Final Report

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Sandybeach Centre
May 15, 2006
The Circle of ACE Teaching Practice was based on the research *The ACE Experience – Pedagogies for life and employability* (Jill Sanguinetti, Peter Waterhouse & David Maunders). This original piece of research investigated the aspects and principles of ACE teaching which support the development of generic skills. A framework for ACE pedagogy was identified with 5 principles and 4 dimensions (The Teacher, The Teaching, The Curriculum & The Place).

The Circle of ACE Teaching Practice project was designed to familiarise participants with the framework for ACE pedagogy and the way in which ACE teaching practice can support the development of generic skills. The Circle of ACE Teaching Practice supported participants in developing projects where they could further explore and apply these concepts to their teaching or their centre.

The basic structure used to implement the Circle is set out below.
1. An initial ‘open’ seminar in Sept presenting the research and developing ideas for projects and possible applications of the research.
2. First workshop (Oct) in two geographical sub groups, reviewing the research and developing ideas for projects and a project plan.
3. Individual or group work on projects, supported by email or phone communication with facilitators and project manager as needed.
4. Second workshop (Nov), discussing work on projects and discussing framework for written report.
5. Individual or group work on projects supported by email or phone communication with facilitators and project manager as needed.
6. Final presentation workshop, followed by submission of written report.

A few additional comments about the participants, the workshops and the presentation day will help to give ‘flesh’ to this brief outline.

**The participants**

There were 19 Circle participants who came from a wide range of Melbourne suburbs and several regional centres. The roles of participants in the Circle were very varied. The Circle included several Centre Managers, some program co-ordinators, some part-time and some sessional teachers, and one Regional Director.

The participants were formed into two geographically based groups for workshop meetings.
- 11 participants were in the ‘northern’ workshop group, based in Lalor, with participants coming from centres in Wangaratta (2), Glenroy (2), Creswick, Geelong, Lalor, Diamond Valley, Melbourne CBD (2).
- There were 8 participants in the ‘southeastern’ workshop group, based in Keysborough, with participants coming from centres in Rosebud, Narre Warren, Seaford, Chelsea, Hampton, Sandringham, Keysborough, Ferntree Gully.
The workshops
Forming the two geographically based groups was essential to facilitate attendance at workshops. Participants were kept informed of what other Circle participants were doing by the project manager who attended all workshops and distributed summaries of project ideas. The workshops proved extremely valuable in helping participants more fully explore the research and issues relating to generic skill development. With support from the researchers and the other Circle members, the Circle participants developed and refined their project plans during the workshops. They were also provided with ‘tools’ to assist in developing their projects, such as the following simple framework for writing up a research proposal which they could use as a basis for their project plan:

1. Title
2. Aim(s) of project
3. Research Question(s)
   (eg “How can the framework be used to support reflective teaching?)
4. Participants and resources (who will be involved, what resources are needed)
5. Method (key steps) and timeline
6. Expected outcomes

Presentation of project reports to the Circle
The Circle participants were brought together for the final presentation session, which enabled the Circle members to learn about, discuss and benefit from all the projects that had been completed. It is almost impossible to fully capture the power, excitement and impact of this day. It was inspiring to hear the outcomes that the projects had had for the participants and their centres, and everyone who attended departed with many more ideas which they could use and apply in their own centre. Throughout this report, comments made by Circle Participants at the presentation day and in the evaluation forms they completed about the project will be used to illustrate the report, and it is the participants’ words that best convey the great value of bringing the group together to hear the final reports.

“Went back to my centre after presentation day full of ideas.”

“Presentation day was most fantastic and exciting – it was wonderful to learn about the great outcomes of the other projects.”

“Presentation session was fantastic. I gained so much from listening to all the reports.”

These comments highlight the importance of operating as an action learning Circle, where participants learned from working with researchers and reflecting on research, from implementing a project, and – very importantly – from each other.

