

AUSTRALIAN **FLEXIBLE LEARNING** FRAMEWORK

Managed by the Flexible Learning Advisory Group on behalf of all States and Territories in conjunction with ANTA

2002 RTO Case Study Project 'Flexible learning in practice'

Torrens Valley TAFE



Torrens Valley integrates flexible learning
with strategic planning

29 November 2002

RTO Case Study Foreword

The following case study is one of 18 case studies that document the use and application of Australian Flexible Learning (AFL) Framework products and services by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). The case studies are an initiative of the AFL Framework for the National Vocational Education and Training System 2000 – 2004 as a means of offering 'real-life' examples of how RTOs are implementing elearning strategies with the assistance of AFL Framework products and services. Each participating RTO has documented their experiences over a six month period (June 2002 to November 2002) and have been selected from each State and Territory representing the TAFE, Private Provider, Enterprise and VET in Schools sectors.

Each case study will provide you with an insight into how RTOs are implementing flexible learning and is critical reading if:

- You are interested in finding out about the possibilities of flexible learning
- You are currently implementing flexible learning within your organisation
- You are looking to extend your flexible learning delivery capabilities

Each case study covers areas such as;

- How to implement AFL Framework products and service
- Change management practices
- Customisation of flexible learning products and services
- Professional development
- Access and equity considerations
- Flexible learning strategic planning
- Blended learning techniques
- Marketing and much more.

Each case study highlights the various ways in which AFL Framework products and services can be applied to the learning environment to enhance client delivery and service.

For further information pertaining to AFL Framework products and services or to access other case studies visit discover.flexiblelearning.net.au or phone 07 3234 1852.

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Case Study Summary

This case study documents the ways in which Torrens Valley TAFE integrates flexible learning into our strategic planning. The products and services from the Australian Flexible Learning (AFL) Framework provide us with tools to facilitate this process.

Overview of Torrens Valley TAFE

Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) is located in Adelaide, SA and offers education and training across a wide range of program areas over four campuses. Since its inception in July, 1993, TVT has maintained a commitment to the delivery of flexible learning and this is expressed through our vision statement, 'Creating choices for life through learning'.

Our vision statement is supported by a number of strategic priorities, one of which states Flexible Learning

We ensure students have choices in what, when, where and how they learn and opportunities to develop key competencies.

Flexible learning has been and continues to be an integral part of what TVT has to offer our clients and our planning processes have been developed to reflect that. At all levels of planning from senior management to individual program teams, staff are asked to address the strategic priorities.

AFL Framework assists in the implementation of flexible learning

The products and services of the AFL Framework provide TVT with tools to assist with planning and implementing flexible learning and with providing professional development. TVT has used a range of these products and services and this case study documents the use of six of them, including,

- LearnScope
- Flexible Learning Leader
- Flexible Learning Fellowship (now incorporated into the Flexible Learning Leaders program)
- Toolboxes
- EdNA Online
- NET*Working Conferences

LearnScope, Flexible Learning Leader/Fellow and NET*Working conferences have provided a valuable source of funding for professional development both at a team level and for individual research and development projects. Participation in LearnScope and NET*Working conferences is encouraged and the ensuing development of networks within the institute, at a state level and nationally has been of great benefit to the institute.

TVT has also made extensive use of resources available through AFL Framework products and services such as EdNA and Toolboxes. A number of teams use Toolboxes as a means of accessing quality resources, suggested learning strategies and supporting materials for the delivery of training packages.

The AFL Framework products and services are not used in isolation from each other, but connections are made between them and professional development is planned to assist

with the integration of the products and services into the fabric of flexible learning at TVT. For example, the exploration and implementation of Toolboxes by the Business Services team led to a growth in expertise that was shared across the institute through a LearnScope project in 2002 involving seven other teams.

Case study objectives

The objectives of this case study were threefold;

- To build an historical picture of how the AFL Framework products and services have been used to facilitate and support the implementation of flexible learning;
- To document current usage of these products and services to assist in the building of internal networks that will support staff in future planning and implementation;
- To create a tool for induction for staff into flexible learning and how it is integrated into the delivery of learning at TVT.

To fulfil the purpose of creating an induction tool, this case study has been developed as a website. It should, therefore, be noted that the information contained within this report is structured for viewing on a website. We have devoted a page to each of the six products and services we have used, covering

- How we use the product
- How it has benefited TVT
- What works well?
- Problems
- Links
- Contact person for more information

Following the description of the product or service is a page which describes in detail one specific project at TVT. This description covers

- Leadership and participation
- What did we do?
- What have we learned?
- Where are we going?
- Testimonial from a participant
- Links
- Contact person for more information

The website has been designed to demonstrate both verbally and visually, the web of interconnections between the AFL Framework products and services and the strategic priorities of TVT. The full website will be released on Friday 6 December and will be available at <http://www.tv.tafe.com.au/flexiblelearning>

1.0 Flexible learning background

About Us

Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) is located in the northern and eastern suburbs of Adelaide. We offer education and training in 17 major industry areas over four campuses including local and statewide programs in

- Business Services
- Building and Finishing Trades
- Community Services
- Computing and Information Technology
- Digital Media Design
- Electronics
- Fashion
- Hair and Beauty
- Horticulture and Environmental Management
- Para-Dental Studies
- Veterinary and Applied Sciences
- Vocational Preparation

We have a broad pattern of community demographics with approximately 10,500 students, comprising a ratio of 55% female, 45% male, 11% non-English Speaking Background and 6% with an identified disability. Of these students, 79% attend on a part-time basis, 3% study externally and the remainder are full-time.

