NSW BOARD OF ADULT & COMMUNITY EDUCATION

THE VOCATIONAL SCOPE OF ACE

Vocational Education and Training within
the Adult and Community Education Sector in New South Wales

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July 1993

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FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the report *The Vocational Scope of ACE: vocational education and training within the adult and community education sector in New South Wales.*

Adult and community education has not been a widely researched field in the past. Because of this there is a need for good research which will assist in understanding the role adult and community education plays in vocational education and training in NSW.

This report contributes to such an understanding. By examining the educational activities of adult and community education providers and the motives of learners at those centres the report presents considerable important detail about adult and community education in NSW.

Hon (Mrs) Kerry Chikarovski, MP
Minister for Industrial Relations and Employment
Minister for the Status of Women

Adult and community education is constantly changing. Its great strength is that responds so effectively to community needs. I strongly believe that adult and community education plays a vital role in lifelong learning. A critical aspect of lifelong learning involves developing work related skills and, of course, in participating in society as an informed citizen.

Increasingly adult and community education is being recognised as a significant contributor to Australia's vocational education and training sector.

Each year hundreds of thousands of adults in NSW participate in short courses offered in one of the 73 centres supported by the Board of Adult and Community Education.

This report provides substantial information on the range of motives learners have for attending ACE courses, the types of courses conducted, the range of participants and the issues confronting the Sector in meeting the demands of the evolving vocational education and training system.

Val Street
Chairperson
NSW Board of Adult and Community Education

Executive Summary

This report was commissioned by the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education. Its purpose is twofold:

1 To develop a definition of what constitutes vocational education and training within the ACE sector which can be used in state and national discussions on vocational education and training.

2 To determine the extent of vocational education and training activities within the ACE sector (NSW) according to this definition.

The definitional task was addressed through documenting and synthesising a range of definitions, views and concerns from three sources:

- extant definitions in the educational literature and in policy documents and reports;
- the results of a questionnaire survey mailed to senior practitioners across the field of ACE in Australia;
- the outcome of a focus group seminar with representatives of ACE providers in NSW.

An outcome of the above is the working definition developed for this study, which is:

Educational activity that promotes the acquisition of competence — in terms of knowledge, skills, understandings, attitudes and values — which contributes to productive work.

The principal features of this definition are:

1 There are no assumptions about the nature of the educational activity (eg when, where, how and by whom it is provided). Thus education and training may be formal or informal, closely related to a job or occupation, or only indirectly or potentially related to a job or occupation.

2 The term productive work is used rather than 'employment', 'jobs' or 'occupations' on the grounds that productive work occurs in both paid and unpaid forms.

3 Competence is not reduced to performance, it is seen as something which underlies effective performance.

4 The definition is consistent with the National Training Board's definition.

The second major task, which is to document the extent of VET in ACE, was approached from three perspectives: the perspectives of the curriculum, the providers, and the learners respectively.

The curriculum

To what extent is the curriculum vocational? How does the curriculum compare with other sectors such as TAFE or with ACE in other states? Are there regional or local differences in the curriculum? What is the best way of classifying courses to give an accurate picture of the vocational extent of ACE? To address such questions a content analysis of the course offerings of the ACE sector was conducted. The principal results are:

1 The existing TAFE statistics methodology does not accurately reflect the contribution of ACE to the national vocational education and training effort. The Department of Employment, Education and Training's Tertiary Fields of Study Classification system, outlined below, provides a more accurate measure of the contribution of ACE to vocational education and training.

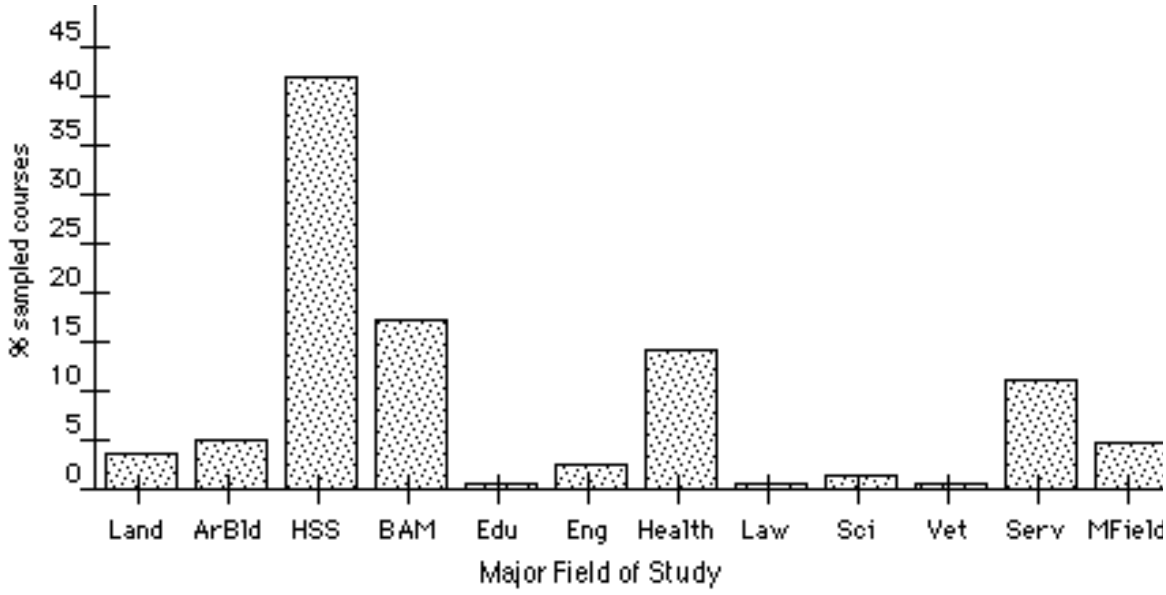
Table 1. Tertiary Fields of Study Classification

MAJOR FIELDS AND SELECTED SUB-FIELDS	COMMON ACE COURSE AREAS
01 Land and Marine Resources	
0102 Agriculture	010205 Horticulture - gardening:
0103 Animal Husbandry	010404 Conservation, nature studies
02 Architecture and Building	020307 Woodworking, Furniture Restoration
0202 Architecture	020308 Carpentry, Joinery
0203 Building	020303 Interior design
03 Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	030206 Creative writing
3.02 Humanities and Social Sciences	030214 Political Science and Government
	030215 Psychology
3.03 Language Studies	030302 Asian Languages
	030303 European Languages
3.04 Visual and Performing Arts	030403 Crafts, Ornament
	030407 Fine Arts
04 Business, Administration, Economics	030409 Music
4.02 Business, Administration, Management	040202 Accounting
4.03 Economics	040211 Secretarial, Word-processing, Clerical:
	040216 Small Business Management:
05 Education	050399 Post-initial School/TAFE Teacher Education
06 Engineering, Surveying	
0602 Engineering and Related Technologies	060212 Automotive
0603 Surveying	060210 Welding

07 Health, Community Services	
0702 Dental Services	
0703 Health Support Activities	070503 Medicine, Medical Aid:
0704 Health Sciences and Technologies	070705 Personal Health Education
0705 Medical Science, Medicine	070705 Social/Recreational Education
0706 Rehabilitation Services	
0707 Community, Family, Personal Health Care	
08 Law and Legal Studies	
0802 Law	080401 Legal studies: Law and Consumers
0803 Justice Administration, Law Enforcement	
0804 Legal Studies	
09 Science	
0902 Computer Science, Information Systems	090314 Zoology
0903 Life, General Sciences	090505 Physics
0904 Mathematics	
10 Veterinary Science, Animal Care	101010 Animal care
11 Services, Hospitality, Transportation	
1102 Food/beverage, Hospitality, Tourism	110201 Food/beverage, Hospitality, Tourism
1103 Transportation	110204 General Cookery
1104 Apparel Sales, Services	110402 Clothing, Clothing Materials
1105 Other Services	
12 TAFE Multi-field Education	120303 Functional Literacy
1202 Multi-broad-field TAFE Vocational Education	120302 English as a Second Language
1203 TAFE Multi-field Basic Education	

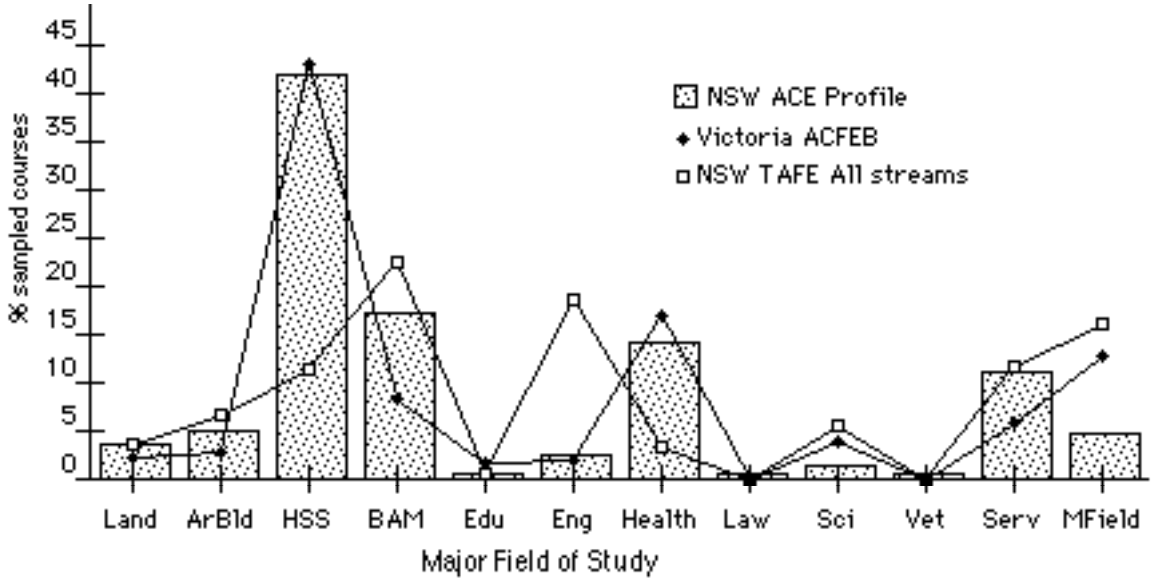
2 Applying the Tertiary Fields of Study system of classifying courses (Figure 1), the four main strengths of ACE are in the Arts and Humanities (especially crafts, visual and performing arts, communication, and languages), Business (especially computing and office skills), Health and Community Services (especially personal health and social-recreational education), and Other Services fields (such as cooking and dressmaking). The main TAFE Multifield courses in ACE are in the area of adult basic education and ESL.

Figure 1. The ACE Field of Study Profile



3 A comparison of TAFE in NSW with ACE in NSW and ACE in Victoria (Figure 2) reveals similar profiles for the ACE sector in the two states. Overall, ACE and TAFE largely meet different knowledge areas, with the exception of the Business, Administration and Management field.

Figure 2. TAFE and ACE, NSW and Victorian ACE



The providers

How do providers see the VET contribution of ACE? Are there links with local industry or business, with national labour market programs, or with other VET providers? What is the extent of demand and where is it coming from? These questions were addressed through a questionnaire/interview survey with a sample of principals and co-ordinators designed to document their perceptions of VET in ACE and the educational links they had established with industry, business, government, and other educational institutions such as schools TAFE colleges and universities.

The survey results indicate ACE is meeting a strong demand for business, administration and management courses. Computing, software packages, keyboarding, clerical, specialised reception skills, typing, book-keeping and shorthand are most often cited as courses that are 'vocational' in presentation.

Table 2. Courses cited as vocational by providers

Course area	Frequency cited: Larger	Small	Total	%

Computing, software	19	19	38	22.1
Clerical, shorthand, typing, reception	23	11	34	19.8
Small Business Management, supervision, sales, accounting, bookkeeping	28	2	30	17.4
Communications, writing , public speaking	6	4	10	5.8
Languages	2	1	3	1.7
Crafts, arts	1	6	7	4.1
Health and community services	4	3	7	4.1
Hospitality, catering, clothing	0	5	5	2.9
Other courses (welding, LMP)	12	12	24	14.0
Providers not specifying , unstated	4	10	14	8.1
Total			172	100.0

Estimates of 'how much the program is vocational' range from 40% to 50% in some large colleges to 5% among small providers.

Many ACE learners enrol for specific vocational reasons, Table 3 shows the most common vocational motive is to maintain or enhance skills for an existing job (69% of instances cited). Principals report many students seek to upgrade skills because they are worried by job security, as much as improving their career prospects. Sometimes employers 'send' them to be trained. It is clear that in quite specific ways learners are using short non-credit courses to adjust and adapt to workplace change.

Table 3. Vocational reasons for enrolling

Vocational reasons for enrolling	**All**	%
Upgrade or improve skills , improve promotion prospects, meet licence requirements of job	33	44.6
Enhance employability, avoid redundancy, demonstrate flexibility, meet employer's skill requirements	12	16.2
Enhance ability to change jobs, gain skills for enter a new line of work, retrain for different position	6	8.1

Enter or return to the workforce, develop necessary skills or confidence, explore areas of work	14	18.9
Maintain income, cut costs through self-sufficiency, earn income by working from home	9	12.2
No vocational reasons or unclassifiable	10	
Total instances cited (n=48 providers)	74	100

There is a clear consensus among providers that ACE makes its greatest contribution to VET by providing accessible and inexpensive learning opportunities across the board, by having the flexibility to respond to immediate local needs, and by being open-ended so learners are able to define the purposes of their learning. Three other crucial but less recognised ways in which ACE contributes to vocational education and training are (1) its crucial role of bridging access to further education and training, (2) its role in fostering small business opportunities, income supplementation, and labour force adjustment, and (3) its contribution to the 'hidden work' of domestic economy and community activity.

The learners

Who participates in adult education, what are they learning and what are their motives? To what extent do ACE learners regard their learning as vocational? For whom is the learning vocational? Is the vocational motive systematically related to learner characteristics such as age, sex, or previous educational attainment? These questions are addressed through a questionnaire survey of learners' motives for enrolling in courses. In addition to providing demographic information, respondents were asked to indicate, from a prepared list of possible course outcomes (see Fig 3), those for which the course 'may be helpful' . They were also asked to identify the outcome for which the course will be 'most helpful' . The principal conclusions to be drawn from the analysis of the results are:

1 The sample of ACE learners is different from the NSW population in a number of respects:

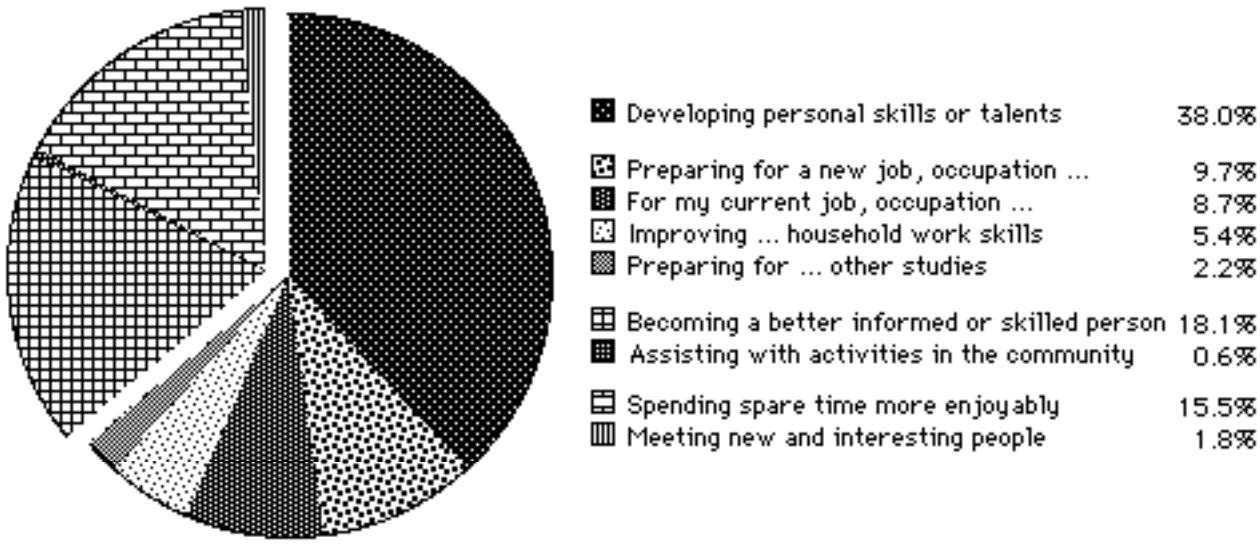
- Three quarters of the ACE learners were female
- Learners were relatively younger - about 60% were under 40, 80% under 50 years
- Three-quarters were in paid employment of some kind
- Three-quarters had completed some form of post-school qualification

- Three-quarters were born in Australia, and ten percent born in non-English speaking countries.

The respondents reported ages from less than 20 years to more than 60 years. A clear majority of learners (58.9%) were less than 40 years of age (39.2% for NSW pop 15-39). However, only a very small number of participants (4.4%) were under 20 years of age. The great bulk of learners (76.1%) were in the decades of their twenties, thirties and forties Only about one fifth (19.5%) of respondents were over 50 years of age (25.5% for NSW population). Male respondents as a group were slightly older than female respondents, about a third of the women (32.9%) were under 30 years of age and only a quarter of men (25.2%) were under 30. Moreover, whereas only 5.9% of women were aged 60 or more, 8.5% of men were in this age group. Finally, respondents from the Sydney metropolitan area were slightly younger than respondents from non metropolitan areas—62.4% of metropolitan respondents were under 40 years of age whereas only 52.4% of respondents from non metropolitan areas were similarly aged.

2 As many as 26% of respondents report a clear vocational motive as their primary motive (preparing for a new job, for a current job, household work skills, preparing for other studies). If the item 'becoming a better informed or skilled person' is included within the scope of 'vocational', then 64% of respondents can be said to have included a vocational component as their primary motive (see Fig 3).

Figure 3 Primary Motive for Participation



3 Several motives are at work for most participants. On average, 2.7 motives were identified as relevant by each respondent in the survey. When multiple motives are taken into account, 90% report a vocational motive (in the broader sense above) as one of a number of motives for participation. It is clear that, for many learners, vocational motives operate even when a course may appear to be non-vocational. Conversely, non-vocational motives operate even when a course appears to be narrowly vocational.

The percentage of respondents marking each item in the survey is indicated below:

- Becoming a better informed or skilled person 56.2%
- Preparing for a new job, occupation or business 22.0%
- For my current job, occupation or business 23.0%
- Spending my spare time more enjoyably 49.0%
- Meeting new and interesting people 28.8%
- Improving and developing household work skills 14.4%
- Preparing for or assisting with other studies 11.2%
- Assisting with activities in the community 6.4%
- Developing personal skills and talents 70.8%

4 The reported primary motive for participation seems to line up with the course area undertaken. Table 4 illustrates how motive is linked to the Field of Study undertaken. In this table **Self-development** combines "Developing a personal skill or talent" and "Becoming a better informed or skilled person" and "Preparing for or assisting with other studies". **Work** combines "preparation for current or future job". Social combines "Using spare time more enjoyably" and "Meeting new and interesting people" and Home and Community combines "Improving and developing household work skills" and "Assisting with activities in the community".

Table 4 Primary Motive and Field of Study

Probability of a learner reporting a given primary motive being enrolled in a given Major Field of Study (n=2002)

Motive	**Course Area Major Field**				
	Arts HSS	*Business*	*HealthCS*	*Services*	*Other*
Work	.24	.52	.05	.08	.11
Self Development	.46	.11	.14	.15	.14
Social	.49	.01	.16	.21	.14
Home and Community	.11	.02	.01	.65	.21

Further interactions, such as between provider characteristics and course area, and learner characteristics and motives, are detailed in the full report.

In summary, the findings of the report are that:

- the ACE curriculum has a strong vocational component, especially when the standard Tertiary Field of Study classification system is applied to categorise course content;
- providers report a strong and growing demand for specifically vocational courses, and they are conscious of the ways in which the broad curriculum leads to vocational outcomes;
- learners are clearly motivated by vocational concerns in undertaking adult education courses.

The final chapter identifies the issues faced by providers in enhancing the sector's vocational education and training initiatives.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The national context

In recent years there have been numerous reports and enquiries into post-compulsory education and training in Australia. Most notably, the ACTU/TDC report *Australia Reconstructed* (1987), the Dawkins' White Paper *Higher Education: a Policy Statement* (1988), the Finn Report *Young People's Participation in Post-Compulsory Education and Training* (1991), the Carmichael Report *The Australian Vocational Certificate Training System* (1991), and the Mayer paper *Employment-Related Key Competencies: a Proposal for Consultation* (1992), and his follow up report *Putting Education to Work: the key competencies report* (1993). All these reports address the issue of fundamental reform of Australia's education and training system. This concern with education and training reform is linked to the broader economic and social reform agendas of state and federal governments, in particular, industry and award re-structuring, workplace reform, and equity and access initiatives. The idea is that education, training and work should dovetail more effectively so that the development of skills, wherever it occurs in the system, is encouraged and recognised.

These reports and enquiries, particularly those of Finn, Carmichael, and Mayer, have focussed on the need for a national vocational and further education system with nationally agreed standards and a means of measuring those standards. The notion of competence and the development of competencies is the cornerstone of this system, and there now exist a number of agencies promoting competency based standards and training. For example the National Training Board (NTB) was created in 1990 to be the national co-ordinating agency for establishing a nationally consistent Australian Standards Framework. This framework provides a common reference point for industries in the development of national competency standards (the National Framework for the Recognition of Training - NFROT). The idea is that competency standards, established in consultation and co-operation with industry, will be the benchmark for curriculum development, assessment, training delivery, accreditation, and individual certification in the Australian vocational education and training system.

The Finn Report identified six areas of competence considered essential for preparation for, and participation in, work. The areas of competence are:

- Language and communication
- Mathematics
- Scientific and technological understanding
- Cultural understanding
- Problem solving
- Personal and interpersonal

The Mayer Committee was set up by the Australian Education Council (AEC) and the Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training (MOVEET) to conduct further work on these key areas of competence. It identified seven key competency strands which are essential for participation in work, further education, and adult life in general. Each of these strands (which have three performance levels) intersects with the six key areas of competence described by Finn. The key competency strands are:

- Collecting, analysing and organising information
- Communicating ideas and information
- Planning and organising activities
- Working with others and in teams
- Using mathematical ideas and techniques
- Solving problems
- Using technology

The work of the Mayer Committee represents an attempt to develop a generic taxonomy of competencies. It also adopts a broader definition of competence than that proposed by the National Training Board, which focuses almost exclusively on behaviour.

The Committee has adopted a broad definition of competence which recognises that performance is underpinned not only by skill but also by knowledge and understanding, and that competence involves both the ability to perform in a given context and the capacity to transfer knowledge and skills to new tasks and situations. (1992, p4)

The Carmichael Report is an Employment and Skills Formation Council response to the Finn Report. The view expressed is that all training be competency based and industry driven, and that progressive implementation be accelerated so that a substantial amount of training is competency-based by 1995. The intention is that training be broad, and attract credit in school and university courses. The report proposes the introduction of four vocational certificate levels equating with the ASF levels 1-4. It also sets out a number of training targets in terms of the proportions of different age groups achieving ASF levels; makes recommendations of delivery structures, including a more open training market

with a greater diversity of providers; encourages the development of links between senior colleges, TAFE colleges, and community providers; and encourages the creation of open learning and community learning centres.

The organisational structures are now in place to create a national vocational and education training system. There are three levels of structure within the new system. The governing body is the new Ministerial Council on vocational education and training, which is responsible for strategic policy and planning for the system as a whole. At the next level a new national organisation, the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), has been established. ANTA receives and allocates state and commonwealth funding and administers a range of national programs. Its key functions are to:

- draft a national strategic plan
- develop state training profiles based on the national plan
- advise the Ministerial Council of principles for the allocation of funding, and planning parameters
- provide advice on growth funding levels
- administer any programs agreed by the Ministerial Council as requiring national delivery

At the third level of structure are the state training agencies, which are responsible for the operational management of the vocational education and training system within agreed national frameworks. The functions of these agencies will include:

- providing to ANTA policy advice and information on training needs and funding
- developing detailed state training profiles
- ensuring that the state training system is in accordance with the national plan and state profile
- allocating resources within the state on a program and geographic basis
- reporting annually to ANTA in an agreed format so that an integrated annual report will be available

In NSW the agency is the Vocational Education and Training Agency (VETA).

Together these structures will:

- establish an agreed set of national goals and objectives for vocational education and training
- translate those goals and objectives into a national strategic plan for vocational education and training
- develop state vocational education and training profiles

Also in NSW there has been established the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) which accredits courses and registers providers.