Outcome 1

Increased awareness in the ACE sector of the Board’s research as it relates to the goals of the Ministerial statement and the local context

The Circle of ACE Teaching Practice has been very successful in increasing awareness in the ACE sector of the Board’s research.
• 22 participants attended the initial seminar which disseminated information about the original research and explored the way in which the ACE Pedagogy Framework might be used or applied in the sector

• 19 people participated in the actual Circle, attending one or more workshops and developing ideas for projects that would apply the ACE Pedagogy Framework. Eleven of the Circle Participants had not attended the original seminar, so taking the seminar and workshops together, a total of 33 people considered the research and its possible applications.

• A further 175 ACE practitioners were introduced to the ACE Pedagogy Framework or some aspects of it through the projects conducted by the Circle participants. Many of the projects conducted by Circle members involved working through components of the Framework with groups of teachers at their Centre. One of the projects involved an interactive lecture presentation about the ACE Pedagogy Framework and generic skills to 100 practitioners at the ACE VCAL and VCE conference. Another project which surveyed teachers about generic skills and aspects of the framework, and provided information about both of these, was completed by 46 teachers.

Obviously the people who fully implemented projects which applied the ACE Pedagogy Framework achieved the greatest depth of understanding and awareness, but an important aspect of the project has been its ‘ripple’ effect, with many people outside the actual Circle becoming involved in some of the projects and learning about the research.

Comments from participants clearly reflect their awareness of the research and of the value and usefulness of the ACE Pedagogy Framework:

“The Framework is valid and very affirming. It articulates the best practice in ACE.”

“The Framework is extremely important because it helps to make explicit the pedagogy of ACE and the work that ACE does. It can be used to communicate the value of ACE.”

Outcomes 2, 3 & 4

Application of learning from the research in practical ways that improves practice and produces outcomes for learners in line with the Ministerial Statement

An action-research/ workplace learning model that can be sustained within the sector on its own initiative for its own purposes

Increased capacity of the member ACE organizations to meet goals of the Ministerial Statement

The focus in this project on teaching and learning processes created terrific potential for applications of learning from the research in ways that would improve practice and produce learner outcomes. The summaries of the projects undertaken by participants provided in Attachment One show how the Circle members have used and applied the research, and the
resultant benefits for themselves and their learners. Several Circle members used the project to create resources that will assist new teachers with effective teaching strategies, others used questionnaires or focus groups to investigate aspects of generic skill development, while others created opportunities for teachers at their centre to reflect on and share ideas about teaching. Participant comments during the project presentations, in their written reports, and in the formal project evaluation, all highlighted how working on the project has been of benefit:

“The project clearly showed the value of generic/employability skills and has led me to change my teaching practice. I now help students identify what generic skills they used during their classes and think about how these skills are used in every day life.”

In many cases, the Circle member implementing the project worked with a group of teachers at their centre. This proved to be an extremely important and powerful strategy, overcoming the isolation that often besets the ACE teachers because they are a predominantly casual workforce. Many Circle participants found that the process of working on the Circle project has transformed their staff meetings and staff interactions:

"Looking at the framework became a very positive means of encouraging our teachers."

“Our teachers are now sharing teaching ideas and truly working as a team.”

“I have started thinking about how our tutor meetings could be much more enriching and our English tutors have agreed to change focus from just reporting to matters relating to our teaching practice. We are going use our meeting almost like a mini PD session sharing ideas on certain aspects of teaching, so we will have our very experienced and very new tutors sharing ideas.”

“Working together and documenting teaching strategies to implement the ACE pedagogy framework has helped overcome the ‘sessional means solitary’ problem.”

As these participant comments indicate, the effect of participating in the Circle will have an impact long beyond the life of the project, and the groups of teachers who are now sharing ideas about their teaching and about developing student’s generic skills have established an action-learning model that can be sustained within the sector.

The fact that several of the projects undertaken by participants created resources that will be used to support and induct new teachers is a further way in which the Circle will have an ongoing impact. The implementation of this Circle project has thus supported teachers in good educational practices, ones which build the generic skills of learners, and in this way the project has worked to increase the capacity of ACE organizations to meet the goals of the Ministerial Statement.

