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# IMPROVING STUDENT OUTCOMES IN THE VET SECTOR

Through Effective Professional Development for  
Teachers: Enabling Learn Locals to Lead the Way

An International Specialised Skills Institute Fellowship.

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# i. Executive Summary

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The Victorian Department of Education and Training (Higher Education and Skills Group – HESG) prioritises improving the quality of delivery in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, yet there is not a systematic approach to the Professional Development (PD) of teachers. The Fellow has investigated PD approaches in North America, with a view to informing improvements in the Victorian model. In March/April 2017, she attended the TESOL conference in Seattle, USA and met with innovative practitioners and researchers in Calgary, Canada and Minnesota, USA where she deepened her understanding of PD and pedagogical approaches, as well as PD models.

The Fellow is Manager at Carringbush Adult Education, a Learn Local Registered Training Organisation (RTO) delivering English as an Additional Language (EAL), Literacy and work readiness programs in Richmond and Collingwood. She has worked in a variety of educational settings in Australia and Asia Pacific for over 30 years.

The overarching theme of effective PD approaches observed by the Fellow is that PD needs to be sustained, rather than occasional one-off events, in order for teachers to engage in systematic reflection.<sup>1</sup> Teachers should be actively engaged in their own PD, with opportunities to be collegiate and to consider how research can inform classroom practice.

Pedagogical approaches to teaching EAL/Literacy learners which were observed centred around implementing teaching strategies which increase the level of rigour in the classroom. Effective teachers need to ensure that every activity has

a purpose which relates to skill building for the learner. Numeracy should be embedded in EAL/Literacy lessons and pronunciation should be taught explicitly, as well as incidentally throughout a lesson.

The model of PD for teachers of EAL/Literacy teachers in Minnesota, USA is a very systematic one which could inform the approach in Victoria. The Department of Education in Minnesota has one coordinator of PD who oversees six organisations which are contracted to facilitate the delivery of PD to EAL/Literacy teachers. Government priorities and current research in best practice teaching methodology is disseminated to teachers across the state in a systematic way.

It is exciting for the Fellow to be part of the discussion of the best ways to approach the professional development of teachers, as we know that teacher effectiveness is so important to improved student outcomes. We should, as individual organisations and the VET sector as a whole, be monitoring the links between teacher classroom practice, professional learning opportunities, and positive student outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

The Fellowship has provided a platform from which to engage key stakeholders in the VET/Learn Local sector in meaningful dialogue about steps which could be taken to improve the quality of education provided to often disadvantaged people. This Fellowship can inform improved PD approaches in the Learn Local sector specifically and in the VET sector more broadly.

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1 Farrell, T. Language Teacher Professional Development 2015 TESOL International Association, p.8

2 Hattie, J. <http://www.educationaleaders.govt.nz/Pedagogy-and-assessment/Building-effective-learning-environments/Teachers-Make-a-Difference-What-is-the-Research-Evidence>, accessed 20/9/2017.

The Fellow recommends that HESG works with key stakeholders to develop a more comprehensive model of PD for teachers of EAL/Literacy in the Learn Local sector. This model could include:

- » Requirements for all teachers to participate in a minimum amount of PD each year (as is required in the P-12 sector<sup>3</sup>).
- » A more transparent system underpinning what type of PD is required and who is responsible for providing it.
- » An expectation that the approaches to PD provided include opportunities for teachers to reflect on and engage with research which inform their classroom practice.
- » An expectation that the approaches to PD provided include opportunities for teachers to collaborate with and learn from other practitioners.
- » That HESG works closely with PD providers to ensure Government priorities are properly realised through PD for teachers.

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<sup>3</sup> Victorian Institute of Teaching, <http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/registered-teacher/renewing-my-registration/professional-development>, accessed 20/9/2017

# 1. Fellowship Background

## 1.1 Fellowship Aims

The HESG has identified amongst its priorities to develop quality education and training systems for VET and to support disadvantaged persons through education and training.<sup>4</sup> The Fellowship's primary focus was on quality teaching and learning in the Learn Local context, however many of the learnings are transferrable to other educational settings, including the broader VET sector.