Additionally TVT is increasing the range of educational products and services for corporate clients offered on a fee-for-service. Our marketing team promotes the range of products using an integrated and cross-program approach. Many clients have commented on TVT's unique ability to provide services and training that cross the boundaries of traditional departments.

TVT's vision statement reflects the high level of importance placed upon flexible learning at the institute. One of our strategic priorities is flexible learning, ensuring that students have choices in what, when, where and how they learn and opportunities to develop key competencies. TVT is committed to maintaining its reputation for training excellence and being at the leading edge of training methodologies and products. Clients and industry stakeholders continue to look to us to provide quality, responsive and flexible learning experiences.

History of Torrens Valley TAFE

Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) was created in July 1993 through the amalgamation of Gilles Plains College of TAFE and the new Tea Tree Gully College. Gilles Plains College of TAFE incorporated the State Horticulture Centre and a campus on the site of the famous Cheltenham Park Racecourse and specialising in facilities for the horse racing industry courses.

Tea Tree Gully College had been specifically designed in the late 1980s to provide a different approach to vocational education and training focused on flexible, student centered, resource based learning. This approach was expanded to encompass the whole of the Institute and has remained a distinguishing feature of our educational programs.

In 2000, another new campus was opened at Urrbrae to house the Urrbrae Education Centre. This centre is unique in that it is a joint facility for Torrens Valley TAFE's horticulture courses and the Urrbrae Agricultural High School.

Since 1993 TVT's commitment to fostering creativity and innovation has fostered the expansion of flexible learning initiatives across the organisation. TVT provides a cross discipline service to industry and due to customisation the range of offerings is comprehensive.

Our level of commitment and the diverse activities available to provide flexible learning options to individual students as well as industry clients was a significant element of our successful achievement of South Australian Training Provider of the Year in 2001 and in our inclusion as one of three finalists for the National Large Training Provider of the Year Award.

Strategic Directions

Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) has developed a vision and mission statement that supports our commitment to flexible learning. Our strategic priorities indicate how we work to implement the vision of the institute.

Vision

Creating choices for life through learning

Mission

Torrens Valley TAFE will:

- Provide individuals access to global careers through lifelong learning;
- Develop a highly skilled and internationally competitive workforce in partnership with local business and industry;
- Provide young people with wider choices for their future learning and work by integrating with schools;
- Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with the community.

Strategic Priorities

Business Development

We diversify our revenue base by delivering a range of innovative products and services in response to the changing needs of our clients and new market opportunities.

Flexible Learning

We ensure students have choices in what, when, where and how they learn and opportunities to develop key competencies.

Human Resource Development

We value staff and ensure the maintenance of up to date skills and knowledge.

Information technology

We apply information and communications technology to:

- Increase the flexibility of learning experiences;
- Increase access to global resources;
- Support our business decisions and processes;
- Incorporate e-commerce practices.

Partnerships and Advocacy

We work collaboratively with stakeholders, business partners, schools and universities, to increase lifelong learning opportunities and promote the role of TAFE.

Structures for Flexible Learning

Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) has structures in place to support the implementation of flexible learning. There are a number of managers who have responsibilities in this area, including

- Assistant Director, Educational Development, who has responsibility for flexible learning
- Coordinator of flexible learning
- Online learning support manager

This strong endorsement from management provides leadership and vision for TVT. To assist in the implementation of our vision, the annual planning processes are built upon the strategic directions stated in our vision and mission statement. Each team, both educational and corporate, is asked to address the strategic directions in the annual plan.

Educational teams can use the resources of the flexible learning support team to assist them in professional development for flexible learning initiatives. One of the important ways to provide support is to access the products and services of the Australian Flexible Learning (AFL) Framework and TVT has used the following

- LearnScope
- Flexible Learning Leader
- Flexible Learning Fellowship
- Toolboxes
- EdNA Online
- NET*Working Conferences

These products and services have encouraged the dissemination of knowledge across the institute and have given staff the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from other institutes both within South Australia and nationally. As well as providing funding for professional development, the AFL Framework products and services listed have supported the development of strong networks.

Promotion of flexible learning

The Flexible Learning support team at Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) promotes the development of flexible learning initiatives in a number of ways. They provide professional development programs including programs in online education. Individuals and program teams can also seek advice for particular projects.

The Flexible Learning support team has also assisted teams in their applications for funding under the AFL Framework and in the implementation of the successful projects. They have provided management support and facilitation skills as well as helping teams build collaborative relationships with other institutes.

Our Assistant Director, Nancye Stanelis, won a Flexible Learning Fellowship in 2001. We have had two Flexible Learning Leaders, Marlene Manto (2002), Coordinator of flexible learning and Peta Pash (2000) who is a member of the Flexible Learning Committee. These scholarships have given flexible learning a high profile at TVT and have encouraged the growth of flexible learning.

It is also important to acknowledge the work that is done at the team level. The Flexible Learning support team does this by maintaining a regular newsletter that tells the story of flexible learning and introduces the local heroes to the wider institute.

There is an annual celebration of flexible learning with an expo of flexible learning initiatives. In 2002 the expo was called (FI)exhibition and staff were treated to presentations from TAFE across South Australia as well as local stories. Some of the presentations in the program were

- Building online learning communities
- Assessment of key competencies
- Access and equity in online education
- Marketing for e-learning
- Collaborative learning
- Implementation of toolboxes

Activities such as the newsletter and the expo reward the leaders in flexible learning, they make the activity visible and keep the momentum going.

Directions

During 2002 Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) has been undertaking a major re-examination of our strategic priorities. Having celebrated the tenth anniversary of the creation of the institute, we have spent some time in reflection upon our vision and mission statements, our objectives and strategic directions.