Speaking to the participants, hearing their presentations at the end of the project, and reading the full reports they have written is the best way of fully appreciating how Circle members applied their learning from the research and how the project has made an important contribution to capacity building. The summaries of the projects provided in Attachment One show how Circle members applied the research and indicate some of the many positive outcomes for themselves, their centres and their learners. Anyone wishing to obtain full copies of the reports listed below can do so by contacting Judy Bissland at Sandybeach on 9598 2155 or emailing her atocs@sandybeach.org.au
1. Projects Focusing on The Teacher and The Teaching
Three of the circle projects focused on the dimensions of the ACE Pedagogy Framework dealing with ‘The Teacher’ or ‘The Teaching’. All three of these projects were implemented by the Circle participants working with groups of teachers at their own Centre. Two of these projects have created resources that can be used to induct and support new teachers. All three projects have had a very powerful effect on teachers at the Centres involved, creating the opportunity and stimulus for reflection on teaching, promoting the sharing of teaching strategies and strengthening teaching practice.

The three projects focusing on ‘The Teacher’ and ‘The Teaching’ are summarised in Attachment One.

   Understanding the culture of ACE
   Liz Miller (Sandy beach, Sandringham)

   Using the framework as a basis for teacher reflection and for a teacher resource
   Karen Crawford (Mountain District Learning Centre, Ferntree Gully)

   Teacher Reflection
   Sue Paull (Diamond Valley Learning Centre)

2. Project Summaries: Focus on generic skill development
Throughout the ACE Teaching Practice Circle, there was considerable discussion about what generic skills are, how students can be supported to develop these, how they can be assessed and how students can be helped to become aware of and articulate the generic skills they have acquired.

Understanding more about strategies for imparting and assessing generic skills is extremely important for ACE provision. The three Circle projects which focused significantly on this area stimulated much reflection and sharing of ideas about generic skills development. The projects undertaken played a significant role in spreading awareness of the research, as one of the projects involved a presentation to 100 ACE practitioners, and another involved a survey that was completed by 46 participants. Both of these projects identified that ACE practitioners are eager to have further professional development to strengthen their practice in developing students’ generic skills. The third project involved conducting focus groups with some students, and this project has developed recommendations for implementation at the Circle participants centre.

The three projects focusing on generic skills are summarised in Attachment One:

   Understanding Generic/ Employability skills
   Marj Sjomstrom (Keysborough Learning Centre), Clea Nicol (Narre Community Learning Centre), Lyn Treloar (Peninsula Adult Education and Literacy)

   The relevance of Generic Skills and the Framework of ACE Teaching Practice for VCE and VCAL Practitioners
   Margaret Brickhill & Heather Williams (The Centre for Continuing Education, Wangaratta)

   ‘You’re treated like an adult here’
   Eleanor Morgan and Ruth Goddard – (Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre)
3. Project Summaries: Focus on ‘The Place’
One of the unique aspects of ACE pedagogy identified in the ACE Pedagogy Framework is the importance of ‘The Place’. The fact that ACE organisations are small means there is terrific potential for creating welcoming and supportive learning environments, ones where learners feel a real sense of belonging. Two of the Circle projects used the aspect of ‘The Place’ in the framework as a springboard to further explore the importance of the Place in ACE provision, one using a survey methodology with students and teachers at a centre, and another using interviews and photographs to capture and document an example of very good practice.

The two projects focusing on ‘The Place’ are summarised in Attachment One.

**What Makes Your Place?**
Karen Dymke (CAE)

*Exploring aspects of ‘the place’ and factors which create a welcoming environment*
Barbara Jacobs (Hampton)

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<tr>
<th>Outcomes 5 &amp; 6</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professional development and increased capability of practitioners to apply research at a local level</td>
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| Fostering a research culture in ACE, participation in professional development and networking among practitioners and local level problem solving. |

The Circle of ACE Teaching Practice project has powerfully achieved the objectives of providing professional development and increasing the capacity of practitioners to apply research at a local level.

The project facilitated critical reflection and professional development in multiple ways at different levels. It stimulated conversations as well as reading and critique of recent research. As has been described in the previous sections, participants drew on the original research to develop their own projects, and in doing this they used and developed some research skills of their own. The prime methodology was that of action-learning research. Participants used a range of research methods in implementing their projects, including focus groups, questionnaires and surveys. Much learning occurred, with practitioners who had never conducted a focus group or written a questionnaire learning to do so. As one participant commented,

“Preparing a draft questionnaire and then having Jill work through the questionnaire with the rest of our learning circle, questioning and challenging, was an exciting learning situation, (if) a little daunting!”

