

Adult Literacy and Numeracy Australian Research Consortium

ALNARC

THE ROLE OF ADULT LITERACY AND NUMERACY POLICY, PROVISION AND RESEARCH
IN LIFELONG LEARNING AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

2001

Vision Statement

ALNARC represents a national innovative collaboration between university-based centres in most states for research into adult literacy and numeracy. This gives ALNARC a unique profile internationally. The Consortium aims to:

- * Develop and maintain an active research culture
- * Contribute to the quality of practice, professional development, research and policy
- * Carry out commissioned research projects
- * Respond to state and national needs as required

Background to the Consortium

The Australian National Training Authority Training funds ALNARC to promote research activity in adult literacy and numeracy. Details of previous research programs can be found on the ALNARC website.

Purpose of the Consortium

ALNARC seeks to foster a culture of inquiry about adult numeracy and literacy provision in contemporary Australian communities, education settings and workplaces. Activities include the following:

- * national research projects guided by stakeholder consultations
- * professional development activities that explore the implications of research
- * publications about adult literacy and numeracy and dissemination to a range of audiences
- * collaboration with other research and advocacy groups
- * position papers to provide strategic guidance

National Office

The National Office provides overall coordination for ALNARC projects and activities. The Office is currently hosted by Victoria University.

The National Advisory Committee

Most states have an Advisory Committee to assist it in its work. The National Advisory Committee provides broad advice about research directions. Its membership consists of Centre Directors, representatives from ANTA, DETYA, national industry training advisory bodies and the Australian Council for Adult Literacy.

Professor Kaye Schofield, RCVET, University of Technology, Sydney is the current Chair of the National Advisory Committee.

ALNARC Research Program - June 2001 - June 2002

For the period June 2001 - June 2002 the ALNARC research program addresses the issue of the role of adult literacy and numeracy in lifelong learning and socio-economic well-being.

The current research program consists of four interlocking projects.

Project #1: What does the past tell us about the role of adult numeracy and literacy?

- * What initiatives have been undertaken in recent years in adult literacy and numeracy policy and research? How have they been designed to improve vocational and lifelong learning opportunities?
- * Can Australia be informed by new policy and program developments in the UK and elsewhere in industrial countries?
- * How have policy in the literacy and numeracy area, and policy in related areas (e.g. health, poverty, (un)employment, and casualisation of work) informed each other?

Project #2: What does the present tell us about the role of adult numeracy and literacy?

This project produces five examples of literacy and numeracy provision across contexts as diverse as workplace learning, community provision and vocational training. A range of methodologies are employed across sites to provide insights into the contemporary context of existing literacy and numeracy practices and what these practices might tell us about future provision.

Project #3: Scenarios for the future

This project considers future scenarios for adult literacy and numeracy use in work and community contexts where notions of skills and knowledge are in a process of rapid transformation? It explores these scenarios through a series of interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral discussion papers, which will form the basis of an online forum during the early months of 2002.

Project #4: Implications for adult literacy and numeracy provision and research: an analysis of the 'evidence'.

ALNARC's overall research plan is drawn together under this project.

Publications

ALNARC has strongly advocated for the development of a 'visible' research culture about adult literacy and numeracy through a range of publications widely available through the ALNARC National website and its links.

Researchers sponsored by ALNARC develop multiple formats for dissemination of research using journal articles, pamphlets, and chapters in books. We also will explore 'research monograph' publications.

Collaboration with Stakeholders

In addition to advisory structures and ongoing networking, a feature of the current research program will be an On-line Forum planned for the early months of 2002.

In general our consultations for the June 2001- June 2002 program invite stakeholders to engage with the following issues:

- * What form might future adult literacy and numeracy policies take?
- * Is there evidence to support the claim that more integrated policy will provide greater leverage for workplace learning and effective citizenship programs?
- * What are the future implications for improved policy, provision and research?

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Funded under the ANTA Adult Literacy National Project by the Commonwealth through the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.