There is thus a more open and competitive training market with a range of providers tendering for both publicly and privately funded vocational training.

There is however considerable controversy and debate concerning the system which is envisaged. For example concerns have been expressed about the notion of competence which underpins the system, such as its inability to cater for the aesthetic, creative, moral and ethical dimensions of work; that complex work environments are incompatible with the competence model; that there is insufficient distinction made between competence and performance; that the competencies being identified are related to industrial awards rather than educational considerations; and that it is impossible to specify in advance all the ways in which competence can be demonstrated. There are also concerns that the national system for implementation will be centralist, bureaucratic and rigid; that there are educational aims which are not, and should not be industry driven; that the system re-creates the dichotomy between vocational and general education, and that the application of national competency standards is more likely to result in uniformity and mediocrity rather than diversity and quality.

Despite the misgivings this whole scenario certainly allows more scope for recognising the skills and experience of those traditionally not well served by the formal education system. It does so by allowing learning (or rather, the outcomes of learning) to be recognised wherever it occurs: in schools, in TAFE colleges, through workplace training, and through private and community based education providers.

Against this background there has been, for the first time, a major senate inquiry into Adult and Community Education (ACE) in Australia. Partly as a consequence of this inquiry, the adult and community education sector is increasingly been regarded as a significant contributor to post-compulsory education in Australia. Within the ACE sector there has been a concerted effort to establish its vocational credentials. The Australian Association of Adult and Community Education produced a report titled *Celebrate the Difference: Skills Formation through Community-Based Adult Education* (1991). This report documents the range of skills developed in the sector and makes a case for regarding ACE as an effective provider of skills formation (especially for women and disadvantaged groups), and recommends that it be included in a cohesive national framework for skills formation. More recently the Evening and Community Colleges Association of NSW, in its submission to VETA (1993), sets out a case for wider recognition of the vocational education and training contributions of evening and community colleges, detailing their specific strengths:

1. *While the other sectors of education focus on degree, diploma and certificate courses, colleges' special strength is in the provision of short courses teaching specific vocational competencies*
2. *Having these skills taught outside traditional certificate courses provides for the flexible acquisition of specific competencies which are strongly demanded by the increasingly diversified employment environment.*
3. *While most of college provision could be accredited to statement of competency level, inevitably over time some colleges will move towards the provision of certificate-level training.*
4. *It is in the area of short skills-based courses where the ACE sector performs more responsively and more cost effectively than any of the other sectors.*

(1993, p6)

ACE is now seen to have a place in vocational education and training and it is included within the scope of ANTA and funded through the ANTA pool. But there remain many uncertainties, and the boundaries of the inclusion of ACE within the ANTA arrangements are yet to be drawn. The NSW representative on the ANTA Task Force, in a memo to the CEO of the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education (Sept 1992), identified a range of issues to be addressed, among them:

- is it possible to distinguish between activities which could be defined as access/ preparatory or credit transferable and those which are focused on skills for leisure or personal development?
- from the ACE perspective is it desirable to do so?
- what impact would this have on ACE sector planning and policy?

  eg. recognition of courses/providers, credit transfer arrangements with TAFE and other providers, assessment of student performance.
- what capacity does the ACE sector have to provide statistical data on course stream and enrolments and to meet the ANTA reporting requirements?
- can the ACE sector meet the NFROT agreement principles?
- what capacity does the ACE sector have to provide 3 year strategic planning data for the development or the state profile?
- would the pressure towards planned offerings be acceptable to a sector whose provision is largely demand driven?
- the sector currently responds to individual/community needs. What would be the impact of responding to other stakeholders? ie government, industry, employers, union?

These questions suggest a number of research possibilities and needs. However, as the recent *Strategic Review of Research in Education* (1992) notes, a 'significant gap' in research exists at a time when adult education provision is expanding rapidly. In particular there is a paucity of research which documents the social and economic contribution of adult education - its role in promoting access to formal courses; increased job skills, productivity and job mobility; its contribution to personal and social adjustment; enhanced quality of life and other outcomes.

This research project helps to narrow this gap by documenting the meaning and prevalence of vocational education and training within the ACE sector in NSW. As such it will be a step towards clarifying the way in which ACE is (or should be) positioned within the national vocational education and training system.

The research brief

The research brief was to:

1. Develop a meaningful definition of what constitutes vocational education and training within the ACE sector which can be used in state and national discussions on vocational education and training.
2. Determine the extent of vocational education and training activities within the ACE sector (NSW) according to this definition

An important strategy in addressing this brief was to obtain multiple perspectives on each of its two parts. Thus the perspectives of a range of stakeholders were sought: academics, senior educational and employment public servants, ministerial advisers, practitioners, providers, and learners. The focus throughout has been on providing as complete a picture as possible of the role of the ACE sector in vocational education and training, a picture which deals in a manageable and useful way with both the conceptual and operational issues.

For the purposes of this study the ACE sector refers to independent community owned and managed organisations which are funded by the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE). The three types of Board funded courses are:

- 22 Evening and Community Colleges comprising 16 metropolitan and 6 rural colleges
- 4 Workers' Educational Associations in 4 locations
- 45 Community Adult Education Associations (CAEC'S) in rural areas

The research strategy

Part A The definition

The issues surrounding the definitional question were documented and a tentative definition (and rationale) was developed from the following sources:

- extant definitions in the educational literature and in policy documents and reports

- a questionnaire survey was mailed to senior practitioners across the field of ACE in Australia
- a focus group seminar was held with representatives of ACE providers in NSW

Part B The extent of vocational education and training (VET) in NSW ACE

Data was collected using three strategies:

- A content analysis of the course offerings of the ACE sector using the existing Tertiary Field of Study Classification of Courses.
- A survey of principals and co-ordinators designed to document their perceptions of vocational education and training in the ACE sector, and the educational links they had established with industry, business, government, and other educational institutions such as schools TAFE colleges and universities.
- A sample survey of learners' motives for enrolling in current courses and actual/attributed outcomes of their prior course involvement.

Research assumptions

In developing the research strategy, the authors were working with a number of guiding assumptions about their methodology.

- Constraints of the brief. The research is limited to defining and estimating the extent of vocational activities of the ACE sector. The research team is aware that interpreting this brief too narrowly would be self-defeating, especially in documenting the extent of ACE's vocational role.
- Complexity. Consistent with a broad view, the research approach admits more rather than less complexity into the project. The researchers see a need to resist over-simplifying the sector and its vocational role, and take note of the wide rationale for the Brief and the need to bring out the fullest understanding of the sector and its role possible within the constraints of time and resources.
- Interpretive and quantitative analysis. The lack of basic research on ACE noted in the rationale for the research brief also leads to the view that the project should employ several strategies and seek a balance between quantitative and qualitative analysis. There are obvious dangers in rushing to quantify what has not yet been conceptualised clearly. A paucity of basic research means a lack of well-developed frameworks for analysing the field, and this is as a large a problem for policy research as the supposed lack of 'hard data'. The research strategy has therefore favoured both interpretive and quantitative methods.
- Providers, Courses and Learners. Another assumption is that basic ACE research must clearly distinguish provider, course and learner variables. In each of these 'domains', greater clarity is needed in conceptualising important variables. Thus, the research strategy separates the problems of classifying ACE courses from the question of the motive and outcome of learners taking courses. We argue this is necessary to properly study the interaction between them. Thus 'motive for participation' is unequivocally treated as a learner-defined variable, not a course-characteristic.
- Multiple perspectives. If there are provider, course and learner dimensions to the vocational activities of ACE, there are multiple perspectives on the vocational role of ACE — policy-makers, principals, tutors and learners. This is another aspect of

the 'complexity' in the field recognised in the multiple methods of the research strategy. This is the justification for highlighting the policy issues in defining vocational education and training (Chapter 2), or classifying courses (Chapter 3), for the strong interpretive approach to documenting provider views (Chapter 4), and not least assessing the learners' experiences in the ACE Learner Survey (Chapter 5).

- A multi-dimensional picture of the 'vocational' in ACE. The research strategy therefore tries to meet the Brief by developing a multi-dimensional picture of the vocational activities of the ACE sector. The assumption is that there is 'no simple answer' to the extent of the vocational role of the ACE sector. The effectiveness of the research will be judged in how it documents the multiple ways in which the sector has vocational outcomes for its participants.

In summary then, the research strategy is based on gaining an appreciation of the three key terms in the ACE equation — the courses, the learners and the providers, ACE's vocational role is analysed from these standpoints.

Overview of the report

The report is organised into six chapters. The purpose of this chapter has been to cocument the context from which the study has emerged, to set out the research brief, and to explain the broad research strategy. Chapter 2 discusses the definition of VET in ACE. It explores the parameters of the definitional question by commenting on relevant extant definitions, and reporting the results of a focus group seminar and a mail survey or practitioners. A working definition is then proposed and comments on its central features are made. Chapter 3 documents the knowledge and skill content of ACE courses (note that knowledge and skill are components of the competence concept which is central to the definition of VET). Comparisons are made with the offerings of NSW TAFE and Victorian ACE and some local comparisons of different colleges are documented. The argument advanced is that ACE should adopt a standard "Field of Study' approach to classifying courses. Using this approach highlights its real contribution to VET.

Chapter 4 reports on the perspective of providers on the vocational and training dimensions of ACE: their view of courses in demand, the motives of learners, links with TAFE and other organisations, involvement with labour market programs, their contribution to the local community, an their views on accreditation and recognition. The thrust of the argument is that ACE providers contribute in a broad way to the vocational education and training needs of the communities they serve.

Chapter 5 reports on the results of a learner survey. It provides a picture of the learners, their demographic characteristics, and motives for enrolling. In addition

significant statistical associations between key variables are reported (eg. learner characteristics such as sex, age and qualifications, and their association with the course area undertaken). This is essentially a descriptive chapter which documents who is doing what and why in the ACE sector. In the final analysis a vocational motive is seen to be a component of most learner's perceptions on why they undertake courses.

The final chapter sets out some of the issues facing ACE providers as they embrace the VET agenda.

Chapter 2

The meaning of vocational education in ACE

Introduction

This chapter reports on the development of a definition of VET in ACE. Three approaches are used to arrive at a definition:

1. A review was conducted of the way VET is defined in the educational literature and in policy documents and reports.

2. A survey was distributed to senior practitioners to document their perspectives on the definitional question.

3. A 'focus group' seminar was held where senior practitioners discuss their views on the nature and scope of the definition.

The results of these three approaches are presented in this chapter. However it should be emphasised that definitions are constructed rather than discovered. The definition presented at the conclusion of this chapter is thus constructed from the range of views and issues set out below.

The literature

There is no universal agreed upon definition of vocational education and training to be found in the literature. For a very few it signifies the full range of activities from personal introspection to formal post graduate study. For many it describes a special type of secondary education designed to prepare the less academically able for entry to semi-skilled and skilled manual occupations. For others it refers specifically to employer sponsored on-the -job or closely job-related , short term and highly practical training. Table 2.1 sets out a range of definitions, thus illustrating the many different ways in which VET is defined and described.

Table 2.1 Definitions of Vocational Education and Training

Definition	Comment
Vocational education is defined as all formal post-school education which prepares students for (or further develops their skills in) a specific vocation or for work generally, up to and including the level of para professional occupations. McDonald, R., Gonczi, A. and Hager, P. (1992) No Small Change : a proposal for a research and development strategy for VET in Australia. University of Technology, Sydney.	Note here the emphasis on formal education, which implies education which is at least accredited and most likely delivered through a formal educational institution. Also note the scope: it is for either a specific vocation or for work generally.
All activities in and out of school designed to contribute to occupational proficiency. Includes apprenticeships, guidance in schools, training programs, on-the -job training and eventual job placement. Page, G. and Thomas, J. (1977) International Dictionary of Education. London: Kogan Page.	This definition restricts VET to 'occupational proficiency'. But it includes all 'activities' rather than formal programs.
The education and training necessary to prepare a person for employment or that which is provided during employment to assist the students to undertake their occupational role more effectively. Jams, P. (1983) An International Dictionary of Adult and Continuing Education. London: Routledge.	The stress here is on preparation for employment and continuing employment-related training. However there is also reference to 'occupational role' rather than simply the narrower concept of 'job'.
Commonly used to mean to do with work. So a vocational course is one preparing the student in a specific job. Pates, A and Associates (1983) The Education Fact Book: an A-Z guide to Education and Training in Britain. London: Macmillan Press.	This contains a narrow focus on 'preparation' and 'job'.
Formal preparation for semi-skilled, skilled, technical or para-professional occupations usually below the baccalaureate degree level. ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Vocational and Career Education	There is an emphasis here on the level of attainment associated with the term VET. note also the use of 'formal' and 'preparation'.
Vocational education should be - *an integral part of general education* - *a means of preparing for an occupational field* - *an aspect of continuing education* The 1974 General Conference of UNESCO, cited in Postlethwaite, T (1988) (Ed) The Encyclopedia of Comparative Education and National Systems of Education. Oxford, Pergamon.	This is quite a broad definition. It includes general education within its boundaries and it makes no assumptions about providing agencies or levels of attainment.

Vocational education should be defined by its central function - to expand the realm of practical human possibility. Drior, H. In Husen, T. and Postlethwaite, T. (1985) The International Encyclopedia of Education. Oxford: Pergamon Press.	This is certainly the broadest definition in the sample. The defining quality of 'vocational' is 'practical activity' - beyond that there are no assumptions about provision, level, and the use to which the practical activity may be put.
Vocational Education and Training refers to post-compulsory education or training which is directed to the development of competencies, or is preparatory to, or is directed to the enhancement of opportunities for such education and training up to and including para-professional education and training National Competency Standards: Policy and Guidelines. Second Edition. The National Training Board, Canberra, 1992, p 61.	The term 'post-compulsory' is used rather than 'post-school'. Thus schools are seen as delivering VET in addition to the post-school sector. Also, although competence is a defining feature of VET, included within it is training which leads to an'enhancement of opportunities' to develop competence.

Issues in defining VET in ACE

Mail survey

A questionnaire survey was mailed to senior practitioners across the field of ACE in Australia. (see Appendix for the covering letter and response pro forma). The aim was to document the range of views and perceived issues arising from the notion of vocational education and training in the ACE sector. The senior practitioners comprised:

- the senior government officers responsible for adult education in each state
- the head of the DEET section responsible for adult education programs
- the office holders in the AAACE at both federal and state levels

A total of 45 questionnaires were circulated and there were 22 responses.

From the responses were derived a set of key terms used to describe VET in ACE. These terms, which are listed below, indicate the range of concerns and interests expressed by senior practitioners. They also provide an access route to the key issues in defining VET in ACE. The terms and associated issues are:

- Competence/key competencies. Is the identification of competencies a pre-requisite for the label 'vocational'? If so, what implications does this have for the design and description of courses in the ACE sector?
- Assessment. Is assessment necessary to prove the vocational value of a course? Is it necessary to confirm the acquisition of competence or knowledge and skill? How will the introduction of assessment change the character of ACE?
- Use.Courses should not be classified in vocational/non-vocational terms. Rather, the outcomes of learning in the ACE sector should be defined primarily in terms of the use to which the learners apply their knowledge.

- Levels. Is there a way of distinguishing between different levels of vocational relevance eg. courses which are targeted as vocational, courses which have potential for a vocational outcome, courses which are a pathway for further learning, and course which have no explicit vocational relevance.
- National system/nomenclature. Does ACE wish to participate in the national system of vocational education and training? What are the benefits and costs of doing so? Any definition will need to fit within the national nomenclature.
- Job, occupation, career, work. At what level of abstraction is learning deemed to be vocational? The most direct link is when learning is applied to an existing job. But is this what is meant by 'vocation'? What about broad lifelong career or occupational skills? What about skills which can be applied across a range of occupations?
- Certification. Is it desirable for ACE courses to be certified? What additional costs will be incurred?
- Articulation, credit transfer and the recognition of prior learning (RPL). Should ACE learners have their learning formally recognised by other educational institutions? If so, how can this be achieved? Is national certification the only mechanism available or should negotiations occur with individual institutions to determine their requirements?
- Pre-vocational. Many of the course offered by ACE can be described as pre-vocational - does this fit in with what is meant by vocational?
- Paid vs unpaid work. Is the term vocational restricted to paid work only, what about productive unpaid work(eg household maintenance and management)?
- Personal development and interpersonal skills. How can the definition incorporate the development of personal and interpersonal skills? Is the development of the fully functioning person not 'vocational'?
- Character of ACE. How can the definition encompass the particular characteristics of ACE? Should the definition incorporate the processes, the way ACE operates? does ACE have a particular niche in the vocational arena (eg literacy, access to education, interpersonal skills)?
- Direct vs indirect benefits. The definition should encompass both direct and indirect benefits in vocational settings.
- Vocation, education, training. Are these terms fundamentally incompatible or does their application lead to unhelpful divisions between 'vocational' and 'general', 'training and education' etc?

Focus group seminar

A seminar was held to discuss the definitional issues. Seventeen senior practitioners in NSW attended (see Appendix for the letter of invitation, the agenda and the list of participants). The participants included evening college principals, regional adult education officers, representatives from peak bodies, and representatives from the Secretariat and Board of Adult and Community Education. After an introduction to the context and purpose of the research, small discussion groups were formed to discuss the definitional issues. The range of views outlined below represent the points raised during the plenary session.

- The concepts and language used to describe the sector need to reflect its character *and* be compatible with the language of decision makers.
- There are compelling reasons to regard everything in the sector as vocational - there is nothing which does not at least have the potential to be vocational
- Existing programs could be described using competency terminology - especially those proposed by Mayer because they are generic rather than related to a specific occupation.
- The vocational/non-vocational division is not useful in describing the sector.
- What constitutes a vocational course is a very fluid concept - because the job market is always changing - there is a need for a definition which is not too restrictive.
- There is a need to stress not only what ACE does but what it is - community based, locally controlled, public education, open to all etc.
- It must be clear and accepted which slice of VET is most associated with ACE.
- Need appropriate structures and instruments for measuring and reporting data pertaining to VET in ACE.
- Measurement and assessment could destroy the sector - but students are requesting certification. Perhaps assessment should be voluntary within each course. Are most students happy with attendance statements?
- ACE needs to do what it has always done with its core, while changing to encompass new needs and directions.
- The vocational emphasis biases provision towards the workplace (eg literacy) - what about the unemployed and the homebound?
- There is a need to have a vision of how education, leisure, employment and unemployment will look like in the year 2000.
- We need to get back to the life skills conception of education.
- The approach of ACE should be pragmatic. The sector will need to deal effectively with ANTA.
- Communication, personal skills, working with others is the bread and butter of ACE and these areas contribute significantly to employability.
- ACE needs a set of words with which it is comfortable and which ties in with reforms in VET in Australia, Europe and North America.
- It is ideally placed to cater for trends in employment and training away from blue collar skills and towards white collar service industry type skills.

- VET is best conceived as a continuum from task related to broad general (life related) education.

The definition of vocational education and training

The following definition is one which attempts to take into account the issues and concerns raised in the literature search, the mail survey, and the focus group seminar.

Educational activity that promotes the acquisition of competence - in terms of knowledge, skills, understandings, attitudes and values - which contributes to productive work.

Please note the following features of this definition:

- Competence is not reduced to performance, it is seen as something which underlies effective performance

  There are no assumptions about the nature of the educational activity (eg when, where, how and by whom it is provided). Thus education and training may be formal or informal, closely related to a job or occupation, or only indirectly or potentially related to a job or occupation.
- It is activities rather than courses which are deemed to be vocational. Some activities are explicitly vocational in their intent.
- There is no reference to accreditation or award levels. Thus accreditation is not a prerequisite for the vocational label.
- The term productive work is used rather than 'employment', 'jobs' or 'occupations' on the grounds that productive work occurs in both paid and unpaid forms.
- Finally, the definition is consistent with the National Training Board's definition.

Chapter 3

Courses

Introduction

The extent of vocational education and training activities of ACE can be partly determined by documenting the knowledge and skill content of ACE courses.

For the purposes of this study DEET's Tertiary Field of Study classification system is used. By adopting a method of course classification applied to all post compulsory education, we can establish more objectively what ACE is doing. Comparisons can be made with other states and other sectors - because it is a standard system that classifies courses in the same way irrespective of whether they are TAFE or ACE or higher education. At present this system has been incorporated into the national TAFE statistics collection where it is applied very unevenly to ACE courses in some states, and not at all to ACE in New South Wales, (NCVER, 1991).[1]

The aims of this analysis are to -

- Apply the Tertiary Field of Study classification to ACE courses in NSW to obtain an ACE Field of Study Profile
- Identify common course areas for ACE within the general Fields of Study
- Compare NSW ACE with NSW TAFE and Victorian ACE
- Draw conclusions about the vocational education and training activities of the ACE sector based on course field of study data

The vocational/non-vocational distinction and the TAFE/ACE relationship

Underlying any discussion of the vocational activities of the ACE sector is the question of the relationship to TAFE, the 'third sector'. It is a commonly held view that TAFE is equated with 'vocational education and training' and ACE, since it is non-award, is defined by implication as non-vocational.

It has to be recalled that for a decade from 1975 the Kangan philosophy saw TAFE as embracing 'adult education' and 'lifelong learning', creating a bigger and broader TAFE system. Briefly, from about 1980 the North American community college was taken as a model, and an ethic of 'access' and 'community responsiveness' stimulated an expansion of non-award courses (see McIntyre, 1991). In some states the new TAFE expanded by swallowing state adult education

divisions. In NSW many smaller TAFE colleges developed on the basis of their non-formal 'community courses', some competing with established ACE centres. In Victoria the burgeoning number of smaller providers strengthened their links to health and welfare agencies as they came under the TAFE funding umbrella.

From the mid-eighties TAFE's priorities increasingly narrowed to a concern with vocational awards. Rationalisation and restructuring has seen TAFE in all states withdrawing from so-called 'leisure and enrichment' courses. Since Kangan, the argument about TAFE priorities has been conducted in terms of the classification of courses by stream based on a distinction between vocational and non-vocational courses. In the revised fourfold TAFE streams, Streams 1000 and Stream 2000 refer to 'leisure and enrichment' and 'educational preparation' respectively. Thus the framework was set to allow a clearer definition of TAFE's priorities as *other than* leisure and enrichment and educational preparation and to set the basis for comparison with 'adult education' in these terms.

This framework, with its 'streams of study' classification, has drawn attention away from the knowledge-content of courses. Thus, in establishing the vocational relevance of ACE, it is critical that attention should be directed to the kind of knowledge found in ACE courses, and less with separating TAFE and ACE in terms of 'streams of study' based on types of vocational awards. This study aims to do this by employing the Tertiary Field of Study classification system.

The 'field of study' (FOScode) classification system

The Tertiary Field of Study Classification is used for both national TAFE and higher education statistics. Twelve 'Major Fields' with sub-fields are shown in Table 3.1. Within any sub-field is a range of codings - the six digit 'FOScode' - which represents a specific classification of content. Though these specific codes are biased towards a TAFE organisation of subject-matter, in practice most ACE course can be classified by FOScode to both a major and minor field of study. Thus 'lead lighting' is classifiable as 030403, 'Crafts and Ornament' which is within the minor field 0304 of 'Visual and Performing Arts', which is part of the Major Field 03, Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences'.

Using this system it is possible to describe an ACE Field of Study Profile for NSW. Table 3.1 illustrates how some typical ACE courses would be coded to each field.