The key aim of the Fellowship was to investigate how to achieve better outcomes for disadvantaged adult EAL/literacy learners, through an exploration of best practice models of Professional Development for teachers.

In the Learn Local sector, there is a great need to support learners who have multiple barriers to full participation in education and employment, which can include a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background and low literacy and interrupted schooling in their first language. These adult beginner learners with more complex needs, such as lack of learning strategies, require particular strategies for teaching and assessing, so their teachers need to have regular PD in order to be delivering programs that reflect the most recent research on how to achieve the best outcomes for their learners and gain ideas for their own classroom based action research. Most pre-service teacher training focuses on teaching primary and secondary students, so teachers need additional opportunities which allow them to improve their own teaching strategies and to gain more knowledge about the barriers which may make learning difficult for adults.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, the field of language teaching is always changing, responding to new research, to changes in student needs and to government policy. Therefore, teachers should regularly update their skills and knowledge and need help to build theories of good teaching.<sup>6</sup>

It became apparent to the Fellow that despite teachers at Carringbush Adult Education having post-graduate qualifications in TESOL, they were not fully meeting the needs of the students. This was supported by research which shows that whilst most EAL teachers are well qualified and experienced, there is insufficient training available in working specifically with low-literate EAL students, who are learning English without having literacy in any language, and that there is a need for PD in this area of teaching.<sup>7</sup>

In the context of Carringbush Adult Education, it was also discovered that teachers didn't have an adequate knowledge base regarding the teaching of oral communication skills, despite the fact that learners had identified that being able to speak and be understood was an important goal. Research supports this, indicating that in many cases, insufficient time is spent on pedagogical focus in pre-service training in pronunciation.<sup>8</sup> Most teachers, therefore, lack knowledge and skills and so need comprehensive and continuing PD in order to feel adequately supported. Canadian research showed that the training opportunities

6 Richards, J. & Farrell, S. (2005), Farrell, in: *Language Teacher Professional Development*, 2015, TESOL International Association, Virginia, p.12

7 Vinogradov & Liden. (2009) Vinogradov, P. & Liden, A. (2009) *Principled training for LESLLA instructors*. LOT Occasional Series, Volume 5. Utrecht, NL: LOT, Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics. pp.133-134

8 Baker as cited in Grant, L. (Ed.). (2014). *Pronunciation myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching*. Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Press, p.201

4 <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/providers/rto/Pages/profdev.aspx>, accessed 20/9/2017)

5 Smith, C., & Gillepsie, M. (2007) *Research on professional development and teacher change: Implications for Adult Basic Education.*, <http://academia.edu>, p.210, accessed 18/9/17, p.210

required to meet this teacher need have in the main been insufficient.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Macdonald's Australian research showed that teachers were reluctant to teach pronunciation, as they did not have the knowledge or skills to do so. Concerningly, a follow-up study in Canada showed that 10 years later there was still insufficient pre-service and PD support for teachers in how to teach pronunciation.<sup>10</sup> This finding is also reflected in the Australian context.

### Professional Development for EAL/Literacy teachers in Victoria

To date, PD for EAL/Literacy teachers has been ad hoc in nature, lacking a systematic approach. Various agencies and peak bodies such as VicTESOL, AMES, VALBEC, Adult Learners Australia (ALA) and VDC have provided one-off workshops, which have been somewhat useful to teachers. However, what is more effective is duration<sup>11</sup> (Birman et al, 2003), as teachers need time and opportunities to interact with colleagues about how research can be effectively applied in the classroom.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, there has been no clearly mandated requirement for PD for teachers in the sector, which often means that organisations which are stretched financially and grappling with increasing compliance requirements, find it difficult to prioritise continuing PD for teachers. An added consideration is that, in this sector, there are mostly part time staff and classes across different sites, making PD and collegiality difficult.<sup>13</sup> Managers often resort to sending individual teachers to occasional, one-off workshops in the hope that some learning will occur.