The heart of the Circle project and of the professional development, within providers and at the workshops, was about ACE pedagogy, including the ACE Pedagogy Framework. Many participants commented about how refreshing and valuable it was to be encouraged to think critically and talk about teaching and learning issues. They talked about how these discussions were themselves opportunities for learning as they exchanged meanings and talked their way to new understandings with colleagues. These professional conversations took place in various
ways; sometimes one-to-one, sometimes in small groups, sometimes in larger groups. Much of the talk was at the provider level, between practitioners; and some conversations were between practitioners and researchers. All of these conversations play an important role in building a culture of reflective ACE practice and research. Such things are difficult to quantify but the impact is apparent in the observations of the participants in their final reports and evaluations, as can be seen from these comments:

“Great to have an opportunity for internal research with the support of external researchers.”

“Wonderful opportunity to meet and share with other practitioners and also to have the time and opportunity to investigate and document aspects of ACE provision, supported by knowledgeable and enthusiastic facilitators.”

The project has been very enriching for me. I began by honing in on generic/employability skills and have come away with many practical, thought-provoking ideas and an absolute pride in the fact that I am an ACE teacher. I have improved my skills in research, writing questionnaires, in report writing and in oral presentations.

‘The value of talking face-to-face with other practitioners facilitated by a ‘significant other’ is ‘huge’ in this model – very valuable.”

“I valued the opportunity to participate and better understand the research, and the challenge of applying the concepts to my workplace”

A further related point here is how the project successfully identified potential uses of the ACE Pedagogy Framework. It was suggested that it might be used effectively as a tool for induction, education and/or professional development of Committees of Management in ACE. Circle participants identified that the Framework can be used as a tool to facilitate discussion of ACE, its purposes and approaches, and that holding these discussions can provide significant professional development opportunities.

The project also highlighted issues about how people access or engage research ‘products’ like the ACE Pedagogy Framework and the report from which the framework emerged. One of the ‘findings’ of this project is that the Framework couldn’t stand alone. It needed, and still needs, interpretation, mediation and explanation, of the sort that occurred during the Circle of ACE Teaching Practice Project. The projects that Circle members conducted addressed these challenges very effectively, simultaneously achieving professional development outcomes and fostering a research culture by taking, translating and applying the ACE Pedagogy Framework.

| Evaluation of Circle, Challenges in implementing the Circle and Improvements for Round 2 |

Evaluation forms were used at the initial open seminar, held in September, and at the end of the Circle Project in March 2006. Participant evaluation has been extremely positive.

The evaluation conducted after the initial seminar indicated that it was highly successful in creating an understanding of the original research and the ACE Pedagogy Framework, as this
CIRCLE OF ACE TEACHING PRACTICE – FINAL REPORT

participant and many others commented:

“The Framework is a very valuable tool for reflection, and for considering strategies that an individual teacher or whole centre might adopt to improve their practice.”

The initial seminar provided an important introduction to the research and the ACE Pedagogy Framework, however more than half of the ultimate participants in the Circle did not attend this seminar. Although ‘refresher’ information about the research was provided at the first workshop, some participants remarked that they felt that it took them longer to grasp the research and develop ideas for their project because they missed the first seminar. In designing the next Circle, we would try to ensure that all participants attended the first seminar and would also plan to strengthen the initial seminar by including:

- more time talking about the nature of practitioner action research,
- a brief commentary on the ethical dimensions of action research
- Some suggested sample projects that practitioners might consider doing.