Table 3.1. Tertiary Fields of Study Classification

MAJOR FIELDS AND SELECTED SUB-FIELDS	COMMON ACE COURSE AREAS
01 Land and Marine Resources	
0102 Agriculture	010205 Horticulture - gardening:
0103 Animal Husbandry	010404 Conservation, nature studies
02 Architecture and Building	020307 Woodworking, Furniture Restoration
0202 Architecture	020308 Carpentry, Joinery
0203 Building	020303 Interior design
03 Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	030206 Creative writing
3.02 Humanities and Social Sciences	030214 Political Science and Government
	030215 Psychology
3.03 Language Studies	030302 Asian Languages
	030303 European Languages
3.04 Visual and Performing Arts	030403 Crafts, Ornament
	030407 Fine Arts
04 Business, Administration, Economics	030409 Music
4.02 Business, Administration, Management	040202 Accounting
4.03 Economics	040211 Secretarial, Word-processing, Clerical:
	040216 Small Business Management:
05 Education	050399 Post-initial School/TAFE Teacher Education
06 Engineering, Surveying	
0602 Engineering and Related Technologies	060212 Automotive
0603 Surveying	060210 Welding
07 Health, Community Services	
0702 Dental Services	
0703 Health Support Activities	070503 Medicine, Medical Aid:
0704 Health Sciences and Technologies	070705 Personal Health Education
0705 Medical Science, Medicine	070705 Social/Recreational Education
0706 Rehabilitation Services	
0707 Community, Family, Personal Health Care	
08 Law and Legal Studies	
0802 Law	080401 Legal studies: Law and Consumers
0803 Justice Administration, Law Enforcement	
0804 Legal Studies	
09 Science	
0902 Computer Science, Information Systems	090314 Zoology
0903 Life, General Sciences	090505 Physics
0904 Mathematics	
10 Veterinary Science, Animal Care	101010 Animal care
11 Services, Hospitality, Transportation	
1102 Food/beverage, Hospitality, Tourism	110201 Food/beverage, Hospitality, Tourism
1103 Transportation	110204 General Cookery
1104 Apparel Sales, Services	110402 Clothing, Clothing Materials
1105 Other Services	
12 TAFE Multi-field Education	120303 Functional Literacy
1202 Multi-broad-field TAFE Vocational Education	120302 English as a Second Language
1203 TAFE Multi-field Basic Education	

In most cases the classification can be made from the course descriptions offered in promotional brochures.[2] For example, office skills courses offered in many colleges would be readily classified to the 'Secretarial, Word-processing, Clerical' area, FOScode 040211, defined as -

> Courses that develop or further the ability of individuals to plan or carry out secretarial, word-processing or general clerical functions or office duties. Principal subject-matter usually includes some of the following: typing; shorthand; word processing; commercial correspondence; scheduling of work and appointments; arranging meetings; providing information to callers; taking and transcribing dictation; filing; front-office work; audio-typewriting; record-keeping; office management procedures; personnel records; time-management.

The great variety of craft activities in most ACE providers would similarly be coded in 'Arts' group in the major category 'Visual Arts' and the category 'Crafts, Ornaments' 030403 which is defined as -

> Courses that develop or further the ability of individuals to understand the processes involved or to fashion objects from clay, fibrous materials, metals, wood, plastics, gemstones, glass and other materials, for personal adornment or other decorative, ornamental or functional purposes. Principal subject-matter usually includes some of the following: art history; ceramics; film and art; textiles; jewellery; gold/silversmithing; three-dimensional design;science of materials; lapidary.

Health and fitness courses such as massage, yoga, meditation and recreational activities, would be classified to 'Personal Health, Social or Recreational Education' (070705) defined as -

> Courses that develop or further the ability of individuals to participate in activities related to personal physical and health education, to sport, and to recreation. Principal subject-matter usually includes some of the following: health and fitness; sports participation; physical education; recreational studies.

The FOScode system is an analysis of content and does not depend on judgements about the 'vocational' intent of the student in doing the course. The advantage for ACE in this system is that it can help to systematically profile the range of knowledge in ACE courses and open up questions of how ACE provision corresponds to that of TAFE and higher education providers.

Method

The Field of Study classification was applied to courses run in first term 1992 by the fourteen Large and sixteen Medium Providers.[3] There was also a separate analysis of all courses of nineteen selected Small Providers responding to the interview survey (referred to in Chapter 4).

Course-titles were sampled from the brochure of providers using systematic sampling, giving profiles that can be confidently taken as representative of the overall pattern of courses. Every fifth course was selected and its course description checked to arrive at an appropriate coding in terms of the major and minor fields of study, giving a twenty per cent sample of the courses offered.[3] Details were entered on a database where the codings were checked for consistency. All the courses of the selected small providers (19, or 45% of 42) were classified, and added together, to give the Small Provider Profile.

The ACE Field of Study Profile

Table 3.2 summarises the analysis, showing a breakdown of courses by Field of Study and provider group, and Figure 3.1 depicts the ACE Field of Study Profile. This term will be used to describe ACE courses across all twelve fields of study. [4]

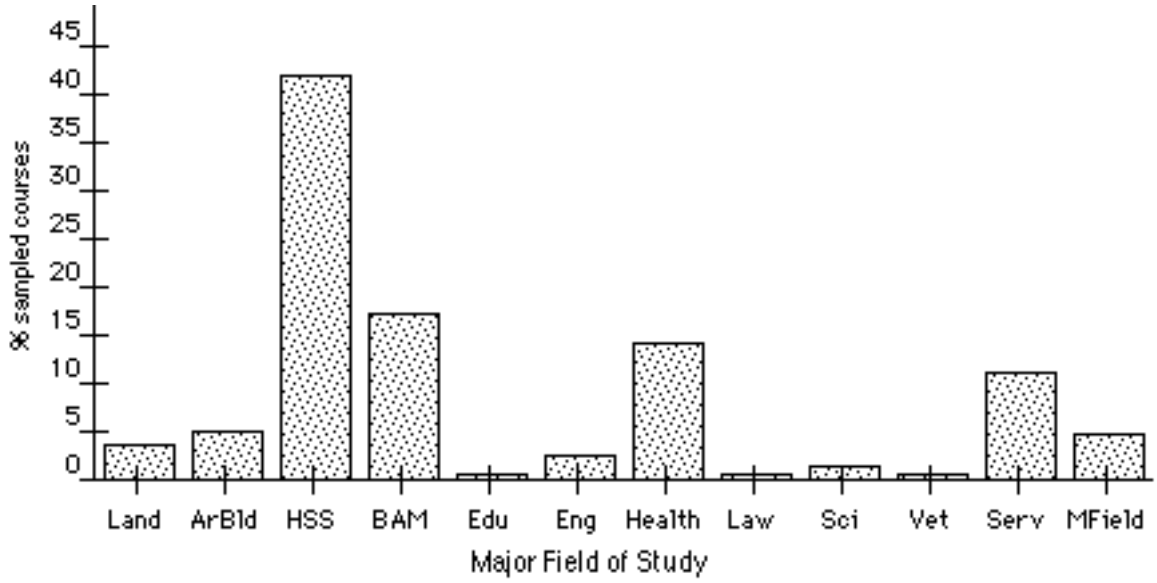
The Profile shows that the four main strengths of ACE are in the Arts and Humanities, Business, Health and Community Services, and Other Services fields. (Note that course contact hours may differ amount courses, and that vocational courses tend to be longer. Also, some specially negotiated vocational courses may not appear on college or centre brochures.)

Table 3.2 also shows some differences between providers by size. These are not dramatically different. The Small Provider profile differs from those of the Medium and Large providers, which align closely. All providers have about 40% of courses in the Arts and Humanities area, but the **proportion** of Crafts courses is much higher in the small centres (about 20%, dropping to about 8% in the Large providers). In the larger providers, 'Humanities' courses are spread across several sub-fields such as Communications and Languages. Smaller providers also have a much smaller proportion of Business and a larger proportion in the Health field, and more in the Services field of study, mainly cooking and clothing courses.

Table 3.2. Field of Study Profiles by Provider Size

	Large		Medium		Small (n=18)	
Course area (field of study)	n	%	n	%	n	%
Field 01: Land and Marine Gardening, conservation courses	12	2.5	18	4.9	21	4.0
Field 02: Architecture and building Woodwork, furniture, landscaping and interior design	25	5.2	18	4.9	12	2.3
Field 03: Humanities, Arts		**42.3**		**41.1**		**39.2**
Communications including writing courses	23	4.8	8	2.1	10	2.0
Crafts and ornament 030407	42	8.7	52	13.8	102	20.2
Other visual and performing arts 0304, including music, drama, and fine arts	65	13.5	45	11.9	70	13.9
Languages - European, Asian 0302	41	8.5	39	10.3	12	2.4
Other humanities 0302	28	5.8	8	2.1	10	2.0
Field 04: Business, administration and management		**17.1**		**18.9**		**11.3**
Computing and data processing 040205	37	7.7	35	9.3	37	7.3
Business management, office skills	35	7.3	35	9.3	22	4.4
Field 05 Education	1	0.2	1	0.3	2	0.4
Field 06 Engineering	9	1.9	10	2.7	8	1.5
Field 07: Health, Community Services	63	13.1	49	13.0	109	21.6
Field 08: Law and Legal Studies	1	0.2	3	0.8	0	0.4
Field 09: Science	8	1.7	0	0	0	0
Field 10: Veterinary Science	2	0.4	1	0.3	3	0.6
Field 11: Services						
Cooking and hospitality 1102	29	6.0	16	4.2	43	8.5
Clothing: dressmaking, hatmaking 1104	20	4.1	16	4.2	48	9.5
Field 12: TAFE Multifield Education						
Basic education, literacy, ESL	23	4.8	14	3.7	12	2.4
Total courses sampled	480	100.0	370	100.0	521	100.0

Figure 3.1. The ACE Field of Study Profile



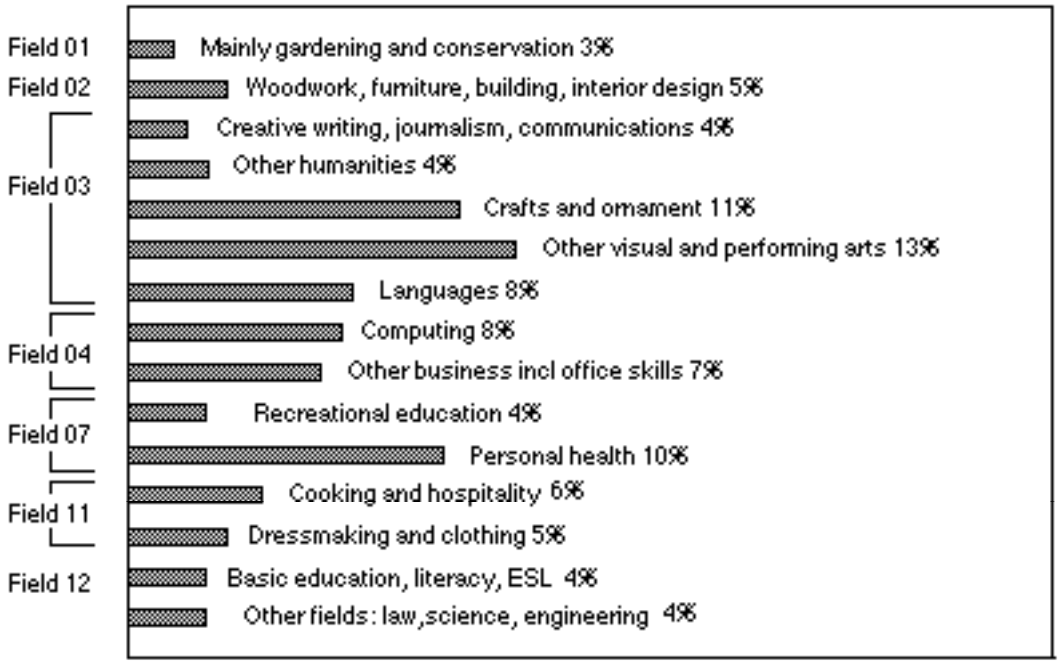
Common course areas

This general picture can be broken down into the common course areas within Major Fields. Many of these common courses are represented in a single sub-field or course code (FOScode). This breakdown of common course areas is shown in Figure 3.2.

Gardening and conservation courses are the most common ACE courses classified to Field 01, Land and Marine Resources. In Field 02, Architecture and Building, courses cluster mainly in the woodworking and furniture area (0203).

The dominant Arts and Humanities field (03), breaks down into Crafts (030403, with 11% of total courses sampled), other Visual and Performing Arts (030407, with 13%) and Languages (3.03, 8%). Half of all Business, Administration and Management (Field 04) courses were classified to Computing (040205, 8% of all courses). In the Other Services field, cooking and clothing courses predominate. The main TAFE Multifield (12) courses in ACE are in the area of adult basic education and ESL (4% of courses).

Figure 3.2. Common course areas in ACE



The data depicted in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 can be used to clarify the vocational role of ACE in NSW.

Firstly, the Field of Study Profile (Figure 3.1) allows some comparisons to be made between ACE NSW TAFE, and Victorian ACE. Thus ACE can be viewed in terms of a larger picture of vocational education and training, and in terms of the strengths of ACE and TAFE in different fields of study.

Secondly, common course areas (Figure 3.2) can be examined in terms of the specific courses that are classified under a sub-field such as 'Business' or 'Language'. These course titles point to the specific vocational needs being met by ACE.

Course titles in selected areas

The ACE Course Profile can be described in greater detail by referring to specific courses classified in areas such as 'Computing' or 'Communications'. This helps to bring into sharper focus the kinds of vocational and other learning needs which ACE is meeting.[5] This analysis can be matched with providers' reports about the courses in demand (Chapter 4). Tables 3.3 to 3.6 show course titles of courses classified to several course areas. (These refer to large and medium providers only). These areas are:

- Computing in the Business field
- The 'Communications' area in the Arts and Humanities field
- Languages in the Arts and Humanities field
- Personal Health and Social-Recreational Education

Table 3.3 shows that the sampled course titles classified to the computing area in the Business Administration major field of study deal with specific applications, especially wordprocessing[6] and spreadsheets, and have an emphasis on IBM/MS-DOS computing with some computer awareness or introductory courses. There are a quite a number of courses that indicate higher levels of competence are involved:

Table 3.3. Courses classified to Computing 040205

Course Title	No.	Course Title	No.
Introductory and Awareness	12	*Wordprocessing*	20
Computer Awareness (4)		Computer Word Processing	
Computer for Beginners		Introduction to Word Perfect	
Compatibles: Beginners		Word Processing (7)	
Computers for Beginners		Word Perfect - Tables/Macros	
Introduction to Computers		Word Processing Microsoft	
Introduction to Computers IBM		Wordprocessing/MS Works	
Personal Computers		Word Processing: Word Perfect	
Buying A Computer		Wordperfect 5.1 4)	
Computing (2)		WordPerfect 5.1 Advanced	
		WordPerfect 5.1 Intermediate	
		WordPerfect for Windows	
IBM/MS-DOS	16	*Spreadsheets*	11
Computer: IBM		Advanced Lotus 123	
Computers: Basic MS.DOS		Beginning Lotus 123	
Computing: IBM Compatibles		Introduction to Lotus 123	
Computing MS Do		Lotus Advanced	
DOS - Disk Operating System		Spreadsheets	
DOS Introduction		Spreadsheets -Intro to MS Excel	2
DOS & PC Workshop		Spreadsheets - Lotus 123 (3)	
Getting to know a PC		Spreadsheets (Introduction)	
IBM Computers		Computer Accounting	
IBM-compatible comps (MS DOS)		Keyboarding	
Microsoft Works 2 for DOS		Typing and Keyboard Skills	
More About DOS		Typing (Computer Keyboard)	
MS-DOS (2)			
MS/DOS for the Serious Use			
Learning MS. DOS			

Apple	5	*Data-base*	3
Computers Using Apple IIE		Database - dBase 1V	
Computing on a Mac		Database IBM	
Computing the Macintosh Way		dBase III Plus	2
Introduction to the Macintosh		Desktop Publishing	
Macintosh		Desktop Publishing - Pagemaker	
		Ventura - Desktop Publishing	

Notes. Wordprocessing is classified to Computing not to Secretarial, Wordprocessing and Clerical.
Accounting software applications are classified to other Business, O402

A second area is that of Communications. The majority of those sampled were writing courses, with another group dealing with generic 'communications' or public speaking and presentation:

Table 3.4. Courses classified to Communications 030206

Course Title	No	Course Title	No
Journalism and Freelance Writing (Intro)	9	Public Speaking (4)	6
Romance Writing		Power of Speech	
Story Telling & Story Creating		Speech Workshop	
Hastings 'Tell-Tales'			2
Scriptwriting		Report Writing	
Storytelling		Resume Writing	
Writing for Pleasure and Profit			
Writing & Selling for Magazines			
Writing Successful Non-Fiction			
Creative Writing (4)	6	Assertiveness, Communication: Basic	3
Exploring Creative Writing		Creative Communication	
Models of Creative Writing		Effective Communication	

A third area of significant provision is that of Language learning. Classification here is straightforward. The interesting question is the balance between the European and Asian languages. Some 18 or one quarter of sampled language courses were in this area, mostly Japanese. European languages dominate, as Table 3.5 shows. A very significant feature of Table 3.5 is the extent to which ACE is now providing the teaching of Auslan (deaf sign language) - as many classes as German or Italian, and more than French:

Table 3.5. Courses classified to Languages 0302

Auslan - Stage 2	12	Italian (8)	10
Auslan 1 (4)		Italian: Intermediate	
Auslan 2 (Sign Language)		Italian - Stage 2	
Auslan (3)		Italian - Stage 3	
Australasian Deaf Signed Language		Italian, Lets Speak	
Sign Language In The Workplace			
French (5)	8	Japanese (7)	15
French for Travellers		Japanese Conversation Group	
French Advanced		Japanese for Busy People Stage 2	
French Beginners French	4	Japanese for Tourists	
Indonesian (4)		Japanese II	
		Japanese Language & Culture II	
		Japanese 1 (2)	
		Japanese: Intermediate	
German Conversation (3)	12		
German for Travellers		Other	6
German (5)		Arabic	
German, Introduction to		Maltese	
German, Level 1	8	Thai, Level 1	
German (Stage 2)		Russian	
Spanish (6)		Russian 1st Year Term 3	
Spanish - Stage 3		Mandarin Chinese	
Spanish, Conversational		Cantonese	

Health and Community Services covers many sub-fields. Apart from St Johns First Aid (11 courses), ACE is concentrated in only one of these, 'Community, Family, Personal Health Care' (0707). The courses sampled fall mainly in 'Personal Health, and Social-Recreational Education' (FOScode 070705). They are about equally divided between personal health care, health and fitness education and therapies on the one hand; and outdoor education, sport and recreation on the other. It is obvious from Table 3.6 that ACE meets a wide range of health education as well as recreational needs.

Table 3.6. Community, Family and Personal Health Care 0707

Care 070702	2	*Health and Fitness*	
Caring for Aged		Aerobics (2)	12
Childcare Assistant Training		Fun & Fitness	
Outdoor, Sport and Recreation		Beauty and self-improvement	
Abseiling (2)	24	Body Conditioning(2)	
Bridge (2)		Beauty and self-improvement	
Beginning Bridge		Stretch To Fitness	
Ace Mah-Jong Club		Drugs, Alcohol and Dependency	6
Backpacking for Beginners		Health & Nutrition	
Bushwalking		Health For Women	
Canoeing & Camping Adventure		Stop Smoking	14
Canoeing & Walking		Tai Chi (3)	
Four Wheel Drive Tours		Tai Chi Beginners	
Fishing (3)		Tai Chi: Beginn /Intermediate	4
Gliding, Introduction to		Tai Chi: Level 1	
Going for Your Boat Licence		Yoga (10)	
Learn to Sail		Yoga & Relaxation	
Scuba Diving		Yoga Postures & Relaxation	
The Magic of Fly Fishing		Yoga, Introductory	
Croquet		Yoga, Hatha	
Golf For Women		Chi Kung	
Golf for Beginners		Quigong	
Golf		Self Defence (2)	
Tennis			
Alexander Tech (3)	9	Meditation (3)	9
Aromatherapy		Meditation, Relaxation and	
Aromatherapy & Massage		Meditation, Tibetan Buddhist	
Homeopathy for Home Use (2)		Relaxation Techniques	
Homeopathy for Home Use	11	Stress Management & Relaxation(3)	9
Reflexology		Conflict Resolution Skills	
Massage/Stress Management		Counselling Skills Part 3	
Massage: Advanced		Personal Development	
Swedish Massage(5)		Personal Time Management	
Shiatsu Massage (2)		Relationship Compatibility	
Healing Massage		Facing Death: Facing Life	
Healing Through Touch		Astrology & Self-Awareness	
		Living Skills	
		Handwriting analysis	

It is important to see that while crafts, arts, music or dancing are recreational for many people, and that this indeed may be the reason they attend courses in these subjects, consistency in applying 'field of study' requires that they are classified under 'arts and humanities' and not 'recreational education'.[7]

These few examples of specific course areas important in ACE further illustrate the range of ACE's contribution to vocational education and training opportunities.

Comparison with NSW TAFE and Victorian ACE

It is helpful to compare NSW ACE with its Victorian counterpart and with NSW TAFE, using the NSW Profile.

Table 3.7 shows a comparison with all 1991 ACFEB courses in Victoria and with TAFE NSW enrolments in all Streams of Study. In 1991 ACFEB classified some 22,000 courses to Streams and Fields of Study, about three-quarters (74%) to Stream 1000. A quarter are therefore classified to other streams: 2100, 2200 and 3100, 'Initial vocational qualification'.[8] Again, it needs to be recalled that ACE does not equal 'leisure and enrichment' (Stream 1000). Both NSW and Victorian ACE includes courses in the 'Educational preparation' and 'Basic employment skills' areas (Streams 2100 and 2200) for example, job-seeking, job-search, adult literacy and ESOL. Victoria also has some initial vocational training classified to Stream 3100. Since enrolment and course profiles appear to be highly correlated, a general comparison of TAFE enrolments and ACE courses of this kind can be made with some confidence.[9]

Table 3.7. NSW ACE compared to Victoria ACE and NSW TAFE

Major Field of Study:												
01 Land	02 ArBld	03 HSS	04 BAM	05 Ed	6 Eng	07 Heal	08 Law	09 Sci	10 Vet	11 Serv	12 MFie	
NSW ACE Profile (% Courses in each field of study)												
3.4	4.8	41.6	17.1	0.2	2.1	13.9	0.4	1.0	0.4	10.8	4.3	100.0
Victoria ACFEB courses (Courses, '000 and % in each field of study)*												
0.5	0.6	9.8	1.9	0.4	0.4	3.9	0.0	0.9	0.0	1.4	2.9	22.8
2.2	2.8	43.0	8.3	1.5	1.9	16.9	0.1	3.9	0.1	5.9	12.9	100.0
TAFE Net Streams plus Stream 1000 (Enrolments '000 and % age)*												
15.6	28.8	48.8	97.8	2.3	80.2	13.9	0.3	24.5	0.6	50.2	69.6	427.1
4.3	7.9	13.5	27.0	0.6	22.1	3.8	0.1	6.8	0.2	13.8	19.2	100.0

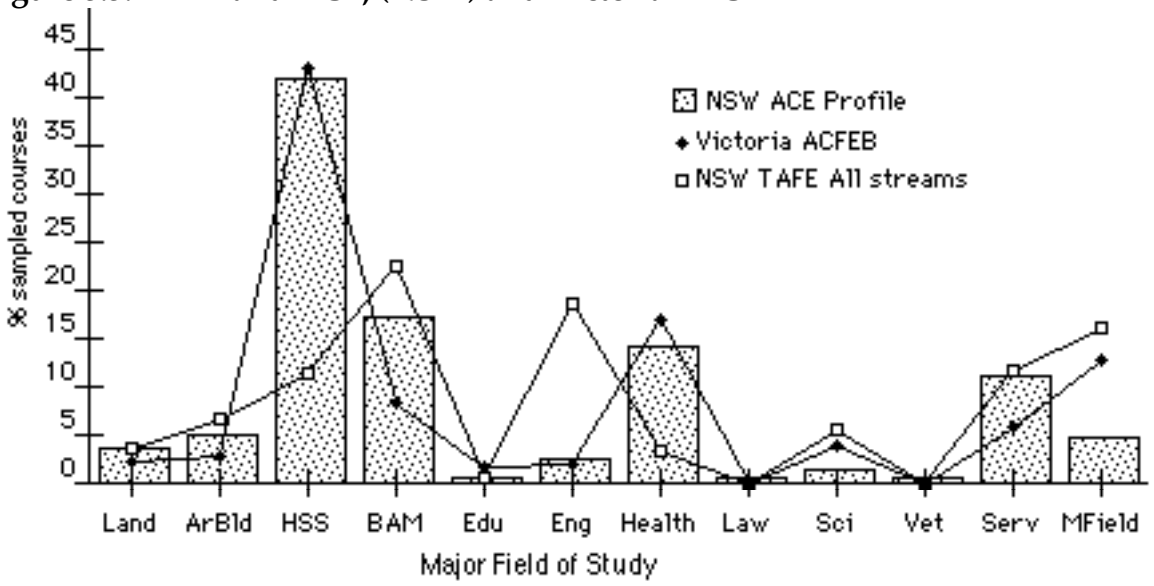
*Source: ACFEB Victoria, 1991 and Selected TAFE Statistics 1991.

This comparison is illustrated in Figure 3.4 which shows that NSW and Victorian ACE profiles are almost identical, departing slightly from each other in the (04) Business field and in the (11) Services and (12) Multifield fields of study.