Our vision statement has been expanded to say

- Creating choices for life through learning
- Creating wealth through a skilled workforce

The strategic priorities have also been restated, reflecting a greater focus upon our clients and how we can provide products and services to them.

- Business Development now focuses upon emerging and growth industries;
- Flexible Learning has an expanded focus of innovation in learning;
- Human Resource Development focuses on supporting staff to create a culture for growth.
- Information technology now focuses on all our business systems;
- Partnerships and Advocacy focuses on partnerships for business growth.

With particular relation to this case study, our priority of providing flexible learning opportunities, has been expanded to include a statement about innovation in learning. Our goal is to provide learning solutions that:

- Build the capability of organisations
- Provide individuals with quality educational experiences and outcomes
- Are flexible, accessible, and able to be customised.

This has led to confirmation of the importance of flexible learning with an expansion of its implementation.

Case Study Objectives

There were three main objectives for this case study. TVT has always had a commitment to flexible learning and we wanted to document our use of AFL Framework products and services for the following purposes.

1. We want to build an historical picture of how the AFL Framework products and services have been used to facilitate and support the implementation of flexible learning. This provides us with a map of our journey in flexible learning thus far.
2. We want to document the current usage of these products and services. This helps us to build a database of resources we can offer teams across the institute and assists in the building of internal networks that will support staff in future planning and implementation.
3. We want to create a tool for induction for staff into flexible learning and how it is integrated into the delivery of learning at TVT. This tool will be in the form of a website that visually and verbally demonstrates the links between the AFL Framework products and services and our own vision and mission statement. The website will provide internal links to help people connect with other members of staff and external links to provide a source of information about the AFL Framework.

Contact

If you would like more information about how flexible learning is implemented at TVT contact Nancye Stanelis

nancye.stanelis@tv.tafe.sa.edu.au

2.0 Using AFL Framework products and services

This section of the case study introduces you to the implementation of the products and services of the AFL Framework at Torrens Valley TAFE. The report includes information on six products and services, including

- LearnScope
- Flexible Learning Leader
- Flexible Learning Fellowship (now incorporated into the Flexible Learning Leaders program)
- Toolboxes
- EdNA Online
- NET*Working Conferences

Please note that the information contained within the following pages is structured for viewing on a website. We have devoted a section to each of the six products and services we have used. Following the description of the product or service is a page which describes in detail one specific project at TVT.

The website has been designed to demonstrate both verbally and visually, the web of interconnections between the AFL Framework products and services and the strategic priorities of TVT. The full website will be released on Friday 6 December and will be available at <http://www.tv.tafe.com.au/flexiblelearning>

Flexible Learning Leader

The Flexible Learning Leader program provides funding for extensive research. Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) uses this program to build knowledge incrementally, and to support the strategic directions of the institute in flexible learning.

Flexible Learning Leaders and TVT

The Flexible Learning Leader program, an initiative of the AFL Framework provides funding for an individual to undertake an extensive study program relating to flexible learning. Study programs are self-directed and constructed around a topic of importance to the sponsoring RTO. The level of funding is significant and provides the opportunity for professional development at a level that a local RTO may not be able to fund.

TVT has used the Flexible Learning Leader program to fund learning in areas of innovation in flexible learning that support the strategic directions of the institute. We have had two people participating in this program

- 2000 – Peta Pash, Educational Manager, Information Industries, researched e-business strategies
- 2002 – Marlene Manto, Flexible Learning Coordinator, researched learning communities

In addition Nancye Stanelis, Assistant Director, was awarded a Flexible Learning Fellowship in 2001. Her area of research was knowledge management. TVT has used these scholarships to build knowledge incrementally and to cover a broad range of areas that relate to flexible learning.

What is the benefit of a Flexible Learning Leader scholarship?

As well as funding professional development, the Flexible Learning Leader program provides an opportunity for building a network with other participants in the program and with people undertaking other AFL Framework projects. This network continues after the project concludes and is a valuable source of information.

Flexible Learning Leaders at TVT have formed strong relationships with external mentors. Peta Pash, for example, was able to draw upon the expertise of the corporate world, bringing valuable insight into how to structure our business processes.

What works well?

Flexible Learning Leaders at TVT all say that the scholarship gave them a 'flexible learning experience'. There is a growing understanding of what flexible learning can be for a learner who has a goal and a focus.

The experience of undertaking such an extensive course of self-directed study has informed their thinking about the planning and implementation of flexible delivery. As the Flexible Learning Leaders are part of the leadership and management team at TVT, the knowledge and insights gained from this program are disseminated throughout the institute.

Problems?

It is a temptation for a Flexible Learning Leader to add the workload of study to an already existing workload rather than replacing some of their workload. In addition to the study, reporting procedures are extensive.

Initially in the planning stages, it is good to give attention to building upon work that has previously been undertaken, either at institute level or by other Flexible Learning Leaders. For the institute to gain the most benefit from this program it is important that time and energy be devoted to it, both at the planning stage and during the study program.

Links

To find out more information about Peta's e-business exploration please refer to the next section.

To find out more about Flexible Learning Leaders visit

<http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/leaders/>

Contact

If you would like to find out more about Flexible Learning Leaders at TVT contact Peta Pash.

peta.pash@tv.tafe.sa.edu.au

E-business exploration

Peta Pash uses her Flexible Learning Leader scholarship to study e-business processes and how they relate to effective communication with our clients. Her work provides a basis for further research projects at Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) and contributes to the building of our collective knowledge

Leadership

Peta Pash holds the position of Educational Manager, Information Industries, with responsibility for Electronics, Computing and Digital Media Design. She also manages Smartmedia, TVT's media production unit, which provides a service to the institute and to external clients.