Participant evaluation of the overall project has been extremely positive, as can be seen from many of the quoted comments included in this report. The evaluation form asked participants to rate the effectiveness of various aspects of the project and provided space for many open-ended comments. Eleven participants completed this evaluation form and in their responses, all of the project’s components were rated as being either ‘Very useful’ or ‘useful’ - none were ranked as being ‘of little use’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Was participating in this project useful in terms of helping you?</th>
<th>Very Useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Of little use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. better understand the ACE Pedagogy Framework and the research that led to its development?</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. develop ideas about how the ACE Pedagogy Framework could be used or applied to your workplace?</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. develop and implement a project based on the ACE Pedagogy Framework that was relevant to your Centre or Cluster?</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<th>B. Rate the following to indicate which aspects of the project you found most helpful.</th>
<th>Very Useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Of little use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. presentations at initial September seminar outlining research</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. provision of written materials suggesting possible projects and outlining the framework</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. workshop sessions held in Oct and Nov in Lalor and Keysborough</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. information and support provided by facilitators</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. discussion with and ideas gained from other ACE practitioners</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. actually working on the project within your own centre</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. preparing for the presentation and/or the written report</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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In addition to inviting comments after sections A and B, above, the evaluation form also asked the 3 open-ended questions. The responses of participants have been summarised under these questions.

C. Was the focus of the project and were the expectations of participants clearly explained? Please suggest anything that could have been improved with respect to providing greater clarity or support in developing and implementing your project.

Nine participants indicated that the focus and expectations were clearly explained, with one suggesting that a couple more examples of projects would have been helpful, and another commenting that missing the initial seminar meant it took longer to find a project focus.

D. Please tell us anything about the overall organization, timing, venues, presentations, level of email & phone contact, or any other aspect that could have improved the project. If a similar project was run again, what changes would you make?

Many participants commented that the project was well organized and managed. Almost all participants, however, commented that running the project over the Christmas holiday period was a problem, causing a loss of momentum and focus. A few suggested that given that the break occurred, it might have been helpful to have held a third workshop prior to the presentations.

E. Any other comments? Please give us any other feedback.

Many positive remarks on the project were made in this section, with many participants commenting on how much they appreciated the opportunity to participate:

“Great that ACFE funded it – hope they are encouraged by good feedback from ACE providers to do so again.”

“Thanks for the opportunity to participate and congratulations on a wonderfully organized project.”

A number of participants who worked as part of a team in their projects stressed how valuable they found this:

“Enjoyed working in a team – allowed us to bounce ideas off one another and develop, explore to greater depth than we would have individually.”

Throughout the evaluation form, many comments reflected the value of learning from other practitioners.

“Great experience to share with others in the sector.”

As was mentioned in the introduction to this report, the presentation of final reports to Circle members was an absolute highlight for everyone concerned, and almost all Circle participants commented on how much they learned and benefited from this day.
Challenges in Implementing the Circle and Improvements for Round 2

One of the biggest challenges for the Circle project was attracting sufficient participants, and retaining them. 19 participants commenced the Circle after a large number of promotional activities:

- Emails were sent out by the ACFE Board
- Emails were directly sent to all providers from the project manager.
- Emails were prepared for distribution by Regional Directors
- Emails sent out by Jill Sanguinetti to participants in the Stage One project
- Telephone calls were made to some providers
- Brief ‘promotion’ of the Circles occurred at one or two regional meetings.

The list of participants with the centres they came from is included as Attachment Two.

We had hoped to start the project with a larger number of participants, as we knew that job changes, job demands, and a range of personal issues would be likely to gradually decrease the number of Circle participants. On reflection, there are several reasons that made it difficult to attract large numbers of Circle participants. One of these is that information about the project is generally sent to extremely busy Centre Managers, who receive many requests to have staff at their centre involved in projects. Conveying information to a group of staff who are predominantly casual is not easy, and even if teachers become aware of the project they may not feel it is appropriate for someone who is “only a sessional” to be involved in the project, especially a project that has a research base and may be perceived as being ‘theoretical’ rather than practical.

It is hoped that the positive experience of those who participated in the first round of projects will help spread the word about the value of being involved, and that this will overcome some of the difficulties in attracting participants to Round 2. Word of mouth certainly seems to be the most powerful incentive for people to join the project, and the Circle of ACE Teaching Practice is being promoted with the other Circles at the VALBEC conference, at some Regional forums, and with the Regional Directors. Nonetheless, with 3 projects simultaneously seeking participants again in Round 2, gaining sufficient participants is likely to remain one of the key challenges.