What then does this analysis suggest about the relationship between ACE and TAFE? This is an important question for the evaluation of ACE's vocational role. Are the TAFE and ACE profiles **complementary**, with ACE being dominant in the courses areas TAFE is not, and vice versa? Or do the profiles reflect a **competitive** relationship, where the same course areas being served suggesting a possible overlap and duplication of provision?[10]

It is clear that where both NSW and Victorian ACE is strongest, in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, the field traditionally associated with adult education, TAFE is not strong with only some 12% of 'vocational' streams having enrolments in this area. Health, the second area of strength for ACE, is similar. In the Business and Management major field that both ACE and TAFE are more comparable. This is the field of study where ACE reports the greatest vocational demand by its participants (see Chapter 4). Similarly, the Hospitality, Transport and Other Services area is being met by ACE. The TAFE Multi-Field area, with its large adult literacy component, is another area served by both providers.[11]

Figure 3.3. TAFE and ACE, (NSW) and Victorian ACE



It is difficult to draw firm conclusions without much more detailed studies of the ACE and TAFE interaction.[12] Such studies should look at specific course areas and examine relationships between providers in each Field of Study.

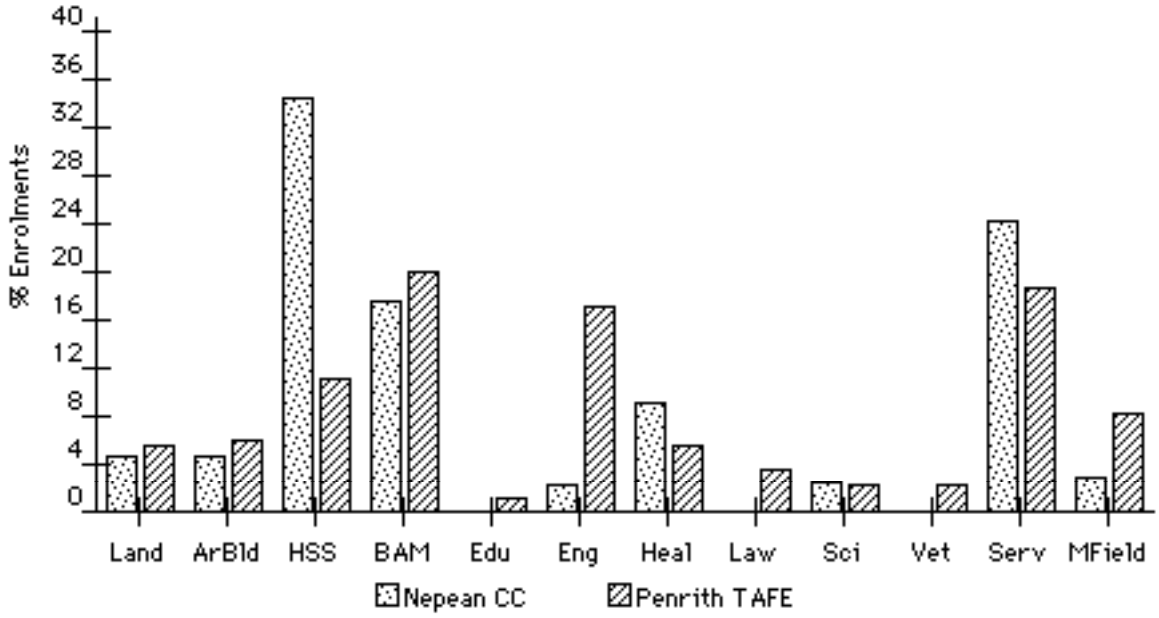
Some local ACE/TAFE comparisons

A few comparisons of TAFE colleges and ACE providers from selected localities will illustrate the need for more detailed regional case studies of vocational education and training opportunities. These comparisons, based on 1992 data, are

tentative, and make no reference to the specific courses offered or the vocational needs arising from the demography of the area.[13]

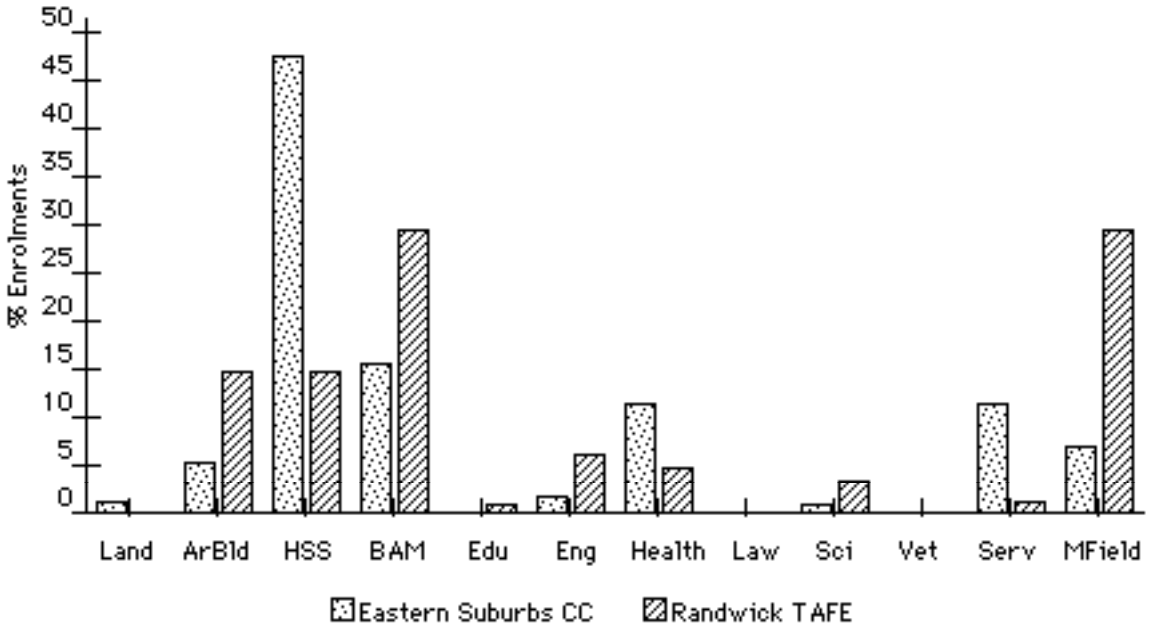
Nepean Community College is a medium-sized provider (approximately 6000 1992 enrolments) based in Penrith and extending as far as Katoomba. It has the typical strengths of an ACE provider in the Humanities and Arts and Health areas, and is comparable to the local TAFE college in its emphasis on Business enrolments. Both providers have significant peaks in the Services field (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4. Nepean - Penrith Comparison



Comparison with Penrith TAFE of the Western Sydney Institute is difficult because TAFE policy is to have western Sydney colleges specialising in different areas, so Business courses are offered at Penrith, Horticulture (Field 01) at Werrington and Welfare (Field 11) at Katoomba.

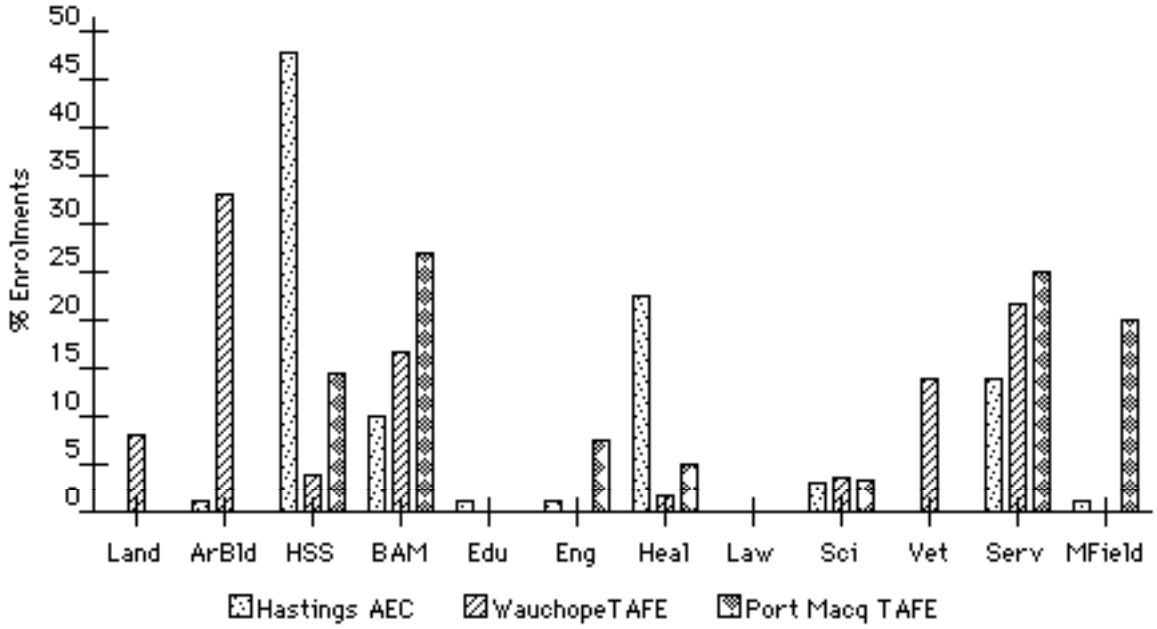
Figure 3.5. Eastern Suburbs - Randwick Comparison



Eastern Suburbs Community College is one of the largest Sydney providers offering courses in over ten centres in the area. Enrolments in 1992 exceeded 14,000. Randwick TAFE College is one of several serving the same area and provides only certain kinds of courses. Nearly half the ACE courses are concentrated in the Arts and Humanities area (with high percentages in languages and visual and performing arts), in Business and computing and cooking and dressmaking. TAFE has its highest enrolments in the Business and Multifield areas, with also a significant Arts and Humanities provision in the design area.

Finally, the **Hastings Valley** (Figure 3.6) has both ACE and TAFE providers in each of the towns of Wauchope and Port Macquarie. Hastings Adult Education Centre is the largest of the 42 CAECs with some 1180 enrolments in 1992. Its strengths in the Arts and Humanities field lie in the arts and crafts, and its profile overlaps the TAFE profile mainly in the Services area. (The small Wauchope CAEC is not shown in Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6. Port Macquarie - Wauchope - Hastings Comparison



Conclusions

A profile of ACE by 'field of study' allows us to describe ACE provision more precisely and to see more clearly its contribution to the total vocational education and training system. Field of Study analysis places the relationship of ACE and TAFE in terms of the knowledge different providers make available, without presuming to simplistically classify ACE short courses as 'non-vocational' or 'leisure'. In this connection it is important to review the way in which the national collection of TAFE statistics[14] (Selected TAFE Statistics, NCVER, 1991) provides data for both Stream of Study and Field of Study of courses for the States and Australia, since these are the major sources of data on the non-university provision of vocational education and training , including ACE.

In the national collection of TAFE statistics the contribution of ACE is trivialised by both the framework and its application to the ACE area. Several problems exist. First, there is the tendency, already noted, to equate ACE with Stream 1000 courses deemed to be for 'leisure and enrichment' purposes. Short non-credit courses are treated as essentially 'non-vocational' or 'hobby' courses. This emphasis can also lead to the ACE contribution to Stream 2000 ('educational preparation' purposes such as adult literacy) being overlooked. Finally, it is virtually impossible to separate ACE from TAFE in either area since the statistics aggregate TAFE and ACE providers.[15] This again underlines the way Streams can distort the contribution of ACE providers to the national vocational education and training effort being reflected in these statistics.

'Field of Study' data are included in the national statistics, but there are major problems in the way Field of Study is applied to the ACE area, even taking into account the distortions above. Enrolment data is only available by Stream 1000 ('leisure and enrichment') and Stream 2000 ('Educational preparation').[16] It is not possible to give a trustworthy national breakdown of 'Field of Study' for Stream 1000.

Only Victoria and South Australia appear to classify courses properly across the Fields. NSW figures are not classified at all (included only in total enrolments) since ACE returned only enrolments and course hours in 1991. Other states have clearly inappropriately used the Field of Study classification to classify their Stream 1000 courses, lumping all short courses into one Field of Study. Thus WA codes 96% of such courses as 'Health and Community Services'.[17] Tasmania (88%) and NT (69%) code courses to 'TAFE Multifield Education' (Field 12), and presumably not because these states are carrying massive adult literacy programs. The explanation is possibly that short courses have been dumped in one or two fields because of the administrative difficulty of coding hundreds of short courses.

If so, this only underlines how ACE is ill-served by the national TAFE statistical framework. In short, the existing TAFE statistics methodology places ACE at a great disadvantage in establishing its contribution to the national vocational education and training effort. From the ACE standpoint it holds up a distorting mirror to whole post compulsory system outside higher education. Ideally, ACE providers themselves should classify their courses by field of study as part of the yearly statistical return. This process does not have to be administratively complex but requires the careful design of the collection forms.[18] By shifting the analysis to the 'knowledge 'content' of ACE courses, the emphasis is placed not on the *demarcation* of ACE and TAFE as separate kinds of education but on their *relationship* as part of an overall system of post-compulsory education.

Notes

[1] Thanks are due to John Foyster of the Statistic Division of the National Centre and ACFEB Victoria for making data available.

[2] The difficulties in classification may in fact be fewer in short courses, which tend to be very specific. However, this is not always possible in the case where several fields of study are equally involved, for example, in 'Law for Small Business' or 'Book-keeping for Farm Management'.

[3] See Chapter Four for definition of the Provider Groups.

[4] The differences between providers are smoothed out in this Profile which was developed by weighting the three provider profiles according to enrolment share (approximately 60:30:10)

[5] The advantage of the database analysis is that the way courses have been coded is open to inspection. This section looks at how the ACE course titles in brochures were classified to each 'FOScode'.

[6] Word-processing is normally classified under the FOScode for Clerical and Office Skills as distinct from business computing, but this now seems archaic given the demise of the word-processor and thre dominance of the PC and integrated software.

[7] See above, the discussion on the current unreliability of the national TAFE statistics classification of Stream 1000 courses by the States, where this category has been used for all ACE courses.

[8] The remainder were classified to Stream 2100, 'Basic employment skills', some 14%, to Stream 2200, 'Educational preparation', (3%) and to Stream 3100, 'Initial vocational preparation', (9%). The proportions of courses in different fields differed, with most Stream 2000 courses in the 12 Multifield Education field, and more than half of the Stream 3100 concentrated in the 04 Business, Administration and Management field and the rest spread thinly across the others - a pattern consistent with the findings of this research. Source: ACFEB Information Systems.

[9] TAFE and ACE in Victoria have been disaggregated in this table. There are several considerations to be borne in mind. (1) The reference years are different (1992 for ACE NSW, 1991 for TAFE and ACFEB) though this is insignificant in a comparison of proportions of enrolments and courses. (2) ACE courses are being compared with enrolments in TAFE. It has to be recalled that ACE courses are very numerous and in any case the association of courses and enrolments in NSW providers are very highly correlated (around 0.8). (3) Victorian figures are based on ACFEB return to the NCVER which is later aggregated with TAFE providers in the Victorian figures in Selected TAFE NSW statistics. (4) The TAFE figures are enrolments (head count) not students (persons enrolled). These are distinguished in the national collection methodology. (5) NSW TAFE has relatively few Stream 1000 enrolments - 5260 in 1991, or less than one percent of gross 1991 enrolments in all streams. See Selected TAFE Statistics, 1991.

[10] It is tempting to simply suggest if the relationship is complementary then this strengthens the view that ACE is clearly 'filling the gaps' in vocational training, where a competitive relationship implies a weaker case of meeting perhaps different needs in the same fields of study. Obviously, this depends both on the specific subfields involved and the variations in localities. This is a general argument that needs to be explored on a region by region basis.

[11] Stream 2000 and Field of Study 12 TAFE Multifield Education are clearly highly associated, suggesting that the demarcation between the domains may be unclear. This is to say that the basis for calling a course 'Educational preparation' or 'Basic Skills' is much the same as the basis for classifying it multi-field. It may be that some labour market programs are being bulk-classified to FOS 12 because they are regarded as preparatory rather than specialised. In other words, vocational intent is used as an extraneous criterion of field of study classification.

[12] A further analysis breaking down TAFE enrolments in Streams 3100 - 5000 and the 1000-2000 streams shows TAFE's strengths are the 'Business' field, its traditional focus on 'Engineering' and the 'Services' area. Business and Services are also a strength of ACE provision. The table suggests therefore, that this 'overlapping' of strengths deserves closer inspection. Streams 1000 and 2000 are much less significant in terms of percentage share of total TAFE enrolments.

[13] The ACE Provider profile is based on courses for the largest term (Term 1), and TAFE on enrolments for the whole year. ACE has many more courses per term, so similar numbers of enrolments are being compared. ACE courses are counted rather than enrolments, since these correlate highly. It is possible that seasonal variations might vary the profile slightly over the whole ACE year. TAFE statistics distinguish between enrolments and net students, recognising that the same student might be enrolled several times. This fact is less important in examining the relative course profiles of providers than it is for arguing participation rates, for example. Another problem for comparison is that TAFE colleges within a regional 'institute' are more and more specialised in particular course areas, so local comparisons should ideally be placed in a regional analysis, for example as stated, in Western Sydney.

[14] This term means TAFE in the broad sense, as everything post-school outside higher education, including 'adult and vocational education' of all kinds. This use of TAFE pre-dates the expansion of ACE as a 'sector' and the general withdrawal of TAFE from 'adult education' courses.

[15] Part of the problem with the notion of ACE sector is that in some country areas, in NSW the smaller TAFE colleges are to all intents and purposes an ACE provider with few if any courses other than short non-credit kind. The Scott review in NSW recognised this and proposed that such colleges might be made over to the new 'ACE' (Scott, 1990, 197-200).

[16] For a full discussion of these problems in establishing the 'adult and community education' role of TAFE in Australia see McIntyre (1991)

[17] This is presumably based on the argument that 'leisure and enrichment' courses by definition must be counted as 'recreational education'. It seems possible that the large percentage of ACE courses in the arts and crafts reinforces this circular thinking. If music and dancing are enjoyed as recreation, then related courses must be 'recreational education'. The effect is to confound Stream and Field of Study.

[18] Most providers now collect course statistics on database or spreadsheet. Courses appear alphabetically in returns. One possibility is to ask providers to self-classify courses by field of study at the point of drawing up the lists of courses - that is, to enter, first 'Courses in land management, horticulture, gardening, conservation, permaculture, forestry, native gardening ...' (field of study 01) and so on. It would only be necessary to list the common course areas in a standard format.

Chapter 4

Providers

Overview

How providers structure their activities is a key factor in ACE's vocational education and training role. Providers know best the range of their activities and as the agents of provision, their viewpoints are shaping the form and function of ACE and its growing vocational role. The second part of the research strategy is to draw on the detailed knowledge of those who work in the field, and document the issues as they see them.

Principals and Co-ordinators of 57 Colleges and Centres (80% of the 72 Board-funded Evening and Community Colleges and Community Centres) were surveyed to document their activities and help crystallise the issues emerging for ACE in the provision of vocational education.

The survey method

For the purposes of the survey , NSW ACE colleges and community adult education centres (CAECs) were grouped according to size based on 1991 enrolments (Table 4.1). The large providers with over 7000 annual enrolments include the WEAs and the larger Sydney colleges. These providers had over sixty percent of 1991 enrolments. The sixteen medium providers from 2000 - 7000 enrolments include several larger country colleges and CAECs, with over a quarter of 1991 enrolments. Over forty small providers, mostly rural, had less than 2000 enrolments per annum, together accounting for about 10 percent of all NSW enrolments.[1]

Table 4.1 shows that size closely relates to type and location of provider, so there was little justification for using these as additional sampling criteria. Thus the largest providers are 'metropolitan' including the WEAs and Sydney colleges. The medium-sized providers include most of the largest non-metropolitan centres. The small providers include all but two of the country CAECs. [2]

Table 4.1. NSW ACE Providers Grouped by Size

Size of provider:			
Classification by size: Enrolments 1991:	Large Over 7000	Medium 2000 - 7000	Small Under 2000
Share of 1991 enrolments:	61.4	28.3	10.3
Type of provider:			
WEA	3	1	-
Evening and community colleges	11	12	1
CAECs	-	3	41
Location:			
Sydney and other metropolitan	14	7	0
Non-metropolitan	0	9	42
Total	14	16	42 (72)
Responding to interview and survey:	13	15	29 (57)

The large providers were interviewed by telephone about their vocational education and training activities using a standard questionnaire which was also sent to all other providers (see Appendix). The response to both interview and survey was very positive, with almost all but 14 of the smallest providers participating.[3]

The survey applied a broad definition of vocational education and training activities in the ACE sector. This was to allow the full exploration of provider activities and give full play to their concerns.[4] The topics were:

- how vocational was the provider's program and to what degree students have vocational reasons for enrolling
- accreditation: whether any courses were recognised by another organisation as being a qualification.
- articulation: whether courses were given credit elsewhere, and what links providers had with TAFE or other organisations
- the extent of demand by employers or government agencies for courses and the effect of the Training Guarantee Act
- extent of CES and DEET funding for courses with assessed employment outcomes, such as Jobtrain
- whether any courses were structured in terms of 'leading to work in the industry' and what occupational skills were in strong demand
- vocational outcomes such as a student creating a job for themselves or starting a small business or earning additional income.

- the contribution of courses to learning skills and knowledge useful to work in the home and in community organisations

Thus the primary aim of the survey was to establish the specific ways in which ACE courses are vocationally relevant while identifying the issues emerging in ACE's role in vocational education and training .

Vocational courses in demand

Most providers said that they presented some courses as 'vocational', grouping or promoting courses in this way (Q1). Providers were also asked to nominate what proportion of the program fell into this category and to describe some of the vocational reasons students enrol. [5]

Table 4.2 shows that ACE is meeting a strong demand for business, administration and management courses. Computing, software packages, keyboarding, clerical, specialised reception skills, typing, book-keeping and shorthand are most often cited as courses that are 'vocational' in presentation.[6] The responses to the question on skills in demand (Q10) and industry-oriented courses (Q9) confirm the picture.[7]

This demand is being experienced by all providers including the smallest country centres. In the metropolitan area and largest country centres a wide range of needs in the 'business area' is being met, while almost all providers are meeting a demand for computer literacy. These business and computing needs include:

- Computing for financial management. Courses are dominated by IBM and MS-DOS and emphasise software applications including accounting, spreadsheets and word-processing packages.
- Accounting skills, with an emphasis on book-keeping and small business management.
- Languages. There is a demand for European and Asian languages for a variety of reasons - assisting business in Italian-speaking communities or Japanese for business, travel and the hospitality industry.
- Communications skills. Employers and individuals demand courses in this area, including report and resume writing, public speaking and presentation skills, and interpersonal relationships including assertiveness.
- Reception and secretarial, including medical and legal work. There is a broad demand for short courses in office skills in the traditional areas of typing and shorthand, as well as specialised medical and legal reception and clerical work.
- Management and supervision skills, including planning, quality assurance, financial management and group leadership skills.
- Sales training and marketing, including selling techniques, advertising and promotion

Computing classes in the Sydney WEA may extend to as many as 125 twenty-hour courses per term, and make up a quarter of the program. Hunter WEA doubled computing enrolments in 1992 and has a 95% take-up rate in such classes.

Table 4.2. Courses cited as vocational by providers

Course area	Frequency cited: Larger	Small	Total	%
Computing, software	19	19	38	22.1
Clerical, shorthand, typing, reception	23	11	34	19.8
Small Business Management, supervision, sales, accounting, bookkeeping	28	2	30	17.4
Communications, writing , public speaking	6	4	10	5.8
Languages	2	1	3	1.7
Crafts, arts	1	6	7	4.1
Health and community services	4	3	7	4.1
Hospitality, catering, clothing	0	5	5	2.9
Other courses (welding, LMP)	12	12	24	14.0
Providers not specifying , unstated	4	10	14	8.1
Total			172	100.0

Estimates of 'how much the program is vocational' (Q1) range from 40% to 50% in some large colleges to 5% among small providers. For some, this kind of vocational demand threatens their general adult education ethos. The Sydney WEA has faced this apparent conflict in its role. 'Training wasn't part of the brief', and antipathy was felt between training and broad liberal studies, though the organisation has accepted it needs both. Others state 'there is no conflict between training courses and adult education, no dichotomy. The good business courses will help credibility with adult education', (Provider 14)[8]. An Evening College Principal (Provider 3) commented that he or she would be worried if 'vocational courses' should come to dominate as business and computing did in the WEA, which was 'once the biggest provider of liberal adult education'.

Smaller providers are more reluctant to single out the vocational among the outcomes of adult learning. A Hunter brochure invites one to 'Learn skills for job-

finding, job improvement, cost-saving and leisure time in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere at affordable prices'. Another responded:

> We do not present as 'vocational' in terms of specifically categorising [courses]. Some would argue that everything we do is potentially vocational or that work-related skills aren't only learned in work or training situations (Provider 47).