In 2000 she was successful in her application for a Flexible Learning Leader scholarship. Her program of study focussed on e-business processes that could be implemented by the institute to support our strategic directions for flexible learning.

What have we done?

Peta's research explored the business processes that relate to client services and communication that surround learning. She identified which of those processes could be embedded in technology and the potential clients that TVT could focus upon.

This project was valuable to TVT in that it examined our relationship with our clients from a service point of view rather than an educational point of view. A priority for TVT is the management of traineeships and Peta examined processes for self-serve, web-accessed reporting to employers on the progress of trainees.

What have we learned?

The main outcome of this project has been to identify huge improvement opportunities in the area of technology-based client services. She has identified a number of segments of our market where we can improve our communication.

Peta also says that her own experience of undertaking flexible learning gave her a vision of what flexible learning could be and this has informed her leadership of the program areas she is responsible for. The learning from this project is being embedded in planning for the development and implementation of new initiatives in flexible learning.

Where are we going?

The project has led to some specific recommendations and trials are under way to test the implementation of online business services to our industry-based clients.

It is also important to note that Peta's project led directly to the application for funding for a Flexible Learning Fellowship. In 2001, Nancye Stanelis was awarded a Fellowship to study knowledge management and her research was based upon much of what Peta had learned in her examination of e-business processes. There is a strong relationship between these processes and the effective management of our information across management, teaching and administrative areas.

A user's view

Rob Davenport, web developer, says

'The E-business project was a great opportunity for staff from various faculties to discuss and compare how processes for dealing with trainees could be streamlined. The ideas floated regarding how we could better serve our customers using technology was also a real eye opener for many of the participants.'

Contact

If you would like to find out more about how the e-business project contact Peta Pash

peta.pash@tv.tafe.sa.edu.au

Flexible Learning Fellowship

A Flexible Learning Fellowship helps Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) develop a change management plan for a coordinated approach to the delivery of flexible learning. The implementation of the research draws together projects from across the institute.

Flexible Learning Fellowship at TVT

The Flexible Learning Fellowship program has now been incorporated into the Flexible Learning Leader program. Nancye Stanelis, Assistant Director Educational Development, was successful in her application for a Flexible Learning Fellowship in 2001 before the two programs were combined.

Flexible Learning Fellowships were designed to assist senior managers do research and develop a change management program for their institute.

TVT had already established flexible learning as a key priority but a lot of the development was ad hoc. It was felt that time should be devoted to developing a plan to encourage a coordinated approach to flexible learning.

What is the benefit of a Flexible Learning Fellowship?

The fellowship allowed Nancye to draw together a number of initiatives across the institute. Her research focussed on the area of knowledge management and built upon the work of Peta Pash who participated in the Flexible Learning Leaders program in 2000, researching the area of e-business.

The opportunity for a senior manager to have time for research is invaluable in the creation of an integrated plan. For TVT, this has meant the development of a coordinated approach to all our business processes that underpin the delivery of flexible learning.

What worked well?

One of the most exciting things about a fellowship is the chance to weave together a number of projects. People from many different areas including program teams, administrative support staff and student services are being drawn together to contribute to the change management plan for the institute.

Problems?

The complications of combining the work of a senior manager with dedicated research have meant that the timeframe of 12 months was difficult to achieve.

However, this has had a positive spin-off in that it has allowed time for reflection and for integration of the research into current activity. Instead of writing a change management plan for what is about to happen, the final report shows that many of the elements of the plan are already under way.

It is anticipated that the development of learning objects and the capability to store and reuse them as part of a total knowledge management solution will be piloted in selected areas of TVT prior to wider application of the successful strategies.

Links

To find out more information about Nancye's research into Knowledge Management please refer to the next section.

Flexible Learning Fellowships have now become part of the Flexible Learning Leader program. To find out more visit

<http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/leaders/>

Contact

If you would like more information on how TVT has used the Flexible Learning Fellowship contact Nancye Stanelis

nancye.stanelis@tv.tafe.sa.edu.au

Knowledge Management

Nancye Stanelis uses her Flexible Learning Fellowship to research knowledge management. Her research leads to the development of a strategy to improve access to information for all teams at Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) and to support the delivery of flexible learning.

Leadership

Nancye Stanelis holds the position of Assistant Director, Educational Development with responsibility for flexible learning. In 2001 she was successful in her application for a Flexible Learning Fellowship with the goal of developing a change management plan to draw together the many individual projects in flexible learning within TVT into a coordinated approach.

With the understanding that such a plan could only be implemented with wide support, Nancye formed a knowledge management group of people critical to the uptake of flexible learning. This group includes

- Flexible Learning Coordinator
- Online learning support manager
- Materials productions manager
- IT manager
- Library manager
- Marketing manager
- Program representatives

What did Nancye do?

Originally focussing on reusable learning objects to help accelerate the uptake of online learning, Nancye realised that the idea of reusability was an integral part of our business processes. Her research built upon the work of Peta Pash who participated in the Flexible Learning Leader program in 2000, studying e-business.

Much of what Nancye learnt through the project came from research across school, university and corporate sectors, both national and international. An early influence was the Information Online conference, which addressed knowledge management in successful organisations and looked at how they made the intellectual property of their staff available across the organisation.

Throughout the course of the fellowship Nancye developed strong connections with a network of people including people involved in other AFL Framework products. This national network provides a continuing source of collaboration and support to the institute.

What did we learn?

One element to come out of the project is an understanding of the importance of supporting staff to do their job well by giving them timely access to the information they need. The staff member may be a lecturer needing access to libraries and templates for developing course materials or a client service officer needing to respond to queries about course information.