Over recent years there have been some worthwhile projects completed, in which Learn Local organisations have looked into different aspects of PD. The Word for Word project, which was conducted by Keysborough Learning Centre on behalf of the ACFE Regional Council of the Southern Metropolitan Region in 2016, recommended that teachers need to be supported through PD and opportunities to share experiences and resources.<sup>14</sup> The Gippsland Learn and Connect project involved many partner organisations, led by Buchan Neighbourhood House, with Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre. It found that teachers need mentoring and financial support to develop their skills and understanding of pre accredited teaching and learning, particularly in an online environment and that collegial support through collaborations such as Communities of Practice will support isolated teachers to access and share information.<sup>15</sup> The issue, however, is that there has been little opportunity for sharing the learnings from these projects with others in the sector, with the result being that their potential impact is reduced.

The Fellow began a journey to investigate the best ways to support Carringbush Adult Education teachers in their professional development, beginning with researching and trialling approaches to upskilling them in their understanding of the features of oral communication and in the use of improved strategies for teaching pronunciation. The focus of the investigation extended to an examination of innovative approaches to professional development of teachers in all areas of their work teaching adult EAL/literacy learners.

By identifying and then implementing a best practice model of professional development for teachers, a key objective was improved quality in teaching strategies, leading to better educational outcomes for learners. Better educational outcomes will result in greater participation and more invested engagement by the learners, allowing them to be better placed to tackle further training and employment and/or greater levels of community engagement.

9 Breitkreutz, Derwing and Rossiter (as cited in Grant, L. (Ed.). (2014). *Pronunciation myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching*. Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Press

10 Foote, Holtby and Derwing as cited in Grant, L. (Ed.). (2014). *Pronunciation myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching*. Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Press, p.198

11 Birman, B., Desimone, L., Porter, A., & Grant, M. (2003) *Designing professional development that works*. Ipswich, MA, USA. Retrieved 18/9/16, <http://upm.edu.my>: EBSCO publishing.

12 Burt, M., Peyton, J., & Scaetzel, K. (2008) *Working with Adult English Language Learners with limited literacy: Research, practice and professional development*. Washington DC: Centre for Applied Linguistics.

13 Smith, C., & Gillepsie, M. (2007), *Ibid*, p.212

14 [www.education.vic.gov.au/.../ACFEwordforwordreport.pdf](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/.../ACFEwordforwordreport.pdf)

15 <http://gippslandlearnandconnect.acfe.vic.edu.au/Gippsland+Learn+%26+Connect+--+home>

By being systematic, organisation-wide, as well as sector-wide, professional development should be more useful for teachers and easier for managers to implement.

The Fellow then sought answers to the following questions:

1. What alternative approaches to PD for ESL/Literacy teachers exist in the world?
2. What are the most effective strategies for teaching learners with interrupted schooling?
3. How can we improve the coordination of PD at a State level?

## 1.2 Fellowship Methodology

### Early International Research

The Fellow began reading literature, talking to local experts and searching the internet to investigate research findings, key people and organisations who work creatively with the PD of EAL/Literacy teachers. She made contact via email with some of these practitioners and was able to follow up with several Skype meetings, which provided the opportunity to discuss the work being done and approaches being used to keep their teachers upskilled. These contacts were also able to advise the Fellow on worthwhile conferences and other key people to contact.