Thus computing and business courses are singled out because they are the most obvious case of ACE meeting workplace training needs, but many other course areas are cited as related to training for paid work, as a brief list indicates: First Aid for health and safety officers; child development for childcare assistants; medical terminology for receptionists; computer networking for network managers; law in small business; video-titling and multi-media; workplace literacy; catering services training for hospital employees; worker training for developmentally disabled people; how to market craft locally; agricultural blasting and welding; lamb preparation and skin curing. These examples are not confined to the largest providers.

Vocational motives

Many ACE learners enrol for specific vocational reasons, (Q2). Table 4.3 shows the most common vocational motive is to maintain or enhance skills for an existing job (51 or 69% of instances cited). Principals report many students seek to upgrade skills because they are worried by job security, as much as improving their career prospects. Sometimes employers 'send' them to be trained. It is clear that in quite specific ways learners are using short non-credit courses to adjust and adapt to workplace change. 'Fear of retrenchment' and 'showing you are flexible and adaptive' figured more in responses than job change or gaining promotion. [9]

These motives are probably those most apparent to ACE staff, and they probably represent just the tip of the 'vocational iceberg' in ACE.[10] Some providers had precise data on reasons for enrolling, one in Western Sydney citing a figure of 24% of 1992 students nominating a 'work' rather than 'health', 'leisure', 'HSC' or 'home related' reason. Table 4.2 also shows the difference between providers. In small rural communities, the economic base is very different and income maintenance, coping with unemployment, and self-sufficiency, are important work-related motives for doing a course.

Table 4.3. Vocational reasons for enrolling

Vocational reasons for enrolling	All	%
Upgrade or improve skills , improve promotion prospects, meet licence requirements of job	33	39.3
Enhance employability, avoid redundancy, demonstrate flexibility, meet employer's skill requirements	12	14.3
Enhance ability to change jobs, gain skills for enter a new line of work, retrain for different position	6	7.1
Enter or return to the workforce, develop necessary skills or confidence, explore areas of work	14	16.7
Maintain income, cut costs through self-sufficiency, earn income by working from home	9	10.7
No vocational reasons or unclassifiable	10	11.9
Total instances cited (n=48 providers)	74	100.0

These data refer to the most obvious ways in which ACE is performing a vocational role, and they should be evaluated in this light. They should also be compared to the findings on motives for course-taking from the Survey of ACE Learners (Chapter 5).

The source of vocational demand for ACE

The survey assessed sources of demand for vocational courses in ACE. These include direct demand from employers and organisations (Q6) demand stimulated by the Training Guarantee Act (Q7), and Commonwealth and State funded labour market programs for the unemployed and disadvantaged groups (Q8).

Providers in both city and rural areas have been responding to requests by employers for courses, as Table 4.4 illustrates. It suggests that government agencies, large firms and small businesses, local councils and community organisations are turning to ACE to meet their immediate needs for workplace training. It also highlights ACE links to other agencies and community organisations.

Table 4.4. Courses requested by employers and other organisations

Provider size rank	Requested by employer or organisation	Training Guarantee Act courses
1	DEET Jobtrain. [AMES] St George Building Society - [Career development for part-time staff]	Supervisor training. Typing and bookkeeping.
4	Graincorp [Communications] Hair salon [Communications]	BHP - Tender for first aid, rewriting of manuals.
5	Aust Institute of Accountants [Attache]	
6	Harvey Norman - Lotus 123. Tender for LMP courses. Entry level language (DEET)	St John's Ambulance.
2	Primary Industry and Energy [ESL) Teachers Federation (word processing) CEIDA (communication skills) Telecom (Teletext Discovery course)	Computer training courses, management. Public presentation. Train the trainer.
10	Childcare assistants- [Various employers]	
11	Import/export industry. (Clerical skills) [Requested by CES]	
13	Local solicitors [Excel/DOS] Caring profession - Lotus.123	Training administration course
15	Kandos Cement [Workplace literacy] Support through their Cert in Cement Manufacturing (award restructuring)	Mt Piper Power Station- computer course, small business book-keeping, workplace Literacy
17	Chamber of Commerce.[Business briefings] Local government [Computer literacy]	
18	Health Commission [Catering services]	Business courses - supervision, computing (IBM), keyboarding skills
19	ALLP funding for intensive literacy course	Computer
20	Chamber of Manufactures [Computer Skills] .	Trainer the trainer. Computer courses
21	City /Shire Council [Computing]	Train the Trainer, Training Admin. Sales and Computing courses
25	Dept Defence [Workplace Literacy] Macquarie Worsted [Communications]	Computing and office admin skills
26	Public Tenants Assoc [Computing] Small business and government departments [MSDOS applications]	Computers, keyboard skills. Public speaking, stress management, conflict resolution
28	Blacktown Hospital [Basic computing]	Small businesses, computing, management
29	Health Commission [Catering services]	

30	RAAF base [computing and other courses] University of Western Sydney.	Train the trainers. Computing
31	Lysaghts [English Improvement] Tamworth Council (Workplace Literacy]	Computing, bookkeeping, workplace literacy.
35	Local Shire [Pre-trade painting, welding]	St John's First Aid
37	Local company [First aid cert]	Computing skills, showcard and ticket writing paid for by employers
40	Kiama Council [Meeting procedures] Nth Kiama Children's Centre [Microwave]	Computers - teachers
48	Coast Care [Craft for Disabled] Broken Bay Aboriginal Corp [Craft Program]	
63	Dept Agriculture [Lamb preparation]	

Table 4.4 implies that government agencies have been more important than private business in commissioning ACE courses, though this is not certain since demand can be expressed by organisations or by individuals. The former being more likely to be cited by providers. While some larger providers report that the Training Guarantee Act has stimulated demand from employers for business courses - local firms or factories have 'sent a cheque for six people to do a course' or booked in groups of employees. Others report very little response or have 'hardly explored' the effect of the TGA, and this seems to depend on the make-up of the community. The largest colleges cited their own TGA obligations which have been met by running a Tutor Training course, or by giving tutors vouchers for college enrolments.

Historically, adult education (like other institutions) has responded to *individual* learning needs. In recent years it has increasingly responded to *community* needs. This is highlighted in Table 4.4 by the apparent success of colleges and centres in marketing courses to local organisations. Because it is locally-based, accessible and flexible, ACE is able to step into training gaps and meet quickly the locally defined learning needs for vocational education and training. If this is so, it is a key to greater community recognition of ACE, and an area for further action by providers.

Responsiveness to local need and demand

Some Principals in larger ACE centres spoke of their natural clientele as small business, which seeks low cost/quick return from training. ACE supplies short courses of high quality to meet their immediate need to train or retrain staff.

In promoting mainly business courses, providers were clearly targeting a specific market not being addressed by TAFE and private providers. [11]

> The ACE sector is crucial - we can identify needs ahead of other agencies. Private providers have mushroomed, taking over our course titles. ACE can lead in short courses, especially for small business, which sees the WEA as a community organisation, able to identify needs and fulfil those needs and stimulating other agencies e.g. TAFE to offer courses... ACE has a special place for small business who are shut out from peak bodies. (Provider 14)

> We should provide short specific courses where there are specific skills to be learned, where a full course is not wanted. We develop people's abilities in an area on a short term basis, where there is a need ... We take note of what people are ringing and asking for, and try to organise it e.g. Japanese, because it is permeating the community or Childcare, where employers rang up and wanted training for untrained people. (Provider 10)

This kind of 'vocational demand' has to be placed in its metropolitan context where there are large numbers of employers provide specific clienteles and 'markets' for short courses. The demand for certain courses is clearly focussed. Because they are generally small , community organisations, ACE providers can move quickly to meet expressed demands for workplace training:

> I believe we should have relatively small scale providers responsive to local needs ... At present [in ACE] there are none of the rigidities of TAFE. If we tried to be the same as TAFE, other community providers would jump in and fill our place and take our clientele. We are able to give a quick response - structured and designed to suit the community, a certain needs profile. You have a sense of the community or market you are serving. This sense and measure of the local community (e.g. our large non-English speaking group) is very important. (Provider 5)

But 'communities' are not 'markets'. The 'catchment areas' of city providers often comprise complex social groupings with different patterns of social and educational need, according to 'demographic mix'. These needs may not be expressed at all. Therefore, establishing the 'community profile' of providers will be increasingly important for ACE, which sees one of its key contributions as providing access to learning opportunities.

The smaller providers often view vocational outcomes as part of the broad picture of community needs, some of which relate to paid work. The community development ethic is strong, and contributes to productive activity in a broader, less obvious vocational sense:

> The role of the sector is to provide access to and foster participation in the broadest range of learning activities which may or may not lead to future study or employment or may be an end in themselves. It is for the student to decide. If this sector is to become driven by a narrow definition of 'vocation' we will become a poor quality cousin of TAFE with no reason therefore to exist. This sector fills a unique gap providing a truly liberal education to the whole community (Provider 26)

> But why is so much emphasis put on vocational education and training when it is only a small part of the whole picture? Our area has few jobs but many social problems so an emphasis on self-motivation , self-esteem and access to information and how to use it, and self development skills are more appropriate. (Provider 41)

Thus providers see that ACE makes its fundamental contribution to VET though its broad community provision. As community-based providers, ACE is capable of identifying and responding to local needs. Specific vocational needs are met through this broad community provision, not in isolation from the general program.

Labour market programs and DEET funding

Half of those providers responding to the survey, (28, or 51% of respondents) had not applied for funding for Jobtrain, JobClub or other DEET funded programs (Q8). Some had applied and been unsuccessful, and a few had applied for Education and Training Foundation (ETF) funding.

The largest providers have been successful in tendering for DEET funded courses. One WEA reports that DEET courses comprise $90,000 or 25% of the budget. Others cite similar figures between 5% and 30% of their turnover. For a group of ten large providers, and one or two CAECs, this represents a significant underwriting of their activities, with student places being funded at a higher level than through BACE grants and student fees. Illawarra WEA claims to have pioneered the over-40s courses for DIRE including numerous business courses such as 'manager's secretary', 'accounting' and 'reception' which continue in high demand in an area of high unemployment. One large CAEC has a Jobclub contract with DEET now in its third year. This is run as a separate business entity with ACE doing the administration, and represents a small but significant percentage of the annual budget. Sometimes the local CES has developed a close working relationship with a College providing multiple programs (such as using the College to perform assessments for ESL students at a fixed fee).

Other providers resent the large investment of time required to prepare tenders, especially some who see inadequacies in the tendering process - a lack of coherent planning, of consistent criteria for determining successful tenders or lack of feedback from DEET regional offices.

A few providers extended their activity into Skillshare courses, either establishing them or running them as an associated activity. This represents a significant extension of their vocational education and training activities.

A few large providers have decided to have nothing to do with DEET-funded programs, others have invested large amounts of time in developing their capacity to run such programs, establishing a 'labour market' section. One centre offers a prisoner-education program based on a US educational franchise. The college has a clear rationale for extending its role into such programs, based on the ethic of the 'well-being of the individual' in the community:

> Our concern is ... the well-being of the individual. We insisted on a selection process. There had to be assessment of prior skills ... We have modified the course to meet students needs. We are interested in giving more than just a classroom experience ... we provide experience in organisations... It is the role of ACE to be involved in this activity, in labour market or other programs. We have achieved this through 50-60 hr week and the sweat and tears of the people in the field. (Provider 11)

Recognition, accreditation and articulation

A key issue is the degree to which ACE courses are recognised by other providers, agencies and organisations. Recognition of the vocational value of ACE courses will be enhanced by accreditation of specific courses in areas of high demand. Providers gave qualified support for this move, qualified in the sense that they argue the strength of their vocational education and training effort is in its flexibility, responsiveness, quality and cost-effectiveness:

> A balance should be maintained between the traditional, informal personal interest courses and the more vocationally oriented courses e.g. typing, shorthand and computing. I believe that the sector should move to accredit the latter courses and achieve proper articulation with other providers such as TAFE. ACE has an important role to play in provision of short courses in selected areas. Articulation and accreditation are essential if this role is to be carried out successfully. (Provider 19)

Accreditation raises the question of 'credit by whom for whom' and raises the wider issue of the way ACE articulates with other 'sectors' and organisations that value its courses - the ACE stakeholders. An important part of ACE's vocational activities is therefore the links it has established with other agencies and providers.

The formal training system is restricted in its ability to meet short-term, immediate workplace and individual learning needs. ACE has moved rapidly into this training gap, leading to pressure to formally accredit some short vocational courses. Equally important are the developing linkages of ACE with other agencies as a grassroots provider. By widening access to education and training, ACE plays a key role in expanding the net training opportunities for adults.

Both city colleges and country centres feel acutely the pressures on ACE to be 'more vocational' in terms of the formal accreditation of some courses and defining links with other providers (articulation). Asked for their views on the future for ACE, even those with the biggest stake in any accreditation process, the large colleges, were quick to point out the risks for ACE in a greater vocational role.

The survey (Q4) explored how far ACE courses are being recognised as qualifications and what links have been made with other agencies and organisations to meet the their vocational education and training needs. Not surprisingly, ACE in its 'non-award, non-formal' character has few if any formally accredited courses and formal arrangements with other providers. The following are the exceptional cases where courses are formally assessed (Q4):

- First Aid. The St Johns Ambulance certificates is widely recognised as a qualification under the OHS legislation and offered via ACE providers large and small. This is one of the few courses with assessment by an external authority.
- Calligraphers can gain recognition through the Society of Calligraphers by successful completion of courses offered by Chatswood Evening College. A diploma is awarded.
- Coastal navigation and Small Boat Safety. Courses lead to assessment for certification by the Maritime Services Board.
- Courses in Deaf Studies at the Deaf and Hearing Impaired AEC have become a requirement for working in the field of deafness and are taken by teachers, interpreters, welfare workers and public servants.

Responses to the question on links with other bodies (Q5) revealed that the practice of certifying course attendance is widespread. Conditions for issue of attendance certificates vary, but often include an attendance of 80% of classes. City Principals report 'hundreds' being requested each week for job-seeking and career development purposes. This testifies to the use of ACE courses as a 'negotiable currency'. There were also frequent examples given of students graduating to become tutors through a long period of 'apprenticeship' in ACE courses, especially in the crafts area where ACE is a major provider of learning opportunities.

Although there are few formal arrangements made with other providers giving credit for ACE courses, this is often informally negotiated by students.

Table 4.5 shows that examples of TAFE treating a related ACE course as a informal pre-requisite for entry are common, especially where TAFE entry is competitive, for example, in art or design courses where prospective students will often use a related ACE course for portfolio development. Other arrangements include the joint development of facilities or other co-operation, and the development with TAFE of literacy programs using volunteer tutors.

Table 4.5. Links with other providers and agencies

Course area and ACE provider	Arrangement	Organisation
Adult basic education	Entry to TAFE course. Contact with Literacy Co-ordinators	TAFE
Agricultural courses	Use of TAFE teachers, facilities	TAFE (country)
All courses	Local round-table on provision Regional Adult Education Council	TAFE, Skillshare, CES (country)
Art and design	Production of major works for HSC by senior school students	High schools
Auslan (deaf sign language)	Completion of ACE course an entry requirement for Auslan Certificate	TAFE
Computing	Use of training facilities at night	Skillshare
Computing	Joint funding of computing area	State High school
Computing, Book-keeping Accounting Childcare Assistants Travel Consultancy Needlecraft	Basic course or early stage preliminary to TAFE certificate	TAFE
ESL courses	Providing early levels of ESL instruction	Adult Migrant Education Service
Graphic design Art and design Commercial floristry Fashion photography	Portfolio development for entry to TAFE course	TAFE
Landcare program (LEAP)	Advanced standing in accredited courses	TAFE (country)
Welding, computing childcare certificates	Formal letter of agreement about linked courses; informal agreements	TAFE Victoria and TAFE NSW

The issue of accreditation looms large for all providers and this came out strongly in their views of the role of the ACE sector (Q16) or 'other burning issues' (Q17). Both large and small providers sounded warnings that by going too far with vocational training, ACE would lose the features that make it attractive to learners in comparison with TAFE, and diminish the broad vocational role it already plays:

> I would hate to see our sector tagged as providing vocational education. We are flexible - people enter for their own reasons, and students should decide what the vocational outcomes are for them. There is nothing to stop us from describing and structuring courses in terms of competencies, but leave the decision about outcomes to students. Give people the choice regarding assessment (Provider 11)

As the larger providers see it, there is a need to make strategic decisions about what courses are accredited and where ACE links to vocational providers like TAFE. Yet providers stress that their main contribution to vocational learning is through the broad learning opportunities offered. The concept of lifelong learning is strongly held:

> We do not see vocational education as the primary objective. It forms part of lifelong learning opportunities. We should not limit ourselves to this motivation for participation in ACE. Our role is to provide access - a pathway for lifelong learning ... an access point, easier than TAFE, low cost with a diversity of programming. We allow students to sample courses. We do not focus on one type of student but cater to a broad range of the community. We increase the participation rate in learning (Provider 3)

> ACE is very important as second chance education: it is non-threatening, provides access to those who [will later] enrol in other institutions and is often a stepping stone to more formalised education (Provider 31)

The training reform agenda is felt to be narrowly focussed, and threatening to a broad concept of ACE, whose value to the vocational system is its breadth and accessibility:

> I think the training agenda has been hijacked by the economic rationalists to the detriment of ACE. If we forget our roots and push too strongly into the training/vocational area we will only create problems for ourselves and adult education will spring up around us again. We should stay doing what we do well and only fill the vocational market where there are gaps left by the traditional training providers. (Provider 35)

Thus providers see themselves as complementing and broadening the system. There is a need to 'entrench a wide concept' of vocational training and maintain a balance:

> ACE should remain flexible, responsive and professional, client-centred and cost-effective. Accreditation and CBT - it is possible that ACE will get further marginalised in funding terms - accredited courses should remain a reasonable proportion of the whole (e.g. 25% - 35%). We should entrench a wide concept of

> vocational training without seeming to be 'mickey mouse' about how we service those needs. (Provider 15)

Thus providers generally see accreditation as a difficult issue, one of several directions to be pursued within a broad strategy for ACE and not as a quick answer to problems of gaining recognition for the sector.

The relationship with TAFE

The accreditation debate suggests providers have a keen appreciation of how far their extended vocational role is tied up with TAFE. Articulation with TAFE is clearly crucial to 'positioning ACE' in its vocational role, and this issue has a wider application in the sector. Table 4.5 shows that most linkages are with local TAFE colleges. These links aim to avoid overlap as much as define learner pathways, and the latter is clearly an area for further action. ACE should recognise and preserve what is most valuable in its courses, and be careful in defining more clearly its links to TAFE:

> The college sees its main vocational role in providing generic skills applicable to a wide range of occupations e.g. computing. It should not try to get closer to TAFE, though having links is important. The college is not anti-vocational but maintains the value of remaining very local and very accessible. To change this accessibility would negate our main purpose of entry to learning. (Provider 6)

The smaller providers face other problems. The smallest centres in isolated rural towns have no competition to speak of, yet they are community agencies performing both an educational and social role.

> We feel it is not the province of the ACE sector to provide vocational training in a small community as these services are already supplied by TAFE, Skillshare etc. This view, however, should not be seen to denigrate the work that ACE does in providing recreational courses to boost participants' self esteem, social skills etc and possibly prepare them to better enter other courses. (Provider 51)

> ... if we participate in VET it must be in the context of a demand from the community - not from the top down. Training that has a specific relevance to our community and that has the potential to create employment or local co-operatives. It must also be remembered that we need to remain autonomous learner-centred providers - not bureaucracies. (Provider 47)

> I personally feel vocational training should be kept to the TAFE and [to] accredited courses in a recognised tertiary institution. ACE has a vital role in the community and should be kept as 'non-formal education'. (Provider 32)

> ACE is community-based, owned and managed and must remain so. ACE has an important role to play in providing community adult education. It would be sad if its independence was lost by having to justify a vocational outcome for every course. Attending a discussion group may lead onto another course and another - thus keeping someone learning lifelong, not necessarily for a job. (Provider 52)

> ACE should not place an emphasis on vocational education and training. TAFE or Skillshare should shoulder this load. There are so many other areas which need to be catered for and ACE is the ideal provider to fulfil these needs. These [needs] are cultural, social and creativity. Not every student is looking for a job, often just fulfilment and a chance to get out of home for a little while. (Provider 66)

In larger towns, ACE centres want to avoid duplication of courses on the one hand, and on the other may try to complement courses offered by Skillshare or local TAFE colleges. In some cases the ACE centre provides a course not available in TAFE. Again there was strong evidence of the desire of providers to link with other agencies. Thus a Kiama centre (Provider 40) runs Asthma courses in conjunction with Illawarra Health Service. Kincumber (Provider 42) promotes and provides the Central Coast WEA adult literacy program through its centre.

The relationship with TAFE varies greatly and appears to take one of three forms, as (a) competition in the same 'market', (b) uncertainty about mutual roles and lack of communication between providers, or (c) clear understanding of complementary roles or close co-operation. Much depends on the locality and its characteristics - how large the locality is and whether it has a TAFE college small enough to be competing for the 'short-course non-credit' market. There were relatively few examples of competition - though the survey might be expected to elicit these. More common was the reflection that in many places the relationship is not well-defined - that providers are serving different markets. Some small centres reported that they work closely with the TAFE colleges as outreach centres:

> We work closely with TAFE encouraging them to offer vocational courses in Barraba. we do the local promotion, advertising, take enrolments arrange venues and collect fees to ensure TAFE classes are available to people ... I can easily establish what TAFE is offering ... and thereby offer other courses. It is an informal arrangement. (Provider 35)

> ... Pressure for vocational outcomes is not always appropriate especially in isolated rural areas. People need to improve self sufficiency skills and self-esteem. we can then assist with access to further education opportunities. We liaise with other providers e.g. TAFE, Agriculture, CALM, Health. If there is too much push for vocational aspects and increased accountability and workload another grassroots movement will spring up ... there are already signs this is happening ... (Provider 60)

In other centres, there are clear understandings about program offerings beyond 'avoiding duplication' to seeing how courses can be sequenced to maximise opportunities for learners - for example where computer basics lead on to more advanced computer software TAFE courses, or craft leading on to commercial needlecraft (Provider 39). The most common area of co-operation is between adult literacy and the TAFE volunteer literacy tutors. A more specialised example is the

provision of farming courses such as agricultural blasting and farm welding serviced by TAFE (Provider 60).

It is easy to cite examples of competition (e.g. Hastings, 24) perhaps because they are the exception. Respondents are usually quick to report experiences either of outstanding co-operation or of conflict with TAFE or other agencies. Few providers described any kind of working relationship with TAFE locally, and it appears there is room for this to develop. Co-operative local partnerships will enhance the recognition of ACE, provided that the sector in the process is not 'put down' as a mere feeder for TAFE. This needs further discussion in the sector. Further research could well set up a proper database of such arrangements to give a more accurate picture of developments.

Even where there is friction over courses, the providers are attempting to position themselves in relation to TAFE and Skillshare:

> As we are learner-centred we offer courses requested by the community. These have been mainly personal growth and artistic classes, partially I think because there is a TAFE in Wauchope that is seen as providing 'training'. We may well provide bridging for some students but have no formal statistics. (Provider 47).

> As regards TAFE! Until there is a clear delineation of which courses are really 'Stream 1000' etc there will be duplication of services resulting in hard feelings between the two sectors - stained glass for example, which the local TAFE still runs as a vocational course. (Provider 51)

Another centre negotiates with a large TAFE college to help it run courses through the centre in an Outreach capacity, and this model - in common with many examples of the ACE centre running courses for a number of agencies - points up the important role providers give their linkages not just with TAFE or schools but with other community services. An example of such a course given by a handful of providers was the Catering Services Certificate provided for the NSW Health Commission, associated with hospital services. The alternative is a difficult situation of isolation and lack of recognition:

> We believe we are the grassroots of the learning process but have trouble gaining recognition from other community and government organisations [We are] frowned upon by Neighbourhood Centres and health services. No co-operation with local Council. Not seen as providing a useful service to the community. ... DEET is too busy funding the local Neighbourhood Centre to set up in competition with us by offering identical courses free of charge [while] we operate as a User Pays system. (Provider 42)

In summary, since most providers are community-based organisations, closer links and better networking will help bring a greater recognition to ACE's work. If

it is ACE's charter to 'respond to the community', then this is where its vocational orientation should be directed. [11]

The vocational scope of ACE beyond the paid workforce

The survey explored ways in which ACE has vocational outcomes beyond the paid work-force, in productive work including self-employment, small business opportunities and income-enhancement. ACE contributes to economic self-sufficiency among low income earners in depressed employment conditions, especially in rural areas. Courses develop skills for work in and around the home (the household economy) and in paid and unpaid community work in ways that contribute to both the individual's vocational development and well-being and to community development. So considered, ACE can be seen as having a wide vocational scope inseparable from its broad adult education function.