The fellowship became a vehicle for planning the management of information across management, teaching and administrative areas to underpin the delivery of flexible learning.

Where are we going?

This fellowship has been significant for TVT because it has led us into thinking about how we make our systems operate together to support our customers' needs and our business goals. It also has connections with the work that is happening in SA as we re-examine our systems across TAFE. Her experience will feed into other projects within the institute to provide access to information to support staff performance.

A participant's view

Matt Emmerson, Marketing and Public Relations, says
'Torrens Valley TAFE is certainly well poised to control and continually improve its knowledge management processes and systems. The Institute has tremendous management support enhanced by Nancye's Flexible Learning Fellowship. There is a unique culture and invaluable skill base of staff in areas such as web development, IT, flexible learning, information management and communications.'

Such a blend has seen some fantastic progress in the areas of version control, internal communication, web solutions and learning/document management systems. Torrens Valley TAFE is definitely an exciting place to be with an innovative culture and infrastructure focused on attaining both student and organisational excellence.'

Contact

If you would like to find out more about the Flexible Learning Fellowship project on Knowledge Management contact Nancye Stanelis

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LearnScope

LearnScope has provided funding and direction for professional development at Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) that supports the strategic directions of the institute. The benefits of relevant and immediately applicable learning have been felt at the local program level and also in the development of capability for innovation in flexible learning.

LearnScope at TVT

LearnScope is a team-based professional development project. Each year groups are funded nationally by the AFL Framework to work together to achieve skills and capabilities of teams within RTOs for delivering their services and products to students/clients more flexibly using new learning technologies.

Since the establishment of LearnScope in 2000, TVT has submitted successful applications in each of the rounds of annual funding. This funding has supported projects in diverse areas including

- Introduction to online learning for managers
- Development of skills in online technologies to support statewide delivery of specialist programs
- Investigation of potential for shared delivery of common competencies across training packages
- Investigation of new and emerging technologies and their application to education
- Theory and practice of e-facilitation
- Investigation of Toolboxes

The LearnScope projects have involved staff at all levels of the organisation and have provided the opportunity for collaboration between program teams. They have also encouraged both teams and individuals to look outside TVT, to develop networks with other VET providers in SA and to see how we are part of the bigger picture.

What is the benefit of using LearnScope?

LearnScope promotes a planned approach to professional development where the learning of individuals and teams is directly linked to organisational needs. Since its inception, TVT has had a commitment to flexible learning and having access to national funding and expertise has supported our strategic planning.

Because LearnScope encourages a cross-program approach to the selection of project teams, it has assisted in the organisational development of TVT by encouraging the growth of networks between program areas that are sometimes inclined to work in isolation. We have also enjoyed the benefits of building links with other RTOs in the state.

What works well?

The teams use work-based learning processes to develop skills and knowledge that can be directly applied to their workplace. LearnScope funding allows us to release people to undertake this learning we have benefited from their increased enthusiasm and from the firing of their imagination.

Each year we have built upon previous projects so the growth in knowledge and skills has been incremental. We have also used the opportunity to build our leadership

capabilities. Staff members who have participated in a LearnScope project are often the people who provide the impetus for innovation and creativity in flexible learning at the local program area.

Problems?

One of the challenges of LearnScope is finding a leadership team, as there is a shortage of people with experience in the facilitation of work-based learning. This is a requirement to receive funding, so the issue has been addressed at the state level in 2002 by the encouragement of a mentoring relationship that allows people to develop their strengths in this area.

Addressing the challenge of leadership has, however, provided TVT with the opportunity to identify leadership capabilities and to build upon them.

Links

To find out more information about ONLearn, a LearnScope project in 2002, please refer to the next section.

To find out more about LearnScope visit

<http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/learnscope/overview.htm>

Contact

If you would like to find out more about LeanScope at TVT contact Marlene Manto

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ONLearn

What are the new skills required to facilitate in the online environment? The ONLearn team investigated and practised methods for engaging online learners. New skills have led to the development of online communication hubs and learning resources.

One of the LearnScope projects at Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) in 2002 involved teaching staff across a number of program areas in learning about how to teach in an online learning environment. The team members of this project, ONLearn came from

- Electronics and Information Technology
- Computing
- Digital Media Design
- Business Services
- Community Services
- ACE

Leadership

There were two facilitators for this project, one on the staff of the institute and one from outside. This combination catered for the needs of the participants in the project and helped provide development of local leadership skills.

Kate Fannon from Adelaide TAFE, was a Flexible Learning Leader working in the field of collaborative learning. Kate has broad experience in teaching online and brought valuable theoretical and practical input in methodology. Alison McAllister from TVT, whose role in flexible learning support includes providing professional development in use of WebCT, supported her.

What did we do?

The participants undertook a number of different learning activities, including some shared videoconference sessions with a LearnScope project through Spencer Institute of TAFE. These sessions put us in touch not only with ideas but also with people working in scattered regions of SA.

Workshop sessions with the co-facilitators covered areas such as good online design, how to use online communication tools to stimulate and support learning and how to modify our methods of writing to effectively maintain contact with our online students. Each participant had a site in WebCT available for them to practise the skills they were learning, both on each other and, in some cases, with students.

What did we learn?

The ONLearn participants identified the skills they wanted to learn. These included skills in the technical domain to help them manage the WebCT online learning environment as well as skills in developing and maintaining a learning community.

The skills learned included

- Technical skills in operating WebCT
- Management of online learning events such as scenario-based discussion activities.
- Precision in online communication.

Where are we going?

