

Shared purpose — shared success

Helen Hennessy, Murray Institute of TAFE

LEARN is the network of all learning resource centres, learning assistance centres and joint use libraries in TAFE South Australia. Since its launch in 1989 this network has worked co-operatively to ensure that all its members actively contribute to the quality delivery of TAFE educational programs.

The LEARN network has striven to continually improve its effectiveness and services. It is widely considered to be one of the most effective networks in TAFE South Australia and amongst TAFE libraries generally.

In May 1996 LEARN secured funding through the Australian National Training

Authority's national project to demonstrate best practice in vocational education and training. LEARN's project, entitled *Networking for quality*, investigated how and why the LEARN network developed and identified best practice characteristics of relevance to the improvement of effective networking. The development and delivery of information literacy programs was used as a key case study.

Phoebe Palmieri, from Victoria, was employed as the project's consultant and worked closely with a reference group chosen to represent the many aspects of LEARN and our TAFE colleagues. The group was composed of myself as project manager; Richard Owen, LEARN Net-

work; Anthea Duthie, Western Institute of TAFE; Clare Murphy, Torrens Valley Institute of TAFE; Wendy Burns, Spencer Institute of TAFE; Linda Chaousis, Torrens Valley Institute of TAFE; Peter Doolette, Regency Institute of TAFE; and Di Booker, OLIMCH manager.

During the four months duration of the project Phoebe met with a wide range of LEARN's members and clients. Technology, including video-conferencing, tele-conferencing and e-mail discussion, was used to enable the involvement of people across the State. Phoebe also took part in one of LEARN's quarterly meetings.

Phoebe documented the project's outcomes in a report entitled *Shared purpose — shared success*. The project's findings were also used in customised staff development workshops for targeted groups (TAFE libraries nationally, other networks, private providers). The one-day workshops were outcomes-based, and aimed at producing achievable goals for those participating. Interstate workshops for TAFE library staff were held in five locations (Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Albury-Wodonga and Perth) during late January and early February 1997. Feedback from these and the South Australian workshop have been very positive.

Other major products of the project were: a series of performance indicators addressing network effectiveness; draft generic client satisfaction survey instruments; and a discussion paper examining the issues involved in providing fee-for-service access to the LEARN network and its services for private providers.

Now that the project is finished the work has really just begun. LEARN has made use of the recommendations from the report to set its 1997 priorities. Performance indicators will be integrated within performance agreements and consistent levels of service delivery across TAFE South Australia will hopefully be established. The generic client satisfaction survey is being refined and will be trialed shortly. The private providers discussion paper is beginning a network-wide debate in preparation for a policy for TAFE South Australia document and customised workshops are still to be offered (New Zealand Polytechnics have been recent participants.)

Copies of the report *Shared purpose — shared success* are still available. Contact Richard Owen at Adelaide Institute of TAFE on (08) 8207 8430 or e-mail richowen@tafe.sa.edu.au ■

On-line course development

Diana Harrison, RMIT TAFE librarian

In 1995 staff in the RMIT TAFE Library (Mike Brooks and Izabela Bartosiewicz) were approached to participate in a venture to publish the 'Local government course' online. These staff had substantial expertise developing web pages (they developed the first TAFE web page in Victoria) and their skills utilising HTML and designing web pages were seen as essential, as were their skills as information specialists. When the project was publicised, it was proposed that an additional two courses be included; these were 'Community justice', and 'Public administration'.

The first stage of the project was to develop a framework for each online course that incorporated the following: a welcome page; an overview of the course; on-line enrolment via e-mail; 'studying on-line' which provided advice on system requirements, and sites for public domain software to assist the online learner; as well as links to the RMIT campus and community.

Each module of a course is listed on the welcome page and includes; teaching staff; learning outcomes of the module; learning resources; and assessment.

The text for each module was developed by the teacher and then converted to HTML by library staff, who also developed the background design for each course. While the outline of each page fits the framework, unique designs were developed for each

course background. The library staff were also involved as information specialists, in locating relevant Internet sites that could be utilised on the learning resources page.

Hypernews software was used as a bulletin board for posting assignments and for conferencing. Software such as Powwow was also used for 'real time' chats. Students submitted their assignments electronically, and completed a feedback form for each assignment. A final evaluation form was also completed at the end of the course and submitted electronically. The on-line framework for each course also provided access to Internet search engines, library catalogues and other databases.

The library staff contributed their skills as information specialists, information literacy trainers, HTML experts and graphic designers. These skills, when coupled with those of the other teachers and curriculum developers, ensured well-developed courses that offered learners the support that they required.

The project was supported by the various Industry Training Boards; the Metropolitan Fire Brigade was particularly enthusiastic about the project, as it was keen to develop on-line studying options for firefighters who often faced periods of inactivity waiting for an 'emergency'. The project team were awarded an RMIT Quality Award in 1996 in recognition of their groundbreaking work in this area. ■