> Almost every course in our program produces some lifestyle or job enhancement outcome. If they did not, the people would not come and pay. It is very cost-effective in public funding terms. Participants select only what they need to meet personal objectives. The cost to the public is less than $10 per enrolment. Once started the participants gain the confidence and motivation to pursue further training and/or education. It is for this reason that informal adult education plays a key role in meeting governments' general education and 'clever country' objectives (Provider 21)

A narrow vocationalist perspective sees as worthwhile only those formally accredited courses directly linked to paid work in a given industry, or training in specific occupational skills. Such a view seriously under-estimates the necessary scope of vocational education and training, since a wide range of vocational needs lie outside the industry training frame of reference.

The bridging and validation role

The WEA pointed to 'Our historical role to provide an opportunity - allowing people to try learning in a non-threatening environment before entry to tertiary study' and this is true of virtually all providers, who cited building self-confidence and self-esteem as a major outcome of ACE. [12] Yet more is involved: '[our] courses allow people to get a taste for learning, to test learning, to set directions - to validate their own learning' (Provider 14). Adults use courses as a 'trial of interest or aptitude' (Provider 1). Mature age students apprehensive about returning to formal study can first 'try out' through a short ACE course.

The range of courses providing bridging and access and the client groups they serve is wide and highlights once again the broad reach of ACE opportunities.[13] It has to be borne in mind that providers may be citing exceptional rather than routine cases. Examples include:

- English language studies for immigrants and NESB groups in the city, often by arrangement with AMES, and literacy courses for older people, some from NES backgrounds
- Labour market programs emphasising access to further education or training, including HELP or youth access courses
- Courses such as 'Women Take Charge' emphasising preparation for return to the workforce, personal finances, time management
- Art and craft courses are used to establish a vocational interest through portfolio development and sometimes work experience
- Report and essay writing for HSC students and mature age students gaining entry to further education
- Courses in natural therapies prior to formal courses with private providers

Access is so much a part of ACE that specific bridging courses are uncommon. As one provider pointed out, stating which courses perform a bridging role is 'difficult to answer as the most unlikely course will often instil confidence or break the ice and people go on from there' (41). Confidence building and self-esteem are general outcomes which enable further educational participation in ACE or other courses:

> There is a need for recognition of the importance of the first step access courses. Many courses appear 'non-vocational' when we look only at a narrow economic viewpoint. Skills learned often enhance more recognisable, measurable skills. (Provider 40)

Other examples referred again to links with TAFE, reinforcing the view that ACE has a crucial role to play in articulation of learner pathways, (see again Table 4.5).

Self-employment and income generation

Courses may lead to learners starting a small business, employing themselves or gaining increased income, (Q12, Q13). These were outcomes of the most common course areas in ACE, including the following:

- Selling art and crafts (pottery, paintings, cottage craft, applique, woodturning, leatherwork, beadwork, decoupage) at local markets or supplying local galleries and shops with work
- Providing a services to order in areas such as leadlighting, commercial floristry, picture-framing, upholstery, furniture restoration and landscape gardening
- Catering services including gourmet catering, cake decorating, supplying restaurants or cafes, chocolate making.

- Desktop publishing , wordprocessing and secretarial services, accounting and book-keeping, often based in the home
- Clothng services: dressmaking, piecework sewing in the home, printing of T-shirts, developing a line of clothing, making children's clothes and aerobics outfits and raffia hat making .
- Health services, particularly massage.
- Other examples across a range of courses included writing for magazines, small signwriting, calligraphy work, and tutoring privately or in an ACE centre.

The arts and craft areas, business and computing, and clothing and cooking course areas, are associated with widespread small-scale economic activity in making and selling goods and services. Each locality has its own examples, but one that well illustrates the economic significance is the North Coast, where tourism provides ready local markets for arts and crafts. Income supplementation activities are particularly important in regions where there are areas of high unemployment.

The survey has only sketched the extent of this activity. Many providers, used phrases such as 'across the board' or 'too numerous to mention' when answering the question. This suggests they believe the outcome is widespread, and that they gave examples best known to them of income enhancement or small business creation. Providers also gave specific examples of career advancement and promotion resulting from an ACE course. Properly documenting these economic outcomes is a major research project in its own right.[14]

Work in the home and community

The survey explored how ACE courses contribute to work in the household and in the community (Q14 and 15). Though conventional economics does not count it as such, the household economy is a major area of productive work including food preparation, care of children and the aged, and home maintenance. Household work and unpaid community work are part of the hidden economy involving large numbers of people, and learning related life skills is part of the vocational development of individuals. [15]

Providers cite numerous home-related courses in the architecture and building field of study including bricklaying, paving, tiling, woodwork, furniture restoration, landscape design and owner--building.

Horticulture courses including organic gardening, permaculture and plant propagation were also often cited, together with maintenance courses in the engineering area or services. Technology has brought a need to learn to use not only computers or microwave cookery but overlocking machines for domestic use. Soft furnishings, dressmaking, furnishings and many craft activities were mentioned.

The ACE learner may attend 'home maintenance' classes for a number of vocationally related reasons—to develop skills as well as offset the cost of paying for these services. The motive for learning to 'do-it-yourself' may be self-sufficiency and maximising disposable income. [16] Replacing the high costs of professional masseuse for a disabled spouse is reported as a reason for learning massage (Provider 10). This alternative is especially important in rural areas where falling farm incomes and unemployment are creating economic hardship.

In less depressed areas, lifestyle preferences are more important. One provider noted the 'multiplier effect' of such courses:

> Three-quarters of our courses would have home application - skills around the home and garden. Cooking as lifestyle management skills - cooking for dinner parties. In the inner city, the recession has increased interest in people improving their house. One could calculate how much economic activity a course generates in this case - consumption of goods, use of services etc. Students may well spend more than double the cost of a course (Provider 7)

While there are often lifestyle motives for enrolling in cookery classes, providers state these courses contribute to the area of life skills. Courses such as effective parenting, counselling, assertiveness and communication, reveal a trend to courses which assist people to manage key relationships and life experiences. This can include learning a language to converse with 'new' relatives.

The growth of ACE is part of a significant expansion of the community services sector of the economy. Many activities in health, welfare, sport, the arts and recreation would not be provided without non-profit organisations and their often volunteer workforce. To this economic activity, adult and community education makes a significant contribution, which could only be superficially explored by the survey. There is a strong case for a more detailed analysis.

ACE providers have a core commitment to the development and enrichment of their localities. They have a strong community participation ethic. Courses are said to develop confidence and interpersonal skills that both enhance personal development and enable people to participate more fully in society. The survey established some of the ways ACE courses enable people to be more productive in community organisations. These included:

- Volunteer training of all kinds, especially with church, youth and welfare groups. Conflict resolution, counselling, law, assertiveness, interpersonal relationships, group leadership and mental health courses have been run.
- Office skills, meeting procedures, committee management, publicity and marketing and public speaking for community groups. The most common example cited was bookkeeping for treasurers.
- Volunteers working in nursing homes and hospitals learning craft courses to pass on these skills. They may form loose interest groups to further their own skills and teach each other.
- Liaison with a range of community centres and groups regarding specific needs including Day Care Centre, Retirement Village, Neighbourhood Centre, Citizens Club, CWA, Senior Citizens groups.
- Education for older people. An Oral History course run in conjunction with a local Council resulted in the needs of older people in the area being recognised.
- Disability program. The Board has funded courses for People With Disabilities in a large number of providers. Courses in Auslan in numerous providers have expanded with the establishment of the Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Adult Education Centre
- Rehabilitation education. One college developed 'Headway', a vocational program for para -and quadriplegics, including computing, clerical and living skills.
- Environmental education. Landcare groups are being supported by some ACE providers, and hobby farm management is creating a demand for rural courses that are 'lifestyle-based' such as the breeding of cashmere and dairy goats.
- Ethnic community groups have requested specific courses, for example, Portuguese Women's Association Dressmaking in Portuguese.

Conclusion

The survey of providers reveals a complex picture of the sector's role in vocational provision. Workforce change is creating a strong vocational demand for ACE courses especially in the small business and computing courses. There are many course areas where learners enrol for vocational motives and numerous ways in which ACE meets a wide range of needs for vocationally relevant knowledge through its short non-credit courses.

A central issue in understanding ACE contribution to vocational education and training is the recognition of the short-course learning in ACE by TAFE and other agencies. Linkages with other bodies and organisations are important, as well as some limited accreditation in key course areas. There is a clear consensus that ACE makes its greatest potential contribution by providing accessible and inexpensive learning opportunities across the board, by having the flexibility to respond to immediate local needs and by being open-ended so learners are able to define the purposes of their learning.

The vocational scope of ACE extends to three other crucial but less recognised ways in which ACE contributes to vocational education and training. These are its crucial role of bridging access to further education and training its role in fostering small business opportunities, income supplementation, and labour force adjustment, and its contribution to the 'hidden work' of domestic economy and community activity.

Notes

1 It has to be noted that the research restricted ACE to those providers whose sole function is adult education and who are funded by the Board of Adult and Community Education.

2 This classification disregards the historical distinctions between types of providers - the WEAs, the Evening Colleges, Community Colleges or Community Adult Education centres and looks purely at the range and kind of courses provided. The grouping disadvantages those colleges with three terms per year, such as Nepean Community College or larger number of courses with small enrolments such as Central West.

3 Six leading practitioners were consulted in developing the scope and format of questionnaire. The medium-sized providers were also telephoned for direct contact about the issues while small providers were given the option of a telephone response to the UTS team. The response rates for each group of providers were: Large, 15 or 100%; Medium, 14 or 87%; Small, 28 or 66%. Divided into quartiles, the response for the quartile of the smallest providers is lowest of all.

4 It should not be assumed that because providers concerns were given 'full play' that the chapter over-estimates the extent of vocational activities in the sector. Few providers appeared to be exaggerating their vocational role nor would this accord with their reported attitudes, and rather more providers might have down-played their VET role because of misgivings about its appropriateness to ACE. This should be borne in mind in considering the activities reported.

5 In reporting the findings of the survey, restraint has been exercised in quantifying responses. The interest of the survey was in drawing out provider viewpoints not establishing (possibly spuriously) the precise extent of matters which in their nature are open to definition by the respondents, (for example, how much of their program was vocational). Such data as are given must be regarded as indicative.

6 Providers responded to this question in terms of what courses were perceived as vocational in character - though the intention was to establish whether the program identified any group of courses as vocational. This underlines the fact that providers

are receiving strong vocational demand for these courses whether or not they explicitly advertise or promote them as 'vocational'. It is possible that other courses were not mentioned because of this. Providers tend to define what is vocational in terms of the business area, because this impacts most strongly on them, as responsive, 'market driven' local providers.

[7] Sixty percent of providers' responding 1 to the question on skills in demand (Q10) referred to computing, half of these linked to office or other business skills. The next most demanded area was language and communication (13% of providers). Most providers reported a 'no' response to Q9.

[8] The report has not generally identified providers by name in quotations of their comments. The provider is indicated by a number corresponding to their size. Thus the largest providers number from 1 to 14, the medium providers fro 16 to 30 and the small providers from 31 to 72.

[9] One large provider observed that 'Our role changes with the flow of the economy. When things are bad, demand is based on skill-enhancement; when good, there is a higher disposable income, more job security more people do leisure'.

[10] These categories are a classification of the terms providers used to describe the 'vocational reasons for students enrolling'. Clearly, there is some difficulty separating these into watertight compartments. Thus any conclusion drawn should be general. See Chapter 5 for full discussion of learner motives.

[11] The comparison with Victoria is relevant here. The Victorian ACE model is not only better funded than NSW but has developed over two decades a much greater integration of adult education and community-based health and welfare services. Though it is partly a matter of judgement, the concern for accreditation of courses should not be allowed to over-shadow this important problem area for ACE. It is significant because, in a sense, the move away from a bureaucratic model of adult education based on the school system, towards a true 'community-based' self-funding model, is quite recent.

[12] Feelings of inadequacy often present themselves...perhaps in coming into the office to choose another option .. they want to do an introductory course, but something more rigorous triggers fears ... students feel they are not clever or not brainy Sydney.

[13] Though most of these examples cited would be classified to the 'Multi-field Education' (Field of Study 12) or 'Arts, Humanities' (03 Field of study).

[14] The Victorian CAE has recently funded a report into 'Economic Benefits' of short courses in ACEFEB. It is very apparent that a wider economic analysis of the cost-benefits of participation is necessary for there to be greater precision about the hidden vocational outcomes of adult learning. It needs to be noted once again, that providers may have only scattered knowledge of instances of these outcomes, especially in the larger providers. The learners themselves are the main source of this information in any future research.

[15] The economic contribution of this work can be estimated. See Mason's (1992) analysis of the 'community economics' of adult and community education.

[16] Again, a cost-benefit analysis of ACE course participation would be revealing. The argument is that the individual is investing considerable time and resources in learning to carry out the kind of house repairs that can be legally carried out by unlicensed person. The motive is not merely satisfaction or better use of leisure. ACE learners can be seen as investing time in an ACE DIY courses in the expectation of the benefits of learning to do such work safely and well. In short, their is a vocational motive - an acquisition of skill related to work outside paid employment.

Chapter 5 [1]

ACE learners

Introduction

Who participates in adult education, what are they learning and what are their motives? These have always been key questions for the field of adult education. The present survey took into account participation studies in the US (notably Johnstone and Rivera, 1965: Courtney, 1992), recent UK studies of participation (ACACE, 1982; Sargent, 1991; McGivney, 1992) and the few Australian surveys including the pioneering 'Nation of Learners' study (Evans, 1988). [2]

The purpose of the survey was to document the extent of vocational motives in undertaking adult education courses and the prevalence of vocational outcomes. It provides information on who participates: if adult education can be said to have a vocational dimension, for whom is it vocational? The survey also gives due regard to the kind of courses ACE learners take and examines the 'knowledge dimension' highlighted in Chapter 3.

The main considerations in designing the survey were brevity, ease of completion and a strict focus on ACE learners - their characteristics, their course-taking and the motives and outcomes they attribute to participation.

A survey of this kind poses special problems if it is to represent the large population of ACE learners[3]. For example, the sample must reflect both the numbers of city and country centres, their unequal enrolment share and it must reflect the distribution of learners over the the most common course areas in ACE Field of Study Profile. The methodology was as follows:

- A one-third proportional sample of providers was used, selected across the regions and city and country locations. There were 5 large, 6 medium and 14 small providers, (n = 25). This was large enough to represent a variety of localities.
- Since large providers have the largest number of classes, 50% of classes were in large providers, 33% in medium and 17% in small providers.
- A sample of 2,500 **learners** was large enough for statistical purposes. Allowing about 10 students on average per class, this would give about 250 classes, allocated in proportionally: 25 per large provider (125 classes), 15 per medium (90) and 3 per small (42).
- The available classes were sampled to ensure they represented the fourteen common ACE **course areas**. This means about 10% of all classes should be in the 'Crafts' course area, 12% in the Visual and Performing Arts, and so on.

Table 5.1 summarises this sampling methodology. The survey was conducted in the fourth week of term on or about Tuesday 22 February, 1993, to ensure class groups were at their largest and before 'drop-outs' occurred. [4]

Table 5.1. Sampling of ACE classes by course area

ACE Course area	Classes from each provider group:					
	Lar	Med	Sma	Total	%	Profile[5]
Gardening or conservation	5	0	2	7	2.7	3.5
Woodwork, furniture, building	5	6	3	14	5.4	3.9
Writing, literature; other humanities	5	6	3	14	5.4	8.5
Crafts - pottery, leadlight, folk art	10	12	4	26	10.1	12.0
Languages - European, Asian or other	10	6	3	19	7.4	8.7
Arts - painting, music, film, photography	15	12	4	31	12.1	11.4
Computing	10	6	3	19	7.4	8.5
Office skills, small business management	10	6	3	19	7.4	9.0
Health - yoga, massage, naturopathy	15	12	7	34	13.2	15.9
Cooking - Italian, vegetarian, Thai	10	6	3	19	7.4	5.8
Hospitality (waiting, restaurant service)	5	0	0	5	1.9	
Home furnishings	5	6	0	11	4.3	4.8
Clothing : Dressmaking, hatmaking	10	6	3	19	7.4	
Basic education, literacy	5	6	1	12	4.7	4.2
Other (Engineering, Science ,Vet Science)	5	0	3	8	3.1	3.6
Total	125	90	42	257	100.0	100.0
In each provider type (%)	48.6	35.0	16.3	100.0		

The responses reported were obtained from 2135 learners enrolled in adult and community education classes in February 1993. This represents a return rate of more than 83% on the targeted sample of approximately 2570 learners. Such a return rate is exceptionally good for a survey instrument of this type especially given the three-step nature of the process where researchers needed to get the co-operation first of college principal or centre co-ordinators, then class tutors

and the learners. Procedures were also adopted to assure data quality at the coding and data entry stages.[6]

The distribution of responses between metropolitan and non metropolitan, among the various sized providers - large, medium and small, and across the content areas is very congruent with the sampling model. Two thirds (66.3%) of respondents were from metropolitan locations and the balance (33.7%) from non metropolitan locations. As regards the size of providers, 53.8% of learners were enrolled in courses offered through large providers; which 34.4% and 11.8% of learners were enrolled in medium and small providers respectively. Responses received across the various content areas were also broadly in line with the model developed (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Comparison: Sampling model and response rate

		Sampling Model		Responses Received	
ACE	Course Area	Classes	%	Individuals	%
1	Gardening, conservation etc	9	2.7	75	3.5
2	Woodwork, furniture, building	14	5.4	130	6.1
3	Writing Communications etc			136	6.4
4	Other Humanities	14	5.4	22	1.0
5	Crafts	26	10.1	254	12.0
6	Other Arts	31	12.1	270	12.6
7	Languages	19	7.4	175	8.3
8	Computing	19	7.4	174	8.2
9	Office Skills, small business management	19	7.4	158	7.5
10	Health & Recreational	34	13.2	267	12.5
11	Cooking & Hospitality	24	9.3	234	11.0
12	Clothing & other services	30	11.7	140	6.6
13	Basic Education, literacy	12	4.7	45	2.2
14	Other fields	8	3.1	21	1.0
15	Not classifiable	–	–	34	1.5
		257		2,135	

It would appear that this very good response rate resulted from the interaction of a number of factors including: the strong support received from the Board of ACE; the close co-operation of the staff of the BACE Secretariat; the unstinting

assistance of the providers; the enthusiastic participation of the tutors; and the interest of the adult learners.

Learner Characteristics

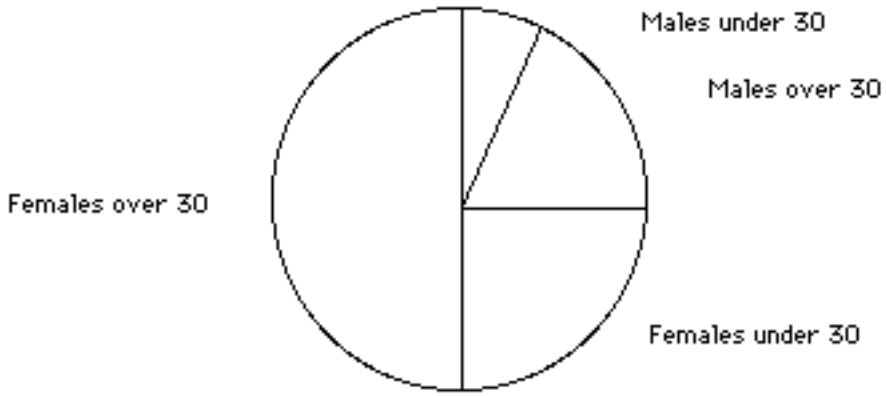
The respondent group was more than three quarters (76.7%) female and less than one quarter (23.3%) male. These figures are broadly in line with the findings of those few Australian studies which have dealt with participation in adult and community education.

The sample of ACE learners is different from the NSW population in a number of respects:

- Three quarters of the ACE learners were female
- Learners were relatively younger - about 60% were under 40, 80% under 50 years
- Three-quarters were in paid employment of some kind
- Three-quarters had completed some form of post-school qualification
- Three-quarters were born in Australia, and ten percent born in non-English speaking countries.

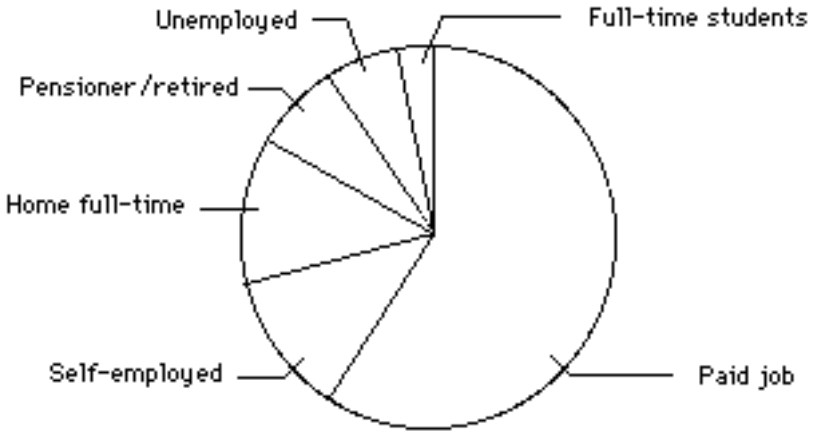
The respondents reported ages from less than 20 years to more than 60 years. A clear majority of learners (58.9%) were less than 40 years of age (39.2% for NSW pop 15-39). However, only a very small number of participants (4.4%) were under 20 years of age. The great bulk of learners (76.1%) were in the decades of their twenties, thirties and forties. Only about one fifth (19.5%) of respondents were over 50 years of age (25.5% for NSW population). Male respondents as a group were slightly older than female respondents, about a third of the women (32.9%) were under 30 years of age and only a quarter of men (25.2%) were under 30. Moreover, whereas only 5.9% of women were aged 60 or more, 8.5% of men were in this age group. Finally, respondents from the Sydney metropolitan area were slightly younger than respondents from non metropolitan areas—62.4% of metropolitan respondents were under 40 years of age whereas only 52.4% of respondents from non metropolitan areas were similarly aged.

Figure 5.1 Age and Sex



A clear majority of respondents held full or part-time jobs. Another 13% were self employed. This means that almost three quarters of respondents (71%) were in paid employment of one sort or another. Additionally, one eighth (12.5%) were at home full-time. Finally, 7.8% were pensioners or retired, 6.5% were unemployed (national unemployment 11%) and 2.2.% were full time students.

Figure 5.2 Employment



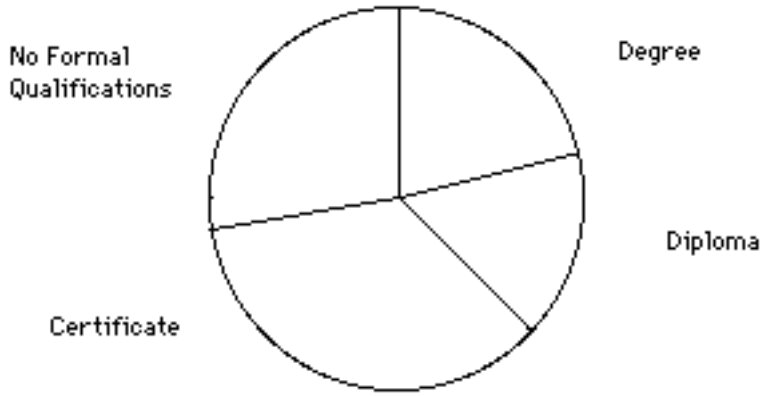
In terms of location, there did appear to be a systematic difference in employment status. More than three quarters (76.8%) of metropolitan were in employment as opposed to less than two thirds (64.6%) of non metropolitan respondents.

While one respondent reported having finishing school at the age of 10 years and another eight reported leaving ages of 12 or 13 years, the great bulk of these adult learners (92.6%) finished school at the ages of 15, 16, 17 or 18 years (15.6%, 24.1%, 26.2%, 26.6% respectively).

More than one quarter (27%) of these participants had completed no further formal qualifications since leaving school. More than one third (36%) had

completed a certificate level qualification. The largest group (37%) of participants reported having completed either a diploma (16.7%) or a degree (20.3%). These figures compare more than favourably with the Australia–wide figures on educational attainments reported by the ABS for persons aged 15-69 in 1992: still at school 4.9%; without post school qualifications 53.4%; trade qualification 13.3%; certificate or diploma 18.7%; and degree 9.4% (p. 35 ABS, 1992).