Each participant has an idea for a project that they will implement with students from their own program area. These include

- Using a Communication Hub for women students in Electronics, often a group that can feel isolated
- Developing a Communication Hub for Voc Prep students to help them improve their language skills
- Developing problem-based learning activities, including an OHS&W WebQuest for students of Computing

A participant's view

Deb Farrell, lecturer in Computing & Information Technology, says 'ONLearn has given me the skills & resources I needed to successfully create and facilitate online learning environments. I am particularly interested in the WebQuests and my development of an OH&S WebQuest is currently giving learners an exciting introduction to problem-based learning. In the future I hope to design many more WebQuests as one of the delivery strategies for Torrens Valley TAFE. Thank - you to the LearnScope team.'

Contact

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NET*Working Conferences

*NET*Working conferences have given staff at Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) the opportunity to look at the big picture of flexible learning. People participating in the conferences build networks with colleagues across the nation and bring creative ideas back to the institute.*

NET*Working conferences at TVT

NET*Working conferences have been run on an annual basis since 1997 and several staff from TVT have attended both the physical and the online conferences. In particular, TVT staff have attended and presented at NET*Working 2000, 2001 and 2002.

Participation in NET*Working conferences has broadened the opportunities for staff from TVT to meet with and learn from colleagues in the VET sector across the nation. In 2002 Marlene Manto, Flexible Learning Coordinator at TVT and a Flexible Learning Leader, participated not only as a presenter but also behind the scenes in the preparation for the conference.

What is the benefit of NET*Working Conferences?

NET*Working conferences have brought TVT the opportunity to build networks, as suggested by the conference title. This has worked particularly well in the years of the online conferences when the cost of participation is lower and we can afford to register a larger number of people.

Participants are given a snapshot of the big picture of flexible learning on a national scale and are exposed to creative and innovative ideas. They bring these ideas back to TVT and we are able to incorporate many of them into our planning and implementation of flexible learning at the local level.

What works well?

This year we funded several registrations and shared them. A large number of people had access and while many did not log on for a great length of time, they did find material that was useful. We found this a good way of disseminating the knowledge and the experience across the institute.

For many staff members this conference was their first experience of communicating online in discussion forums and chat rooms where the topic of conversation was relevant to their work. We were able to introduce ideas raised at the NET*Working 2002 conference into our Learnscope projects, giving a very contemporary and exciting note to that work-based learning.

Problems?

As with all conferences, NET*Working offers so much information that it is difficult to find time to fit in everything that could be relevant. The NET*Working 2002 conference site was very big and for some people seemed an overwhelming space to negotiate. This problem is, however, offset by the fact that the site is now open as a database of information.

The online environment, while having many advantages, can also pose a difficulty in that people often find it hard to set aside time to visit the site if they are attending the conference from their own desk. It is important that people are supported to attend the online conference with release time.

Links

To find out more information about TVT's involvement in the NET*Working 2002 conference please refer to the next section.

If you would like to find out more about the NET*Working conferences, visit

<http://flexiblelearning.net.au/nw2002/>

Contact

If you would like more information about how NET*Working conferences are used at TVT contact Marlene Manto

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NET*Working 2002

*NET*Working 2002 gives many staff members at Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) their first taste of a dynamic online environment. The ideas generated by the conference continue to be supported by the networks we have built up and the database of information gathered on the conference site.*

The NET*Working 2002 conference involved staff across a number of program areas, as TVT funded registrations that we shared. The participants in the conference came from

- Business Services
- Community Services
- Computing
- Digital Media Design
- Electronics and Information Technology
- Horticulture
- Management

Leadership

Marlene Manto, Flexible Learning Coordinator at TVT, was awarded a Flexible Learning Leader scholarship for 2002 to research learning communities and as part of this project, participated in the NET*Working 2002 conference on a number of levels. As well as presenting online, she worked behind the scenes learning the ropes of preparing for and running an online conference.

What did we do?

In the week prior to the conference, Marlene had access to the NET*Working 2002 conference website and was able to suggest improvements in the construction of the site from the point of view of a new user. This experience of working behind the scenes has expanded the knowledge base TVT can draw upon in redesigning our own website and intranet.

During the conference itself Marlene presented a paper and led a forum based upon her research into learning communities. The special interest group she initiated was one of the two most popular, attracting a large number of postings from conference participants.

TVT funded ten registrations that were shared among a number of participants. Connections were developed between the NET*Working 2002 conference and other AFL Framework projects. For example, participants in the ONLearn LearnScope project were introduced to the writing of Marc Prensky, one of the keynote presenters at the conference.

What have we learned?

One of the most important resources to come from involvement in the NET*Working 2002 conference is the ongoing network of contacts built by Marlene through her involvement in this project. This has brought the benefit of new partnerships to TVT.

Staff at TVT are also using the large archive of information that is stored on the NET*Working 2002 conference site. This database includes research papers, links to other sources of information and a reservoir of interesting ideas and practical applications that form a body of current and useful material.

Where are we going?

Staff at TVT will continue to delve into the collective memory of NET*Working conferences and there are plans to participate in future face-to-face and online conferences.

A participant's view

Alison McAllister, flexible learning support and lecturer in Digital Media Design says 'I had a great time trying out the FAME course run by NSW TAFE during the NET*Working 2002 conference – it gave me an insight into how to use the chat tool and the discussion board to engage learners in the online environment.'

Contact

If you would like to find out more about how TVT's involvement in the NET*Working 2002 conference contact Marlene Manto.

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Toolboxes

Business Services pioneered the use of Toolboxes at Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) and with the support of professional development programs other program areas are starting to enjoy the benefits as well. Toolboxes are increasingly forming part of the resource for flexible delivery.