The second major challenge was to retain participants in the project once it commenced. As has been discussed at previous Reference Group meetings, and as almost all Circle participants commented in the evaluation form, keeping participants involved in a project split over a Christmas break was very difficult. Of the 19 participants who started in the Circle, two departed because they ceased working in the ACE sector. The remaining 17 attended one or more of the seminar and two workshops in 2005, but only 12 of these actually completed projects in 2006. The five who did not complete projects but who attended the seminar and/or workshops definitely benefited from the project and developed an understanding of the ACE Pedagogy Framework and its applications, but clearly the full value of the project was reduced for them.

The issue of timing has been addressed for Round 2 by running the project within the calendar year, and this should help reduce attrition rates. We also hope to build on and strengthen a factor that helped sustain participants in the first Circle, which was having teams of two (or more) participants from a centre or cluster work together. The team members were able to share the workload, support each other, and bring the project to completion and we plan to encourage this approach in Round 2. It needs to be acknowledged, however, that there is always likely to be some attrition from project of this sort, partially because most of the participants are either casual employees or centre managers with a huge number of competing commitments. When your chief concern is finding the time to prepare the next class or keep your centre staffed, operating
smoothly and financially viable, it can be difficult for managers and practitioners to ‘take on board’ something like the ACE Pedagogy Framework, and to give it priority. While there are a number of improvements that can and will be made to strengthen the implementation of the second Circle of ACE Teaching Practice, the implementation of this first Circle has been highly successful.

Summing up, the project:

- disseminated previous research to the field
- engaged researchers with practitioners
- stimulated many professional (thoughtful, critical, reflective) conversations
- cultivated new relationships and networks within and across providers
- challenged and extended the research (as well as the researchers and practitioners)
- generated new developmental ideas for further research, and
- promoted workplace learning
- facilitated improved ACE practice

Thanks and acknowledgements

The success of this project has stemmed from the wonderful and talented group of ACE practitioners who shared their ideas and energetically implemented their projects, spreading an understanding of the ACE Pedagogy Framework to many others in the sector.

The project’s success has also depended on the skilled facilitation and participant support provided by the two researchers involved, Jill Sanguinetti and Peter Waterhouse.

My role as project manager has been greatly supported and assisted by Rosemary Sharman, the CEO of Sandybeach, and our ever-helpful administrative staff and volunteers.

It has been extremely beneficial to have two other project managers to share ideas with and develop approaches to the Circles, so my heartfelt thanks are extended to Rowena Naufal and Libby Barker. There has been excellent mutual support and sharing of information on a range of issues, including:

- Promoting the Circles
- Ideas for how the Circles would operate
- Allocation of funds for Circle participants
- Development of statements outlining expectations of participants
- Preparation of reports

Finally, my thanks are extended to the ACFE Board for funding such an innovative project, enabling practitioners to work alongside researchers and learn from each other as they used and applied research. In particular, I would like to thank Cheryl Wilkinson, who provided welcome and helpful support and guidance throughout the project.

Judy Bissland
Project Manager, Circle of ACE Teaching Practice,
1. Project Summaries: A Focus on The Teacher and The Teaching

*Understanding the culture of ACE*
Liz Miller (Sandybeach, Sandringham)

Liz worked with 5 other ESL teachers to explore aspects of the ACE Pedagogy Framework. The teachers worked together to produce a resource booklet that can be given to new teachers to help them understand the culture of ACE and give them specific strategies for implementing some aspects of the framework.

The project had many positive outcomes. It has produced a booklet that will be an extremely valuable part of the orientation for new teachers, focusing directly on educational strategies and the ACE culture. The process of producing the booklet has proved extremely beneficial, creating an opportunity for a group of sessional English teachers to work together as a team in sharing their teaching approaches. This has greatly reduced the sense of isolation often experienced by sessional teachers and has created an environment for ongoing sharing of educational approaches.