### Research into Victorian Context

The Fellow met with key people from HESG, Learn Local sector, representative bodies such as Adult Learners Australia (ALA), VALBEC and VicTESOL, to discuss their views on the current model in Victoria for PD for teachers of EAL/Literacy. It was apparent that, whilst individual organisations and peak bodies have always worked in a variety of ways to upskill teachers, there has not been a systematic approach to this. In addition, high quality Capacity and Innovation Fund (CAIF) projects which address PD needs of EAL/Literacy teachers, have not been brought to the attention of others in the Learn Local sector, which

means relevant broader learning has been limited. Whilst it is very encouraging that HESG, through the Vet Development Centre (VDC) and Skills First Quality Workshops, has been attempting to address the PD needs of teachers in the VET/LL sector, the nature of the approach remains ad hoc, rather than systematic.

### **Attendance at the 2017 TESOL International Convention, Seattle, Washington: 21st to 24th March 2017**

Participating in this conference afforded the Fellow the opportunity to learn about current research and practice in the areas of pedagogy for EAL/Literacy learners and PD approaches for teachers, as well as to forge connections with like-minded practitioners and researchers who are experts in their field.

*\*See Appendix One for detail on TESOL 2017*

### **Bow Valley College, Calgary, Canada: 28th-29th March 2017**

The Fellow participated in a series of meetings and workshops with faculty and staff, allowing her the opportunity to learn more about the work being done at Bow Valley College with adult ESL/Literacy learners and approaches the College are using to ensure that teaching is informed by current research.

*\*See Appendix Two for detail on Bow Valley College*

### **Minneapolis/Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA: 3rd – 7th April 2017**

The Fellow met with key people from the Minnesota Department of Education, Hamline University, Adult Teaching and Learning Advancement System (ATLAS) and Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC) to learn about Minnesota's innovative, systematic model of PD for teachers of EAL/Literacy. She also visited a range of ESL/Literacy centres to observe and discuss teaching methodology and to investigate how the PD model works in different contexts.

*\*See Appendix Three for detail on the model of PD used in Minnesota*

## 1.3 About the Fellow

Margaret Corrigan is Manager at Carringbush Adult Education, a Learn Local Registered Training Organisation which delivers EAL, Literacy and work readiness programs to disadvantaged residents of Richmond and Collingwood across 9 sites. The majority of these learners are from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and have significant barriers to full participation in education and training, as well as to employment. These learners (and others like them) require highly skilled teachers to work with them to help them achieve their goals.

### Qualifications:

- » Diploma of Community Sector Business Management: RMIT
- » Certificate IV in Training and Assessment: Yum Productions
- » Graduate Certificate in TESOL: University of Canterbury (Christchurch College of Education)
- » Graduate Diploma in Student Welfare: University of Melbourne
- » Graduate Diploma in Education: ACU (Mercy College)
- » Bachelor of Commerce: University of Melbourne

### Professional Memberships:

- » VicTESOL (Committee Member)
- » Victorian Adult Basic Education Commission (VALBEC)
- » Adult Learners Australia (ALA)

The Fellow has a demonstrated commitment to the Learn Local sector. She has managed the development and implementation of creative programs to meet

student needs within the complexities of the required compliance frameworks of multiple funders.

The approaches she has overseen at Carringbush Adult Education are innovative, eg: the work with teachers to upskill them in their knowledge of pronunciation concepts and strategies to teach pronunciation effectively. She hopes to continue this culture of innovation through investigating and then implementing a better approach to PD for teachers.

She is passionate about finding ways to achieve better outcomes for her students. The barriers faced by low proficiency learners in the Learn Local sector are often not fully understood and the Fellow is always investigating further how we can develop teacher knowledge and skills using a systematic approach.

The Fellow has enjoyed sharing her learnings about approaches to PD with others in the sector facing the same challenges. She intends to continue developing her knowledge in this area.

Investigating possible solutions to an identified organisational problem has been very rewarding for the Fellow. The Carringbush Adult Education journey of realising there was an issue with pronunciation teaching, researching ways to solve it and then taking action to improve the knowledge and skills of the teachers, has encouraged her to believe that this approach could be applied to other areas of teaching. Fine tuning a better model of PD for teachers would improve the outcomes of this process.