Toolboxes at TVT

At TVT we began to look at Toolboxes 3 years ago as a means of providing a collection of resources, suggested learning strategies and supporting materials for the delivery of training packages. The early Toolboxes convinced us that this resource could be used in classroom delivery as well as in industry-based delivery, in an online teaching mode and/or stand-alone.

Implementation of Toolboxes began with Business Services and was supported by a professional development program. Currently a number of program areas use Toolboxes extensively, including

- Administration (201)
- Children's Services (302)
- Retail Management (314)
- Retail Operations (212)
- Horticulture (208)

In 2002 professional development has been supplemented by a LearnScope project investigating Toolboxes. A result of this LearnScope project has been the increased interest in using Toolboxes with implementation planned for 2003. Participants have included staff from

- Business Services
- Children's Services
- Digital Media Design
- Floristry
- Hair and Beauty
- Horticulture
- Learning Resources
- Small Business and Retail

What is the benefit of using Toolboxes?

Toolboxes provide a resource that complements and supplements traditional delivery. Our experience has been that lecturers are moving towards blended delivery, using Toolbox resources and combining them with external resources and face-to-face delivery.

As more Toolboxes are becoming available, we are finding that there is greater opportunity for us to mix and match the resources because some competencies go across training packages. For example the Toolbox for Certificate IV in Retail Management also covers competencies in Floristry, Small Business and Frontline Management.

What works well?

The Business Services area has found that being able to offer this resource as part of a blended delivery model has been a successful marketing tool. Access to this resource has been of benefit to the program when tendering for FFS work.

Problems?

The main difficulties we have encountered have been technology-based. We began with a Series 3 toolbox and there were problems with uploading the material to WebCT, the platform we use for online delivery. We also had to realise that students accessing an online course from home often couldn't get access to some of the online features such as chat.

However, Toolboxes will continue to provide us with a resource for blended learning. As Toolboxes are improving both in the technical area and in their application across training packages, we are seeing growing enthusiasm for using them. It will be important to continue to give staff time to explore Toolboxes and to learn how to use them both as a stand-alone resource and in an online environment.

Links

To find out more information about how the Retail Toolbox is used at TVT please refer to the next section.

To find out more about toolboxes visit

<http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/toolbox/>

Contact

If you would like to find out more about toolboxes at TVT contact Sandra Neville.

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Retail Toolbox

The Retail Toolbox is providing opportunities for cross-program delivery of common competencies. This reusable learning resource helps us to work more efficiently and cohesively.

The Retail Toolbox is used by a number of programs at Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT)

- The Floristry program uses the entire Toolbox
- The Hair and Beauty program use parts of the Toolbox blended in their delivery
- The Fashion and Horticulture programs are currently preparing to use the Toolbox in 2003 as a means of diversifying their delivery methods.

Leadership

Di Baron is a lecturer in the Business Services program with a special interest in retail. She has also worked with Hair and Beauty program. This breadth of experience helped her to see opportunities for the application of the Retail Toolbox across programs.

During 2002, Di has participated in a Reframing the Future project at TVT. As part of this action learning project, she has taken leadership in the consolidation of training in retail across TVT and in the creation of a cross-program focus.

What have we done?

The process of training staff to use the Retail Toolbox began informally. Di's perception of the Toolbox as an excellent resource for her area led her to introduce it to other staff in Hair and Beauty. Her role has expanded to assist other program areas with the implementation of the Toolbox.

We have set up a cross-campus shared drive through which staff have access to

- Retail Toolbox
- Training package
- Learning and assessment strategies
- Learning guides
- Directory of resources in the libraries of all the campuses
- Retail trainers' data base

Access to these materials in digital format has encouraged staff across campuses to explore the Toolbox and given coordinators the resources to plan and implement the use of the Retail Toolbox within their program area.

What have we learned?

The Retail Toolbox is a reusable resource and gives us the opportunity to reduce duplication of work and effort in the preparation of materials. It provides us with the resources to take a more cohesive approach to course development and delivery.

Where are we going?

Students will benefit from a greater choice in how they take the retail component of their course. Because many of the competencies are common to a number of training packages, there is increased opportunity for cross-program training.

A participant's view

Maria Tsakrios, lecturer in Floristry, says

'The Toolbox is a bonus that provides easy access to information, allows students to enter at different competencies and to work at their own pace. It creates one on one discussion between lecturer and student. It is wonderful and I love using it!'

Contact

If you would like to find out more about how TVT uses the Retail Toolbox contact Di Baron

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EdNA Online

EdNA Online has developed collaborative networks between educational organisations across sectors and across the states and territories of Australia. It provides a valuable repository of information and a research service to all educational sectors.

History of EdNA and its links to TVT

The Education Network of Australia was launched in 1996 as a means of encouraging educators to access and use digital technology and to provide them with a means of collaboration. The EdNA VET Advisory Group developed the original proposal for the national AFL Framework and so was the seed from which the framework grew.

EdNA Online is a cross-sectoral service covering schools, universities and VET incorporating ACE. It was designed with the original vision of providing a 'one-stop shop' of information about education in Australia. EdNA has now developed into much more than a repository of research, becoming a gateway to a wide range of information and the vehicle for collaboration between the educational sectors and between the states and territories.

Since 2000, Nancye Stanelis, Assistant Director of Torrens Valley TAFE (TVT) has been the project manager for the VET component of EdNA Online. Her task has been to promote EdNA and to make it more relevant to the VET sector. Her involvement has brought about the development of strong links between TVT and other educational organisations both in SA and nationally.

What is the benefit of EdNA?

The EdNA Online service has set up networks and collaborative arrangements with educational organisations across the states. It gathers, compiles and disseminates information on a regular basis.