*Using the framework as a basis for teacher reflection and for a teacher resource*
Karen Crawford (Mountain District Learning Centre, Ferntree Gully)

The aims of this project were to facilitate a process enabling teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices in relation to the *ACE Pedagogy Framework*, and to develop a resource for teaching staff to support them in incorporating the ACE culture into their classrooms.

The project involved having a number of individual conversations and two group meetings with teachers at MDLC. In all, 9 teachers were involved in the discussions about the ACE Pedagogy Framework and how it can be implemented in the classroom. The discussions were very valuable, with teachers commenting that “the sharing was a great experience” and that “developing ideas with others is something that a sessional teacher normally misses out on in smaller organisations”.

Through the group discussion, a booklet was developed to provide some practical ideas for implementing the aspect of the Framework focusing on ‘The Teaching’. These ideas will be incorporated into the Tutor’s Kit provided to all MDLC staff, which will help to continue to build the culture of the organisation and will introduce many other teachers to the principles of the ACE Pedagogy Framework over a period of time.

The value of creating opportunities for sessional teaching staff to meet, reflect on their teaching, and share ideas was strongly demonstrated. The Centre plans to continue offering such opportunities as an important way of overcoming the frequent reality that ‘sessional means solitary’.
Teacher Reflection  
Sue Paull (Diamond Valley Learning Centre)  

Sue’s aim was to use the ACE Pedagogy Framework to give teachers a chance to focus on teaching and learning and thus to provide some balance given the recent extensive focus on auditing procedures.

9 teachers were involved in providing a written response to two questions:
- What do you think is teaching and what is learning?
- Do teachers focus on teaching when the think they are focusing on the learning? If so, why does this happen?

The written responses were collated and discussed at a staff meeting together with some extracts on reflective journal writing. The teachers then agreed to reflect on their teaching for the year, taking 15 minutes for written reflection after each class, and to meet at the end of each term to discuss these reflections. The DVLC management wholeheartedly supported this project and has agreed to pay the teachers for their time.

The process of providing the stimulus and opportunity for teachers to reflect on their teaching has been extremely beneficial. The teachers who are involved in the project have commented that reflecting on their teaching has caused them to try out new approaches and resulted in improvements. They are also discovering the benefits of cross-pollination, with English and maths teachers sharing ideas. Sue reports that both she and the other teachers involved are feeling very invigorated and revitalised, and they are all looking forward to the continued sharing of what they are discovering about teaching.

2. Project Summaries: Focus on generic skill development

Understanding Generic/ Employability skills  
Marj Sjomstrom (Keysborough Learning Centre), Clea Nicol (Narre Community Learning Centre), Lyn Treloar (Peninsula Adult Education and Literacy)  

This group wanted to develop an understanding of Kearn’s generic skills for teachers and learners, and apply this understanding to classroom pedagogy and learners. In particular, they wanted to raise ACE teacher’s awareness of generic/employability skills, of how they transfer those skills to their learners, and of the strategies that can be used to encourage learners to both demonstrate and develop their own understanding of these skills.

The group developed a survey which was circulated to teachers in their clusters, and with a combination of persuasion and persistence, 46 surveys were completed. Information about the ACE pedagogy framework and Kearns generic skills was sent out with the survey, and a number of respondents indicated that completing the survey was in itself a form of professional development!

The questionnaire identified that while most teachers had an awareness of generic and employment skills, most indicated that they would like to have more professional development in this area. In particular, there is a need to provide explicit and practical methods of conveying these skills as part of everyday practice. There is also a need to provide teachers strategies for ensuring that the learners are aware of the skills they are acquiring. The practitioners in the research team developed and shared some of their own approaches for achieving this, including
the strategy of having students reflect on the generic skills acquired at the end of sessions.

The project has stimulated much thinking about ACE teaching practices that can support learner development of generic skills and strategies to help learners become aware of the skills they have acquired.

**The relevance of Generic Skills and the Framework of ACE Teaching Practice for VCE and VCAL Practitioners**  
Margaret Brickhill & Heather Williams (The Centre for Continuing Education, Wangaratta)

The focus of this project was to foster reflection on ACE Practice, generic/employability skills, and the relevance of these for VCE and VCAL teaching.