Figure 5.3 Qualifications since leaving School



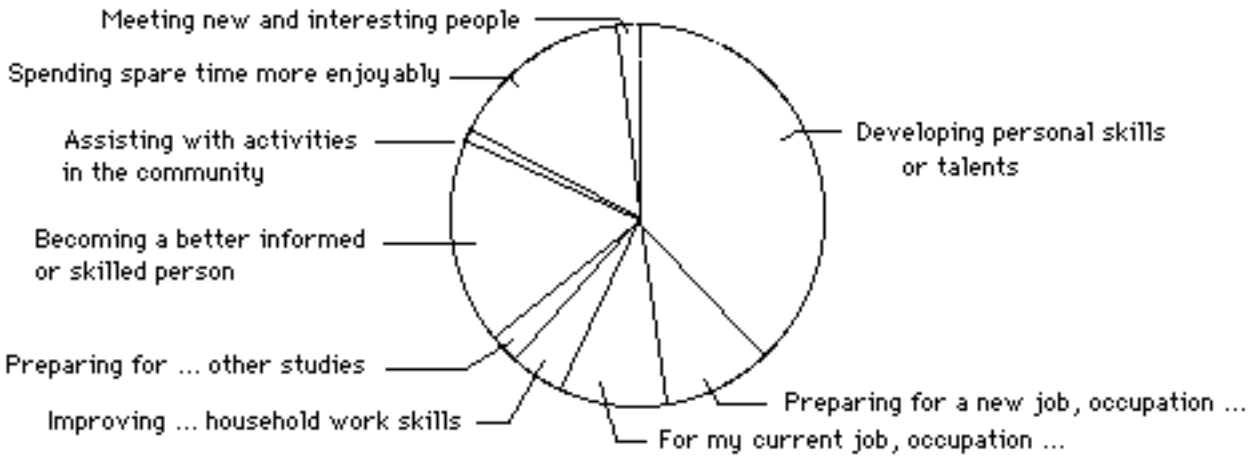
While there was no real differences related to sex in the ages at which respondents left school, there was a slight difference in the holding of post school qualifications. A higher proportion of men had degrees—25.5% as opposed to 13.7%. However, a higher proportion of women held diplomas—18% as opposed to 12.7%. Not surprisingly, the youngest group had the lowest level of post school qualification—less than 1 in 20 had a degree or a diploma, whereas about 40% of the remainder of the respondent group held a diploma or a degree.

Most respondents (75.5%) were born in Australia. Of those born overseas, a majority were born in English speaking countries. In fact more than 90% of all respondents reported an English speaking background. More respondents from the Sydney metropolitan area were born overseas compared with non metropolitan respondents: 69.9% and 86.6% respectively.

Motives

The survey asked respondents to state their motives for enrolling in terms of 'ways they thought their [present] course may be helpful to them'. Learners could indicate several motives from a list and were also asked to state their primary motive.[7]

Figure 5.4 Primary Motive for Participation



More than one third of respondents endorsed "developing personal skills and talents" (38%) which must be regarded as an at least partially vocational motive. A second group of related motives, more overtly vocational in motivation were endorsed by a total of more than one quarter (26%) of respondents. These included "preparing for a new job, occupation or business" (9.7%) "for my current job, occupation or business" (8.7%); "improving and developing household work skills" (5.4%); and "preparing for or assisting with other studies" (2.2%).

A third group, which had to do with more civic motives, were endorsed by almost one fifth (18.7%) of respondents. These included: "becoming a better informed or skilled person" (18.1%) and "assisting with activities in the community" (0.6%). A final group endorsed by less than one fifth (17.3%) of all respondents could be described as the more commonly but incorrectly regarded primary motives for participation in ACE. These were "spending my spare time more enjoyably" (15.5%) and "meeting new and interesting people" (1.9%).

Several motives are at work for most participants. On average, 2.8 motives were identified as relevant by each respondent in the survey. The percentage of respondents marking each motive response item in the survey (n= 5774,) are shown in Table 5.* When multiple motives are taken into account, 90% report a vocational motive (in the broader sense above) as one of a number of motives for participation. It is clear that, for many learners, vocational motives operate even when a course may appear to be non-vocational. Conversley, non-vocational motives operate even when a course appears to be narrowly vocational.

Table 5.3 Motive for participation for present course

Motive	Number (n=5774)	% of responses
Becoming a better informed or skilled person	1151	56.2
Preparing for a new job, occupation or business	453	22.0
For my current job, occupation or business	470	23.0
Spending my spare time more enjoyably	1004	49.0
Meeting new and interesting people	590	28.8
Improving and developing household work skills	295	14.4
Preparing for or assisting with other studies	229	11.2
Assisting with activities in the community	132	6.4
Developing personal skills and talents	1450	70.8

This general picture of motives is qualified by taking into account the learners course area of enrolment, (see Appendix, Table 40). Learners enrol for different reasons depending on the course area:

- While "developing personal skills or talents" is the primary motive most frequently cited (n=777), the largest number of learners giving this motive are in the Crafts and Visual Arts areas (together about 33% of such responses), and Health and recreation courses (some 17%)
- Overtly vocational motives (n=198, n=179) concerned with "preparing for a current or new job, occupation or business" are concentrated in the Business and Computing courses, (about 40% of such responses).
- The motive "becoming a better informed person" (n=371) is quite evenly cited across all of the courses areas and not especially associated with any one or two course areas
- Spending spare time more enjoyably (n=318) is concentrated in the Crafts and other Visual and Performing Arts areas (together, some 37% of responses) and to a lesser extent the Health (17%) and Cooking (14%) areas.

The only apparent difference amongst respondents was in age - not unexpectedly, as respondents became older "preparing for a new job" steadily

declined as a primary motive for participation—from 29% among those under 20 years to 1.5% among those 60 or over. Similarly, the motive "spending spare time more enjoyably" steadily increased in relevance across the age range from 7.9% (among those under 20 years) to 26.3% (among those 60 years or over).

Outcomes of a previous course

When asked to reflect upon the ways in which **previous** ACE courses had been useful to them, adult learners who had been involved in those courses, reported results which reinforces the motives material reported above. More than one third (34.2%) of respondents saw the principal outcome as having been the development of "personal skills and talents". A more overtly vocational set of outcomes were endorsed by more than one quarter (26.7%) of respondents. These included: "preparing for a new job, occupation or business" (7.6%); "for my current job, occupation or business" (10.9%); "improving and developing household work skills" (5.3%); and "preparing for or assisting with other studies" (2.9%).

A third group which had to do with more civic outcomes were endorsed by more than one fifth (22.3%) respondents. These included: "becoming a better informed or skilled person" (21.4%) and "assisting with activities in the community" (0.9%). A final group of outcomes endorsed by about one sixth of respondents has to do with the commonly but incorrectly regarded primary outcomes of ACE—"spending my spare time more enjoyably" (14.9%) and "meeting new and interesting people" (1.8%).

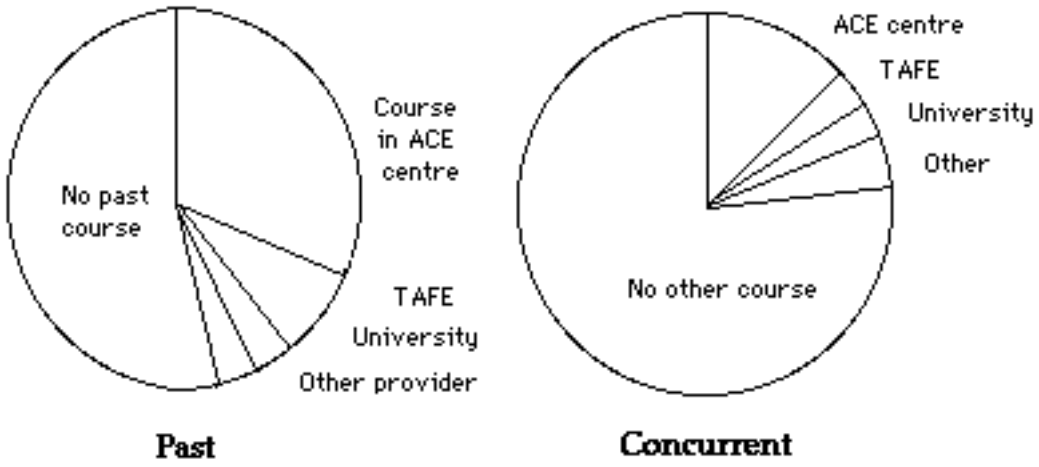
Participation in previous and future courses

Almost half of all respondents (45.8%) reported having taken at least one course in the last year or two, while almost one quarter (23%) were concurrently enrolled in another course. Moreover, more than three quarters (76.3%) of respondents indicated that they intended to enrol in a future course. In terms of total participation, less than one quarter (22.1%) reported having taken no previous course while a few learners (2.4%) reported having taken ten or more courses in the last five years. The great bulk of respondents (69.2%) indicated that they had participated in one to five courses in that period one (22.1%); two (13.3%); three (14.3%); four (8.6%); five (4.8%) (see Tables 12, 16, 19, 23).

Providers

Even though these respondents were all enrolled in courses through adult and community education providers, many of them had had experiences across the range of post compulsory education providers, (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 Provider of past and concurrent course



Of those who indicated that they had taken a course in the previous year or so—68.3% reported that the course had been provided by an adult education centre, 17.3% reported a TAFE college; 7% reported a university, and 7.4% reported other, largely private, providers.

A smaller proportion, about a quarter, indicated they were also 'enrolled in another course, anywhere'. Of these learners—56% reported that course was offered by an adult education centre; 14.3% reported a TAFE college; 12.2% reported a university; and 17.5% reported other, largely private, providers. Finally, in terms of the future courses they intend to take, of those who intended to take such courses—more that three quarters (79.8%) indicated that this future course was likely to be offered through an adult education centre; 11.2% indicated a TAFE college; 3.6% indicated a university; and 5.4% indicated other largely private providers.

Course Areas Studied

As mentioned previously, the sampling model adopted for this study was based upon proportional sampling of course areas, therefore the distribution of the

responses received does not measure the relative "popularity" of the various course areas. However, there are a number of comments which may be made about the various course areas based on the responses received. Some of these have to do with the sequential taking of course in the same or related course areas.

Table 5.4 shows the relationship between current enrolment and previous, concurrent and future enrolments respectively as a percentage of all such enrolments in that course area. In other words, this is the incidence of a learner stating a course in the same course area as their current enrolment.[8]

This means, for example, that of all people taking courses in the Computing area, about one quarter (23.5%) have taken previous courses in that area, another quarter (28.1%) are concurrently enrolled in similar courses, and more than half (55.1%) intend to take such courses in the future.

Table 5.4 Comparison current, previous concurrent and further course enrolments

Current Course Area	Other Courses Taken		
	Previous	**Concurrent**	**Future**
1. Gardening, Conservation, etc	30.8	25.0	18.9
2. Architecture, building, etc	26.4	32.1	41.9
3. Writing, Communication, etc.	44.7	26.7	59.4
4. Other Humanities	5.6	0	33.4
5. Crafts	49.5	34.3	57.2
6. Other Visual and Performing Arts	50.0	27.8	61.5
7. Languages	47.5	17.5	64.7
8. Computing	23.5	28.1	55.1
9. Other Business	15.1	31.4	55.7
10. Health & Recreational	42.6	28.4	47.4
11. Cooking & Hospitality	34.6	36.8	59.2
12. Clothing & Other Services	45.3	36.4	69.6
13. Basic Education	50.0	0	68.7
14. Other – Science, Engineering, Law, etc.	0	0	13.7
15. Not Classifiable	0	15.0	0

Keeping in mind the proportions of the sample who indicated a recent previous course, a concurrent enrolment in another course or a planned future course, a number of conclusions can be drawn from Table 5.4 about the incidence of course-taking by these NSW learners:

- In half the fifteen course areas, over half the learners had done a previous course in that area in the last year or so.

Previous course-taking was highest in the areas of Basic Education (50%), Visual and Performing Arts and Crafts (each 50%), Writing and Communications (44%) and Clothing and Other Services (45%). Thus, in these areas, a quarter of the

total sample is reporting a previous course in the same area. This implies some continuity of learning.

- No more than one third of responding learners are currently taking another course in the same area in any institution.

Concurrent course-taking in the same area (affecting a quarter of the total sample) is highest in some five areas - Cooking and Clothing (36%), Crafts (34%) and the Architecture and Building field (32%) - though not much less for other areas such as Computing, Writing and Health areas.

- In two-thirds of the course areas, at least half the learners say they plan to take a course in the same area in the future.

Intended course-taking in the same area is highest among those learners enrolled Clothing courses, Basic Education, Languages and Other Visual and Performing Arts, Crafts and Writing. It is less than one third of learners only in three areas including Gardening or Conservation courses (19%) and Other courses (14%).

These findings are consistent with a view of the sample as a group of people active in taking short courses, many of whom have recently taken a course either in ACE or another institution, and most of whom say they will continue with such courses in the future. This picture of continuity of learning, is supported by the degree to which course-taking will take place in the same course area as present enrolment.

The taking of courses in the area of Visual and Performing Arts seemed to be systematically related to age. Only 7.5% of participants under 20 years of age were enrolled in such courses while 22.1% of those 60 or older were similarly enrolled. Moreover, this same course area was strongly supported by those "home full time" as well as those who described themselves as retired or pensioners. Not surprisingly, the largest group of participants in the Basic Education course area were the unemployed.

Interactions among learner, course and provider characteristics

The survey was designed to separate clearly learner, course and provider parameters in ACE participation. A further analysis can then determine which variables have a significant effect on a particular variable of interest. Loglinear modelling can be used to examine these interaction effects, and answer questions such as:

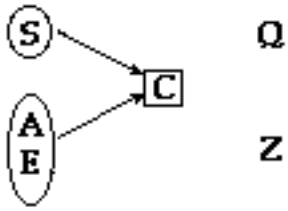
- What kinds of learners participate in one field of study rather than another?
- What motives are associated with one group of learners or one course area?
- What kind of learners are more likely to participate most in course-taking?

For example it may be of interest to know if sex, age , or employment status is related to the course area chosen or the primary motive for enrolling. Since the data in the study are categorical, the appropriate statistical technique is loglinear modelling, carried out using the statistical package GLIM.

Loglinear models seek to explain the number of observations at each combination of the variables and to describe the pattern of association between them. Those variables which have a significant effect are identified, and the magnitude of these effects are estimated. Logistic models, obtained from the loglinear models, show how the odds of one value of the response variable rather than another depends on the combination of explanatory variables. Such odds are expressed numerically as, for example, 2.5 to 1 (or simply 2.5), meaning that there are 2.5 chances `in favour' for every 1 chance `against'. These odds can be converted into probabilities: for instance, an odds of 2.5 represents a probability of 0.71.

In this report, various areas are examined, one by one, to see which variables influence the variable of interest. In some case, categories have been collapsed from the original ones used on the survey form. Thus, course area is reduced from fifteen course areas to four Major Fields of Study (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Business; Health; Services and Other) This is to allow the investigation of several variables at once and to enable the results to be interpreted easily.

1. The Effect of Learner Characteristics on Course Area



Note Arrow indicates effect of one variable on another; absence indicates no effect

Summary:

- Only Age, Sex and Employment have a significant effect on course area (Major Field of Study in ACE)
- Age and employment have an interactive effect on course area
- Females were twice as likely than males to go into Services a factor of 2 and Males were twice as likely as females to go into Other Field course
- Males were marginally more likely to go into Business.

Key:

C = Course area Major Field (Arts,Humanities and Social Sciences; Business; Health; Services; Other)
S = Sex (Male; Female)
A = Age (Young, under 30; Middle,30-49; Old, over 50)
E = Employment (Employed, FT or PT, student; Not Employed: unemployed, home, retired, pensioner)
Q = Qualifications (None; Certificate; Degree or Diploma)
Z = Country of Birth (Born in Australia; Not Born in Australia)

The effects of learner characteristics of sex, age, qualifications, employment status and country of birth on the course area were examined. The only learner variables that had a significant influence on course area were sex, age and employment status. The effects of sex were independent of the effects of age and employment. However, the effects of age and employment were significant individually and in interaction with each other. In other words, the effects of employment were different in different age groups.

In summary, Arts was the most common course area, taking between one-third and one-half of students at each combination of sex, age and employment. Females were more likely than males to go into Services (by a factor of 2) and marginally more likely to go into Arts or Health. Males were twice as likely as females to go into Other course, and marginally more likely to go into Business.

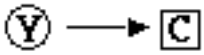
Older (50+) people are more likely to take Arts courses than young (under 29) or middle-aged (30-49) people, and especially those older people who are not employed. About the same proportion of employed people take Business courses at each age group, but this proportion is higher in young people and lower in old people who are not employed. Middle-aged people are more likely to be in

Health courses than the other age groups, and in each age group the employed are more likely than the not-employed to take Health courses.

Young people are more likely to take Services courses, and the proportions decrease with age. However, the young not-employed are significantly under-represented in Services courses. In the young and old age groups, the not-employed are twice as likely as the employed to take Other courses.

The chances of taking an Arts course are highest for female, old, not-employed people and lowest for male, young, not-employed people. The chances of taking a Business course are highest for male, young, not-employed people and lowest for female, old, not-employed people. Health courses are most popular with female, middle-aged, employed people and least popular with male, old, not-employed people. Services courses are most popular with female, young, employed people and least popular with male, young, not-employed people. The chances of enrolling in Other courses are highest for male, young, not-employed people and lowest for female, old, employed people.

2. Effect of Provider Characteristics on Course Area



Summary:

- Courses taken differ in different types of ACE provider
- Business courses are most likely in large metropolitan colleges.
- Health courses are most likely in small country centres and least likely in large metropolitan colleges.
- Services courses are least likely in small country centres

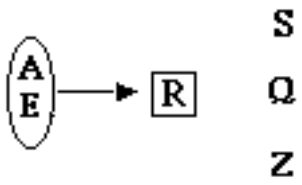
Key:

C = Course area Major Field (Arts,Humanities and Social Sciences; Business; Health; Services; Other)
Y = Type of college (Large metropolitan; medium metropolitan; medium country; small country)

The effects of size of college and location of college on course area were examined. Since size and location are confounded, a new variable `type of college' was created with four categories: large metropolitan, medium metropolitan, medium country and small country. Type had a significant effect on course area, that is, courses taken were different in the different types of college.

In summary, country centres have fewer students in Arts courses than do metropolitan colleges. Business courses are most likely in large metropolitan colleges. Health courses are most likely in small country centres and least likely in large metropolitan colleges. Services courses are least likely in small country centres, where they seem to be replaced by Other courses. To some extent, these characteristics are caused by the limited offerings of the small centres, and partly by the method of sampling. [9]

3. Learner Characteristics and Motive for Enrolling



Summary:

- Age and employment status significantly affect motive for participation individually and in interaction
- Self-development is a uniformly important motive for all ages and employment categories
- Work is most likely to be given as a motive by the young, least likely by older, not-employed
- Social motives are most likely for old, not-employed

Key:

R = Motive for participation in present course (Work; self-development; social; home or community work)
A = Age = Young (under 30), Middle (30-49) and Old (over 50)
E = Employment (Employed, FT or PT, student; Not Employed: unemployed, home, retired, pensioner)
S = Sex (Male; Female)
Q = Qualifications (None; Certificate; Degree or Diploma)
Z = Country of Birth (Born in Australia; Not Born in Australia)

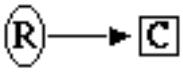
The only important learner characteristics affecting the primary motive for enrolling were age and employment status. They had significant effects individually and in combination. 'Motive for enrolling' collapsed nine primary motives into four categories. [10]

The Self Development motive is uniformly important. Between one-half and two-thirds of each age and employment category gave Self-development as motive for enrolling, and this was slightly higher for those not employed than for those employed. It must be noted that Self-development refers to the combination of 'personal skill and talent' and 'becoming more informed and skilled person'. Thus, age and employment do not alter the extent to which the sample has 'personal competence' for motives for enrolling.

About one-quarter of young people quote Work reasons. The corresponding proportion is lower for middle-aged and older people, and amongst older not-employed people it is down to 5%. Social reasons are more likely with increasing age, rising to one-quarter in the old, not-employed group. About 5% of each age and employment category give Home or Community work as their motive for enrolling, but the figure for middle-age not-employed people is twice this.

Work is most likely to be given as the primary motive by the young, least likely by those older people who are not employed. Self-development is the most likely primary motive for old people who are not employed, but it is more likely than not to be given in each age and employment category. Social motives are most likely again with old, not-employed people and least likely with young, not-employed people. Home or Community work is most likely to be given as the motive for enrolling by middle-aged not-employed people.

4. Effects of Motive on Course Area



Summary:

- Half the learners giving Work as their primary motive go into Business courses
- Such learners are ten times more likely to be enrolled in Business than a Health course
- Half of those who give Self-development as their primary motive enrol in an Arts course
- Two thirds of who give Home or Community motives are enrol in Services and (than Arts courses,

Key:

C = Course area Major Field (Arts,Humanities and Social Sciences; Business; Health; Services; Other)
R = Motive for participation in present course (Work; Self-development; Social; Home or Community work)

The earlier picture showing a link between course and primary motive for enrolling is confirmed. Motive (four categories) significantly affects the learners' Major Field of Study (five categories). This finding of a clear association of primary motive and course area is noteworthy, given the attempt of the research to distinguish clearly course and learner variables. Table 5.5 summarises the

probabilities of a learner reporting a given primary motive being enrolled in a given Major Field of Study.

About one-half of those people who give Work as their primary motive go into Business courses, and a further one-quarter go into Arts courses. (It is ten times more likely for a such learner to be enrolled in Business than a Health and Community Services course, and six times more likely than enrolment in Services, for example).

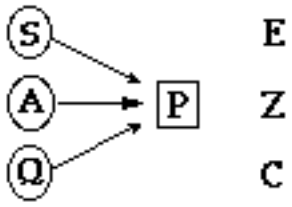
Table 5.5 Primary Motive and Major Field of Study (n=2002)

	Course Area Major Field				
Motive	ArtsHSS	Business	HealthCS	Services	Other
Work	.24	.52	.05	.08	.11
Self Development	.46	.11	.14	.15	.14
Social	.48	.01	.16	.21	.14
Home and Community	.11	.02	.01	.65	.21

About one-half of those who give Self-development as their primary motive enrol in Arts courses, and the rest are spread fairly evenly in the other types of courses. (Again, it is four times more likely that a learner with this motive will enrol in an Arts course than a Business course).

The same pattern is shown among those who give Social reasons for enrolling, with the exception that they avoid Business course almost entirely. Two-thirds of those who give Home or Community work as their primary motive enrol in Services courses, and they avoid Business and Health courses almost entirely.

5. Effects on Participation in a Previous Course



Summary:

- Only Sex, Age, Quals affect participation in the course.
- Males had a lower probability than females of having done a previous course,
- Middle-aged and older people had a higher probability than young people, and
- More qualified people had a higher probability than unqualified people.
- Older qualified females (highest odds) are about 2.5 times more likely to have done a previous course than young, unqualified males (lowest odds).

Key:

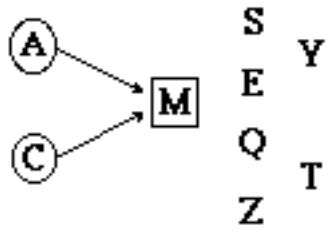
P = Previous course taken (Yes, No)
S = Sex (Male; Female)
A = Age (Young, under 30; Middle,30-49; Old, over 50)
Q = Qualifications (None; Certificate; Degree or Diploma)
E = Employment (Employed, FT or PT, student; Not Employed: unemployed, home, retired, pensioner)
Z = Country of Birth (Born in Australia; Not Born in Australia)
C = Course area Major Field (Arts,Humanities and Social Sciences; Business; Health; Services; Other)

What kinds of learners are more likely to have taken a *previous* course? The effects of learner variables and present course area were examined. Only the sex, age and qualifications of learners were significant, each variable having an individual effect on whether a previous course was taken. There were no interactions between the explanatory variables. Employment status, country of birth and present course area were not important.

The odds of having done a previous course were 0.57 to 1 for female, young, unqualified people. These odds were two-thirds lower for males, about 1.5 times higher for middle-aged and old people and about 1.7 times higher for those with diploma or degree qualifications. In other words, males had a lower probability than females of having done a previous course, middle-aged and older people had a higher probability than young people, and more qualified people had a higher probability than unqualified people.