Information officers collect material from the web and from current reports and research and produce regular national newsletters to publicise this database to RTOs. Our staff therefore has access to a database of current information. They can also ask for help in researching particular topics of interest and can contribute to EdNA.

What works well?

EdNA was originally focussed on building its own service but has developed a dynamic capability to work in a distributed environment. Instead of being a 'one-stop shop' EdNA has become a portal to a network of 'department stores' and 'franchises', educational sites that each provide their own service but can use EdNA to support them.

What this says to us is that the essence of providing flexible learning is to be agile and adaptable in a constantly changing environment. EdNA provides us with a model of change as well as with a large repository of relevant material to keep us up to date with initiatives in flexible learning across Australia.

What didn't work and why?

EdNA Online has had troughs as well as highs. Some of the technical elements of the site took a lot longer to develop than to imagine. This meant that the site has not always been used by the VET sector as well as it could have been.

However, EdNA was able to respond by planning and implementing a major rebuild of the site, launched at NET*Working 2001. The rebuild included a restructure of the content and architecture of the site to make it more responsive to the demands of the different groups that use the site.

Links

To find out more information about EdNA VET Online please refer to the next section.

If you would like to find out more about the services EdNA Online can offer you, visit

<http://www.edna.edu.au/>

Contact

If you would like more information about how EdNA Online is used at TVT contact Nancye Stanelis

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EdNA VET Online

One of Torrens Valley TAFE's (TVT's) senior managers was appointed project manager for EdNA VET Online. This involvement helped TVT establish national networks and provided a conduit of information that we use to inform our strategic planning.

Leadership

When the AFL Framework was launched in 2000, states and territories were asked to nominate projects they were interested in managing. The EdNA VET project was based in SA as it was felt that having some local input would help to make it more relevant to VET needs. Nancye Stanelis, Assistant Director at TVT was appointed the project manager for EdNA VET Online.

The information officers for EdNA VET Online have come from the LEARN network of TAFE libraries and have background and experience in developing and managing collections of resources for VET practitioners. The project officer for EdNA VET has an ITAB background and so brings a valuable link with industry.

What did we do?

The EdNA VET alert services, which are provided as fortnightly email bulletins, have been promoted to managers and teams across TVT. These bulletins provide information and links to current online resources such as reports, research and other relevant documents. As information in the bulletins is specifically targeted to vocational education, this provides a valuable source of useful and relevant material.

Staff have been able to find material specific to their needs when working on projects or investigating topics such as

- learning objects
- e-facilitation
- learning resource development
- student support
- technical aspects of web development.

What did we learn?

In addition to the many useful resources, involvement in the EdNA VET Online project has shaped much of the thinking at TVT regarding the rebuilding of our own website and intranet. We have gained valuable insight into how we need to structure and manage the website to optimise its usage, whether by students, staff, industry or members of the public.

Promotion of EdNA-based services such as www.myfuture.edu.au the national careers information service, has benefited our students as we have been able to make them aware of this site. The need to provide user friendly interfaces that match the interests of specific market segments has helped us in our investigation of the design of our own website, intranet and marketing materials.

A greater awareness of the benefits of content and information management has led us to undertake internal projects to make information on policies and procedures more easily available to our staff. A document management strategy has been initiated across TVT.

Where are we going?

For the future TVT is looking at using new technology to provide

- a news service to staff via our intranet,
- easily accessible links to relevant services, including EdNA,
- integration of information via xml between our intranet and internet sites
- a document management system to support administration

We are interested in exploring the ability to share learning and teaching materials between educational programs across TVT. We are undertaking a pilot in conjunction with other TAFE units in SA to find appropriate software to achieve this. The technical forum on EdNA remains a useful source of information as we explore these developments.

A User's View

Claire White, Manager TAFE Library, says

'As manager of the library I subscribe to two online newsletters offered by EdNA that I scan for useful links to pass on to the library or programs

For example, in the latest Networker there was

- a list of online links in 'Ecology & Botany' which I passed on to Horticulture,
- the Cybrarian project which aims to assist in decreasing the digital divide that I passed on to Access & Equity
- an online forum, Netd@ys 2002, aimed at digital illustrators, film makers and animators that was passed on to Digital Media Design.'

Contact

For more information on the EdNA VET Online project contact Nancye Stanelis

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3.0 Conclusion

The Torrens Valley TAFE case study has provided an opportunity for us to document the knowledge and skills that have been developed at TVT through accessing the AFL Framework products and services. We have had the chance to reflect upon the integral role of the AFL Framework in supporting the development and implementation of flexible learning at TVT.

The six products and services examined in this case study have contributed to the growth of flexible learning at TVT through providing professional development and resources for learning. The professional development programs such as LearnScope and Flexible Learning Leader/Fellow have been an integral part of our professional development programs, providing funding and opportunities for networking. NET*Working conferences have provided the opportunity for staff at all levels to share with colleagues on a national level.

Products such as the Toolboxes are increasingly becoming an important resource to support flexible learning methodologies. The implementation of Toolboxes in one program area has sparked interest in a number of other areas and created the opportunity for professional development that was supported by LearnScope.

AFL Framework products and services have played an integral role in supporting the planning and implementation of flexible learning at Torrens Valley TAFE

4.0 Acknowledgements

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Flexible Learning Leader	Peta Pash Marlene Manto
Flexible Learning Fellow (incorporated in the Flexible Learning Leader program)	Nancye Stanelis
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EdNA Online	Nancye Stanelis
NET*Working	Marlene Manto
Testimonials	Deb Farrell Rob Davenport Matt Emmerson Maria Tsakrios Claire White Alison McAllister

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