Margaret and Heather worked together in preparing an interactive lecture which Heather gave as the Keynote address at the *Reflections and Futures* conference for VCAL and VCE teachers in ACE. Approximately 100 teachers were at the keynote address, which outlined and invited reflection on generic skills and on the *ACE Pedagogy Framework*.

In addition to the presentation and discussion at the conference, several ACE practitioners agreed to provide further written responses and reflection.

The project made a very large number of ACE practitioners aware of the ACE framework and of its capacity to be used for professional development and its potential for inducting new staff. The project also stimulated some very interesting discussion of generic skills and identified quite polarised views. Some practitioners strongly believed that the best approach is to integrate the teaching of generic skills into the curriculum, whereas other felt strongly that they needed to be taught explicitly: ‘when things are embedded everywhere, they are covered nowhere’.

The project has stimulated reflection on teaching in light of the *ACE Pedagogy Framework* and reflection on the best ways of helping students develop generic skills. The project has provided a strong stimulus for teachers to review and strengthen their approach to teaching the strategies they use to support student acquisition of generic skills.

‘You’re treated like an adult here’  
Eleanor Morgan and Ruth Goddard – (Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre)

Eleanor and Ruth wanted to investigate students’ views about attending GNLC and any connection between Kearn’s generic skills, student views and values of the Centre. In particular, they wanted to look at factors influencing youth attendance.

Two focus groups were conducted, one with a youth group and one with an adult group. The focus groups were very successful, with both groups participating enthusiastically and giving insightful replies. One of the strongest themes that emerged was the importance the students placed on being treated as adults, and treated with respect at the Centre. Many of the comments made during the focus group directly linked to aspects of the ACE Pedagogy Framework. The responses of the youth group and the adult group were also considered in light of Kearns generic skills framework, and differences in the two groups were identified, with adults showing much greater self direction, personal mastery and awareness of the expectations on them.

The project has helped Ruth and Eleanor frame a number of recommendations for implementation at Glenroy. These recommendations should support improved youth attendance and strategies which continue to develop generic skills including self-direction and personal
mastery in the young people.

3. Project Summaries: Focus on ‘The Place’

What Makes Your Place?
Karen Dymke (CAE)

Karen used the dimension of the ACE Pedagogy Framework described as ‘The Place’ as a tool for reflection and discussion with students, managers and teachers. Using a series of questions related to the Framework, Karen formally interviewed the centre manager and held informal discussions with a range of practitioners and students. The result of her project was the documentation of an example of very good practice, one which demonstrates and illuminates the concepts in the ACE Pedagogy Framework. The work Karen did together with a photographic powerpoint presentation related to the centre provide an excellent example of one way of documenting, ‘marketing’ and promoting the services ACE provides and the contribution made by community centres.

Exploring aspects of ‘the place’ and factors which create a welcoming environment
Barbara Jacobs (Hampton)

Barbara focused on the dimension of ‘the place’ in the ACE Pedagogy Framework, exploring which factors are most important in creating a welcoming environment and sense of belonging. Barbara surveyed teachers and students at Hampton Community Centre and presented the outcomes of the survey to staff at the centre. The feedback received from the survey has validated the way in which the Centre has created a sense of belonging while also highlighting some aspects of the physical environment that could be improved.
Circle of ACE Teaching Practice
Commencing Participants

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<tr>
<th>Northern Workshop Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret Brickhill</td>
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<td>Wangaratta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brad Clarke</td>
<td>Diversitat</td>
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<td>Rick Jamieson</td>
<td>DEAC Inc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth Goddard</td>
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<td>Eleanor Morgan</td>
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<td>Sue Paull</td>
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<td>Stephen Webb</td>
<td>Lalor Living and Learning Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heather Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Dymke</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Yvette Barrington</td>
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<td>Karen Crawford</td>
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<td>Robyn Downie</td>
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<td>Barbara Jakob</td>
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<td>Clea Nicol</td>
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<td>Narre Warren</td>
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<td>Marjorie Sjostrom</td>
<td>Keysborough Learning Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lyn Treloar</td>
<td>Peninsula Adult Ed &amp; Literacy</td>
<td>Rosebud</td>
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