The lowest odds of having done a previous course are about 0.4 to 1 for young, unqualified males, corresponding to a probability of about one-quarter. The highest odds are about 1.5 to 1 for older females with diploma or degree qualifications, corresponding to a probability of 0.6.

6. Effects of Learner and Provider on Persistence of Course Major Field (n=893)



Summary:

- Only the learner's age and present course area affect whether their past course Major Field was the same
- The probability of past being the same as present course area is highest for older people in Arts courses, and lowest for young people in Services.

Key:

M = Same = Previous Course in Same Course Area (Yes; No)
A = Age (Young, under 30; Middle,30-49; Old, over 50)
C = Course area Major Field (Arts,Humanities and Social Sciences; Business; Health; Services; Other)
S = Sex (Male; Female)
Q = Qualifications (None; Certificate; Degree or Diploma)
E = Employment (Employed, FT or PT, student; Not Employed: unemployed, home, retired, pensioner)
Z = Country of Birth (Born in Australia; Not Born in Australia)
Y = Type of college (Large Metropolitan; Medium metropolitan; Medium country; Small country centre)
T = Total of past courses (n).

A further aspect of participation is whether those who have taken a previous course are enrolled in the *same major field of study*, ('same major field'). Since less than half of the sample reported doing a previous course, the sample size was reduced in this case to just under 900. The effects of learner and provider variables were investigated.

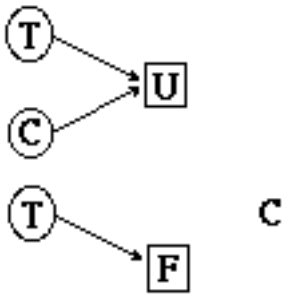
The only variables with a significant effect on the variable 'same major field' were age and present course area. These had independent effects. Variables sex, employment status, qualifications, country of birth, type of college and previous course total were not significant.

Overall, just under half of those who reported taking a previous course had done this in the same area as their present course. The probability of the same course area is highest in the Arts field and lowest in Services and Home or Community work. The probability of the same course area increases slightly from young to middle-aged, and then significantly from middle-aged to old.

The odds of the previous course being in the same area are about even (1 to 1) for young people in Arts courses. These odds are about the same for middle-aged people, but double for older people. The odds are approximately halved for all other course areas. The highest odds are 2.3 to 1 for older people in Arts

courses, corresponding to a probability of 0.7. The lowest odds are 0.5 to 1 for young people in Services courses, corresponding to a probability of 0.3.

7. Effect of Course Variables on Participation in Concurrent or Future Courses



Summary:

- The total number of previous courses taken was the most important influence on concurrent and planned course-taking
- The probability of a learner taking a concurrent course is markedly increased for those reporting five or more past courses
- The probability of a learner planning a future course is .87 for such learners

Key:

U = Taking a concurrent course (Yes, No)
F = Planning a future course (Yes, No)
T = Total of previous ACE courses taken (Number)
C = Course area Major Field (Arts,Humanities and Social Sciences; Business; Health; Services; Other)

Again, past participation might be expected to influence present and future course-taking. The analysis explored the effect of present course area and total number of previous courses (ptot) on whether or not people were taking another course concurrently, or were planning a future course.

Total number of previous courses was the most important influence on another course and on future course. Present course area was significant, but not as important, for another course, and did not show a significant interaction with total number of previous courses. Present course area did not have a significant effect on future course.

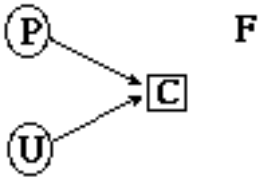
The overall probability of doing a concurrent course is about 0.2. The probability is higher if more courses have been done previously, with a substantial increase among those people reporting doing 5 or more courses. Variations in present course area are not so marked. The highest probabilities are in Business and Home or Community work, the lowest probabilities are in Arts and Services.

The same information can be presented in terms of odds. The odds of doing a concurrent course are 0.12 with a low previous course total and in the Arts area. These odds are doubled with medium previous course total and multiplied by 8 with high previous course total. The odds are increased by about 1.5 in the

Business, Health and Home or Community work areas, and decreased slightly in the Services area. The highest odds are 1.5 in the Business area with a high previous course total, corresponding to a probability of 0.6. The lowest odds are 0.1 in the Services area with a low previous course total.

The odds of planning a future course are 1.8 for those people who have a low previous course total, corresponding to a probability of 0.65. The odds and probabilities increase for those people who have done more previous courses. For those who report doing 5 or more previous courses, the odds of planning a future course are 6.8, corresponding to a probability of 0.87.

8. Participation Effects on Enrolment in Present Course



Summary:

- Whether a learner reports completing a previous course and whether they are doing another course have a significant effect on present course area
- Planning a future course has no effect on present course area

Key:

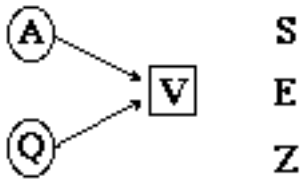
C = Course area Major Field (Arts,Humanities and Social Sciences; Business; Health; Services; Other)
U = Taking a concurrent course (Yes, No)
F = Planning a future course (Yes, No)
T = Total of previous ACE courses taken (Number)

To further explore participation effects, it is interesting to ask what are the effects of levels of a learner's past-course-taking, and their planned and other current course-taking on their present course area (Major Field) of enrolment. All variables had significant effects except the planning of a future course, and none of these effects interacted.

However, the analysis revealed some strange features of the previous course total variable. There were inconsistent results, as people reported having done previous courses and doing concurrent courses, but having a low previous course total. Of most concern was that some people who did not respond to the section on 'a course before this one' and were not doing concurrent courses reported a high previous course total.[11] For these reasons, it was decided to drop the variable 'previous course total' from the analysis.

Having done this, previous course and another course still had a significant effect on present course area, while future course was still not significant. Overall, courses in the Arts area were most common whether or not a person had done a previous course or was doing a concurrent course. The odds of all courses compared to Arts are about 0.5 to 1. Doing a previous course increases the odds and the probabilities for Health, decreases for Business and leaves the other course areas essentially unchanged. Doing another course concurrently increases the odds and the probabilities for Business, Health and Home or Community work, decreases them for Services and Arts.

9. Effect of Learner and Course Area on Provider of Previous Course



Summary:

- Age and qualifications are the only variables with a significant effect on previous provider
- The overall probability of having ACE as previous provider is between 60 and 80%
- This is decreased with higher qualifications and increased with age of the learner
- ACE is from three to eight times more likely a provider than TAFE, of the previous course

Key:

V = Provider of Previous Course (ACE Centre, TAFE college, University, Other)
S = Sex (Male; Female)
A = Age = Young (under 30), Middle (30-49) and Old (over 50)
Q = Qualifications (None; Certificate; Degree or Diploma)
E = Employment (Employed, FT or PT, student; Not Employed: unemployed, home, retired, pensioner)
Z = Country of Birth (Born in Australia; Not Born in Australia)

Finally, the analysis throws some light on what makes the difference to learners taking a past course in ACE, as opposed to other providers. The effect of learner characteristics, course area and primary motive for enrolling were examined. The learner characteristics used were sex, age, employment status, qualifications and country of birth. The only variables with a significant effect on previous provider were age and qualifications, and they had independent effects with no interaction. Present course just failed to have a significant effect: however, including it in the model would create a large number of classifications with many empty cells, so it was decided to leave it out.

More than 70% of people who had done previous courses had ACE as the past provider. For young, unqualified people the odds of TAFE as past provider compared to ACE were 0.4 to 1, University 0.1 to 1 and Other also 0.1 to 1. These odds are further reduced with increasing age for TAFE and University, but increased for Other. They are increased for TAFE and Other for those with certificate qualifications and decreased for those with diploma or degree qualifications, and vice versa for University.

In other words, the overall probability of having ACE as previous provider is between 0.6 and 0.8. The next most common is TAFE with probabilities of between 0.1 and 0.3. Increasing age increases the probabilities of ACE and decreases the probabilities of TAFE. Increasing qualifications to certificate level increases the probabilities of TAFE at the expense of ACE. A further increase in qualifications to diploma or degree level increases the probabilities of University as past provider at the expense of TAFE.

The young, especially those with certificate qualifications, are least likely to have ACE as past provider. Older people with diploma or degree qualifications are most likely to have ACE as past provider. The most likely with TAFE are young people with certificates and the least likely are older people with diploma or degree qualifications. The most likely with University are young people with diploma or degree qualifications, the least likely are certificate qualified people of all ages. The most likely to have Other as previous provider are older people with no qualifications or certificates, the least likely are young people with diplomas or degrees.

Summary

The primary focus of this learner survey was to document the prevalence of the vocational motive among ACE participants. A prior question however, is 'for whom is the learning vocational or non-vocational?'. The survey results thus provide a broad picture of participation in ACE in terms of learner characteristics such as sex, age, qualifications, employment status, and country of birth. In addition these learner characteristics were related to motives for enrolling and to the course areas undertaken. What are the principal conclusions to be drawn from the analysis of the results?

- Several motives are at work for most participants.

Although only 26% of respondents reported the vocational motive as the dominant motive up to 90% have a vocational component among their motives (when 'vocational' includes 'becoming a better informed or skilled person).

While it is true that vocational motives operate even when the course is ostensibly non-vocational, it is also true that non-vocational motives operate even when the course is narrowly vocational. This is consistent with the results of similar surveys conducted in the USA ,where non-vocational motives are reported as operating even when the course area is narrowly vocational (Courtney, 1992). The point needs to be made that in survey research of this type, alternatives to the vocational motive as the primary motive are attractive to respondents because they are necessarily couched in higher order phrases such as 'developing personal skills and talents' or 'becoming a better informed or skilled person' - phrases which are interpreted as potentially including the vocational motive.

- Adult and community education is more likely to be 'continuing' rather than 'compensatory'

Those who pursue adult education opportunities are not necessarily making up for earlier educational deficiencies. Indeed, those who have already reached the highest levels of formal education are disproportionally represented among the ranks of the participants in adult education. This is consistent with the findings of participation surveys in the UK and North America.

- Adult and community education is not attracting a wide variety of learners from the population.

Those sections of the population under represented in adult education are males, the unemployed, the less well educated, older people, and people from non-English speaking countries. The sample did not determine how many Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander people participate, but this is unlikely to be inconsistent with this pattern.

- Motive for participation depends vary largely on the course area

The reported primary motive for enrolling seems to interact with the course area undertaken. For example 50% of participants in Business courses report a vocational motive as their primary motive, 50% of participants in Arts courses report a self development motive, and 67% in Services courses report a community work motive.

- Participants will generally take more than one course in the sector.

Participants have taken adult education courses before and more say they will take future courses in the sector. Perhaps this reflects the 'general participation syndrome' reported elsewhere (London and Ewing, 1982). Courtney (1992) depicts this syndrome: 'a participant in adult education is more likely to be an

active and productive participant in his or her community, and in the society at large, than someone who is not ... adult education is a form of cultural engagement' (p 51).

Notes

1 The researchers wish to acknowledge the significant contribution to this chapter of our statistical consultants, colleagues from the UTS School of Mathematical Sciences, Dr Peter Petocz and Ms Leigh Wood. The descriptive statistics in the first part of the chapter were produced in consultation with Ms Wood who also arranged data entry and checking of data quality. Dr Petocz prepared the inferential statistics and the second part of the Chapter based on his report.

2 The survey design drew on Johnstone and Rivera's categories of motive for participation, and aimed to improve on the 'Nation of Learners' study by defining course variables in terms of Field of Study and distinguishing motive and outcome as learner variables. This is consistent with the view that motive is learner-defined not a course feature. Cf. Chapter Three, criticisms of 'Streams of Study' and supposed 'leisure and enrichment' motivation for short courses. See also Clark (1982) on needed developments in Australian participation studies.

3 In any year, over a quarter of a million people enrol in ACE colleges and centres. Term 1 has the largest enrolments usually, so the survey was planned for the term when highest participation occurs. The survey thus represents approximately a one per cent sample of the yearly enrolment of learners.

4 Thanks are due to the Board of ACE who gave their full support to the survey. The support of providers had been canvassed during the Provider Survey. A Board teleconference with the Executive Director briefed providers, and personal letters were sent to Principals, Co-ordinators and Tutors asking for their assistance. Principals identified Tutors for each class in a list of course areas supplied to them. The survey forms were batched in numbered packets together with a letter and instructions to the Tutor. The tutors were promised a copy of the results on filling out a request with the returned forms intact in the packet. Principals agreed to collect up and dispatch the forms and more than three-quarters were returned within a fortnight.

5 The sampling model approximates the NSW ACE Profile fairly closely, except in the Clothing and Cooking course areas (11 Services field). This is because the NSW ACE Profile is weighted to favour the largest colleges which have the bulk of the enrolments in the Board-funded providers. The sampling model is closer to the profile of Medium and Small Providers and is a therefore the preferred basis for asking providers to nominate classes.

6 A coding manual was produced for a group of five student coders who were instructed in the coding procedures and supervised during the coding process, so that anomalies were noted and corrected at the time. Very few respondent anomalies (such as incomplete or nil returns) were noted. During data entry, similar checks were made on consistency and accuracy of coding. The consulting statisticians had close knowledge of the process and were confident of the data being of high quality.

7 Only the data for primary motive - the way in which the course was expected to be 'most helpful' is reported here.

8 In other words, Table 5.3 summarises the diagonals on a set of three 15 x 15 contingency tables.

9 This sampling specified the kind and number of courses each provider should sample. It allowed the Small Providers (who sampled only three courses each) to replace any of these by similar courses if they were not running the required type. This replacement took place only in such centres, and may have affected the profile of small centres (see Table 5.2).

10 These were: Self-development ("Developing a personal skill or talent" and "Becoming a better informed or skilled person" and "Preparing for or assisting with other studies") ; Work (for current or future job); Social ("Using spare time more enjoyably" and "Meeting new and interesting people"); and Home and Community ("Improving and developing

household work skills" and "Assisting with activities in the community"). It should be noted this grouping is different from that of the earlier discussion of primary motive.

[11] Some 1146 learners gave a nil response to the section on 'A course before this one' , yet only 470 (22%) reported 'no previous course' when asked to enumerate their previous courses later in the survey. This apparent flaw in the survey may be due to several reasons (a) because of a misunderstanding, supported by reports from some tutors returning the forms, that learners sometimes took the 'past course' section as referring again to their present course. This may explain the similarity of outcomes and motive data reported (b) It may have been that respondents were confused as to whether to include the actual course they were doing in their previous course total. There were a group of people apparently doing 5 or more courses at the same time, as they did not report having done any previous courses. These doubts about the data should be borne in mind in drawing conclusions about the effects of past course-taking in this survey.

Chapter 6

Issues for ACE providers

This study set out to determine the sextant of vocational education and training in the ACE sector. It has achieved this by exploring the nature and scope of the vocational dimension of ACE, from the perspective of course content (Chapter 3), provider perceptions (Chapter 4), and learner characteristics and motives (Chapter 5). In summary the findings are that:

- the ACE curriculum has a strong vocational component, especially when the standard Tertiary Field of Study classification system is applied to categorise course content
- providers report a strong and growing demand for specifically vocational courses, and they outline the ways in which the broad curriculum leads to vocational outcomes
- learners are clearly motivated by vocational concerns in undertaking adult education courses

In this final chapter an attempt is made to identify the issues faced by providers in enhancing the sector's vocational education and training initiatives. The recommendations contained in the report are then summarised

ACE providers in NSW confront a number of emerging dilemmas. These express the key issues surrounding the development of the sector's vocational education and training role:

The funding dilemma

As per-student Board funding has steadily diminished, the largest providers have benefited by being able to underwrite their general program through special programs often funded at a higher rate per student than then Board can provide. The benefits have flowed mainly to those providers that have the base from which to tender for these competitive, and non-recurrent funds.

Yet the gains from short-term funding are bought at very considerable opportunity costs, including the time invested in the tendering process, the administrative demands created, the over-stretching of infrastructure and the stress on dedicated staff.

The 'funding dilemma' is two-fold: a risk of investing more time in funding applications than the success rate makes worthwhile and the risk of success leading to program expansion outrunning the administrative capacity of the centre and causing staff burn-out. This dilemma is felt most keenly in the medium-sized providers, some of whom have grown to a critical point where a minimal infrastructure (temporary or home office, one centre, few tutors, volunteer support) is suddenly overburdened. Growth also generates higher expectations from all parties - the College management, the Board itself, the student clientele, other providers and the local community.

These providers are experiencing the real 'opportunity costs' of diversifying the funding base - higher workloads, increased stress on staff, investment of time in submission writing, administration of grant monies including budget management, multiple centres and staff to oversee, all added to the ongoing effort to maintain a marginally unprofitable general program.[1] These are to be reckoned as the 'hidden costs' of underwriting expansion through non-Board funding. Such costs are common to many community-based services which are asked to diversify their resource base beyond their recurrent State grant.

Thus continuing development of the sector needs to measure the many benefits of ACE's expansion against the real development costs involved. Its high cost-effectiveness and self-funding should not obscure the need for increased levels of infrastructure funding and greater support for planning and community management skills.

The recognition dilemma

ACE providers are operating in a state of flux, trying to define their relationship to TAFE and School Education, to other agencies including local government, responding to the local labour market, attracting CES funding and linking more closely to local organisations and employers - and not least, the Board itself and accreditation authorities such as VETAB. There are dilemmas in defining those linkages which will be important in determining ACE's immediate vocational role.

A key dilemma for providers is clarifying what relationships are most important for bringing about greater recognition of ACE courses and the learning they represent. While it is tempting to further extend the vocational role to win

recognition for ACE, there is a dilemma, especially in articulating with TAFE colleges and universities. If ACE becomes more vocational, it risks a wasteful competition with TAFE, private colleges and other community providers. On the other hand, if ACE links too closely to TAFE it may lose its prized flexibility as TAFE dictates requirements for course to have credit. Part of the resolution of this dilemma is to separate 'recognition' of ACE courses from the accreditation agenda and to open up other avenues of recognition, especially in the area of the linkages ACE makes with community and other organisations.

The accreditation dilemma

Accreditation is seen as having costs and benefits. A rush to accreditation would threaten the very features of ACE courses that make them the 'lubricant' of the current vocational education and training system: accessibility, responsiveness to immediate need, quality control through fee-paying students and cost-effectiveness. Yet without accreditation of at least the courses most in demand, ACE will not be linked effectively into national training structures. ACE will be marginalised.

There are misgivings about potential of accreditation to undermine the value of adult education, especially when the liberal values of adult education are expressed in terms of its freedom from the rigidity of many formal courses. By going to far with accreditation, ACE would lose the very breadth of outcome it contributes to the vocational education and training system. As one large college expressed it -

> On the one hand, the [national] curriculum provides enormous opportunities for us ... perhaps we can define our role and be recognised as offering more than hobby courses. We could be evaluated as offering quality. But there is a real risk that we define our main aims as providing vocational education and training and risk downgrading and de-valuing the existing adult education provision. Apart from the extremities, I have trouble telling what is what ... There is the absurdity of assuming that a course has to be done by some one for them to end up doing a certain kind of work, when experience obtained as well as courses, and an attitude to doing a kind of work are important. We are starting to describe vocational education and training in terms of courses, not a range of experiences, some of which are vocational (Provider 6)

Part of the solution is to treat accreditation as comprising many issues including the recognition of adults' learning prior to courses and the creation of explicit learner pathways by links with other providers. Providers see that there is a wider agenda to be addressed than the step of accrediting selected courses through VETAB.

The independence dilemma

Providers large and small stress their autonomy as largely self-funding and community-managed organisations. Their sense of accountability to their 'markets' or student clientele is as great as to the Board of Adult and Community Education, and there is some resistance to perceived 'bureaucratisation' accompanying the Board's requests for information from centres. The dilemma is that providers cannot hope to make any progress in the quest for greater recognition unless the Board and other bodies have the information to argue for better funding and recognition of the sector as whole, and providers themselves need quality data for their own planning purposes.

The most common responses to the providers' survey question about what kind of student information should be collected by the Board (Q18) were 'students' reasons for enrolling and their gains from the course'.[2] However, providers are questioning the value of non-incoming earning 'research' collecting data on their own activities. The dilemma is that winning better recognition for the sector is not going to be done without much improved statistical data on ACE students and courses. Further, to market courses effectively means providers need their own data for planning. Thus, one task in helping the sector to develop and fulfil its expanded role is to ensure there is agreement by the sector on the collection and use of data by providers and the Board. (This issue relates to matters raised regarding ACE statistics in Chapter 3).

The values dilemma

A majority of providers feel their core values to be under threat from the vocational emphasis. It is not the rationale for community-based educational access in small often isolated country centres. Expanding into vocational activities to underwrite the general program is not really an option for the smaller

providers who are even more at risk of over-reaching their ability to service an expanded program except through exploiting a volunteer workforce. They tend to see traditional adult education as being de-valued by the push into vocational education, even when they are doing it as part of their role.

Such is the expansion of demand in areas such as computer and business training that there is a perceived threat to 'broad adult education' values. This raises a dilemma for some providers about how to reconcile a diversifying program with the historical commitment to liberal adult education, a question about whether the ethos is being undermined. The dilemma is part resolved by some Colleges through a curriculum emphasis on generic skills. They re-assert the vocational relevance of the 'education of the whole person' and argue that their learners are seeking this broadening value of adult education as part of their enhancement of their work skills.

Conclusion

This study supports the conclusion that ACE has experienced a widespread expansion into 'vocational' courses. These are being demanded by new clienteles of small business and local organisations, as well as individuals. They want business, management, computing and communications courses. The benefits of this expansion are widely recognised in meeting a huge demand for career-transition and other needs arising from the changing workplace.

The ACE sector is performing very cost-effectively from its meagre resource base to meet this demand for vocationally relevant learning. However, there are signs that the infrastructure in many centres is being stretched beyond its limits. For ACE to realise the potential in this vocational role, the development costs (including matters of accreditation and curriculum development) need to be properly resourced.

ACE expansion in to vocational education and training activities underlines the key point that short non-credit courses are a vital element in assisting persons and communities to adapt to massive workplace and technological change, and rising unemployment, and the stimulus of the training reform agenda. The expanded role of ACE has been underscored by its success in developing a system of true

community-based short course provision as quickly as TAFE colleges have withdrawn from it.

The demand for short course provision through ACE also highlights the need to define the scope of vocational education and training in broad rather than narrow terms. Clever country objectives are achieved through a broad view of work and related competence, rather than one which values only formally accredited and industry-specific courses. Such a broad view is consistent with a concept of lifelong education and recurrent learning opportunities of the kind ACE in NSW offers. It is consistent with the 'community college' model now adopted by the community-based ACE providers, a model once espoused by TAFE to ensure that courses were accessible and responsive to adults' learning needs[3]. In these terms, ACE is emerging as a key component in a total vocational education and training system that is responsive and flexible to both workplace and personal learning needs.

Notes

1 All types of providers used the survey to make comments about the number of unpaid hours that needed to be worked in order to maintain the college or centre at its current level of provision. On funding levels, see Government Funding of Adult and Community Education in NSW, a submission by the Council of NSW ACE Organisations to the NSW ACE Board. This claimed a decrease in real terms of 22% in nine years while enrolments have risen by 88% (Appendix to Submission).

2 About 15, or 40% of classifiable responses to the question, though a third of providers gave no clear answers. The next question (Q19) found an overwhelming majority of respondents were prepared to distribute the Survey Of ACE Learners which gave attention to motives for enrolling and outcomes of courses. See Chapter 5 for a full discussion.

3 See Chapter 3 for references on the development of TAFE since the Kangan Report, TAFE In Australia (1974).

Glossary of Terms

AAACE	Australian Association of Adult and Community Education
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACE	Adult and Community Education
ACFEB	Adult, Community and Further Education Board (Victoria)
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AEC	Australian Education Council
ALLP	Australian Language and Literacy Policy
AMES	Adult Migrant English (formerly Education) Service
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
ASF	Australian Skills Framework
BACE	Board of Adult and Community Education (NSW)
CAEC	Community Adult Education Centre
CALM	Conservation, Agriculture and Land Management (NSW)
CBT	Competency Based Training
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training (Federal)
DIRE	Department of Industrial Relations and Training (NSW)
ECCA	Evening and Community Colleges Association (NSW)
ESL	English Second Language
FOS	Field of Study
MOVEET	Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training
NFROT	National Framework for the Recognition of Training
NTB	National Training Board
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TDC	Trade Development Commission
TGA	Training Guarantee Act
VETA	Vocational Education and Training Agency
VETAB	Vocational Education and Training Board
WEA	Workers Educational Association

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