sites are designed to support students in their study of the ten VET in Schools subjects in NSW. HSC Online is a collaboration between CSU and the NSW Department of Education and Training with significant input from the NSW Board of Studies.

The evaluation, which will be completed by December, is being conducted with teachers and students using a mixture of interviews, questionnaires and focus groups. The team aims to capture views on the effectiveness of these sites from a variety of standpoints. The sites themselves are also being evaluated in terms of their pedagogical effectiveness using a framework

derived from the principles that underpin the NSW Quality Teaching Framework. The results of this evaluation will inform both the design and content of these sites to the ultimate benefit of both teachers and students.

International conferences

Erica Smith has presented papers at two international conferences this year. Details appear below:

Smith, E. (2006). The experiences of apprentices and trainees in small Australian businesses: Some qualitative research findings. *Socially responsive, socially responsible approaches to employment and work conference*, Australian Centre for Research in Employment and Work, Monash University Prato Centre, Tuscany, Italy 1-4 July.

Smith, E. & Smith, A. (2006). How lower-level and vulnerable workers benefit from employers' engagement with the national qualification system in Australia. *Socially responsive, socially responsible approaches to employment and work conference*, Australian Centre for Research in Employment and Work, Monash University Prato Centre, Tuscany, Italy 1-4 July.

Smith, E. (2006). Value adding to apprenticeships: How an Australian construction company invests in apprentices to produce future senior managers. *Hochschultage Berufliche Bildung* conference, Bremen, Germany. 15-17 March.

Peter Rushbrook will be presenting a paper at the *2006 Canadian History of Education 14th Biennial Conference: The educational past: from margin to centre*, 26-29 October, Ottawa, Canada.

Forthcoming conferences

- **ACEN 2006 Conference 27-29 Sept 2006, Gold Coast**
Collaborative Education - Employers and Educators working together
A forum for the latest research and showcasing best practice
Conference Themes
Collaborative Education:
Contribution to the Emerging Economy
Contribution to Teaching, Learning and Student Outcomes
More information from the conference website:
www.swin.edu.au/hosting/acen/aussieConfPages/confHome.php
- **VETnetwork Australia National Conference, 11-13 Oct 2006, Cairns**
Exploring Transitions and Opportunities: A Topical Conference
www.vetnetwork.org.au/html/conference2006/index.htm

To be put on the RIVET mailing list, email vetresearch@csu.edu.au or write to
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