## 1.4 Abbreviations / Acronyms / Definitions

While some academic papers include abbreviations, acronyms and definitions at the end of a report, for the purpose of a Fellowship Report these are included at the beginning in the event some readers are unfamiliar with included terms.

<b>ABE</b>	Adult Basic Education	<b>HESG</b>	Higher Education and Skills Group
<b>ACFE</b>	Adult, Community and Further Education	<b>ISSI</b>	International Specialised Skills Institute
<b>AMES</b>	Adult Multicultural Education Services	<b>LINCS</b>	Literacy Information and Communication System
<b>AMEP</b>	Adult Migrant English Program	<b>LLO</b>	Learn Local Organisation
<b>ATLAS</b>	Adult Teaching and Learning Advancement System, USA	<b>LLN</b>	Language, Literacy and Numeracy
<b>BVC</b>	Bow Valley College, Canada	<b>NCVER</b>	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
<b>CAIF</b>	Capacity and Innovation Fund	<b>PD</b>	Professional Development
<b>CALD</b>	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	<b>PSLLT</b>	Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching
<b>CEIIA</b>	Centre for Excellence in Immigrant and Intercultural Advancement, Canada	<b>RTO</b>	Registered Training Organisation
<b>DET</b>	Department of Education and training (Victoria)	<b>SEE</b>	Skills for Education and Employment
<b>EAL</b>	English as an Additional Language	<b>SVTS</b>	Skills Victoria Training System
<b>ELLS</b>	English Language Learners	<b>TAFE</b>	Technical and Further Education
<b>ELT</b>	English Language Teaching	<b>TESOL</b>	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
<b>ESL</b>	English as a Second Language	<b>VALBEC</b>	Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council
		<b>VET</b>	Vocational Education and Training
		<b>VDC</b>	VET Development Centre
		<b>VICTESOL</b>	Victorian Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

## 2. Fellowship Learnings

During her investigations, the Fellow explored some of the approaches which were being practiced in a variety of settings in Canada, USA and the UK. Her learnings were related to three areas: PD approaches, pedagogical approaches and models of PD.

### 2.1 Professional Development Approaches

The overarching theme of effective PD approaches observed by the Fellow was that PD needs to be sustained, rather than occasional one-off events, in order for teachers to engage in systematic reflection.<sup>16</sup> Approaches should be bottom-up, with teachers actively involved in their own professional learning, through goal setting.<sup>17</sup> The use of Study Circles (sometimes also referred to as Reading Circles) has proved to be a relatively low cost, yet effective way for teachers to read relevant articles and to have an opportunity to reflect on these, and discuss with colleagues how the research might translate to changed classroom practice.<sup>18</sup> Utilising teacher observation and mentoring (by management or peers)<sup>19</sup> and different types of team teaching<sup>20</sup> were other PD tools observed, giving teachers opportunities to reflect on their practices and work, with support, towards their own goals.

16 Farrell, T., *Ibid*, p.26

17 Louws, M., (2014). Teachers' Professional Learning Goals: What do teachers (still) want to learn? CSET Speaker Series 13/2/2014 Leiden University Graduate School of Teaching, Netherlands reflective inquiry and engagement with research.

18 <http://atlasabe.org/professional/adult-esl>

19 Farrell, T., *Ibid*, pp. 19,21

20 Farrell, T., *Ibid*, p.20

### 2.2 Pedagogical Approaches

The Fellow observed many interesting pedagogical approaches, including the concept of working with teachers to increase rigour in the classroom.<sup>21</sup> This relates to the fact that students, no matter what their level of English, need to develop the skills and habits of mind<sup>22</sup> required for problem solving in the modern world. Increased rigour in EAL/Literacy classes is necessary for further training and work readiness, as well as for using critical thinking skills to perform everyday literacy tasks. Teachers need to use authentic, relevant materials and ensure that all activities are designed with a specific outcome or purpose in mind. Numeracy should be incorporated into English language teaching to provide further opportunities for meaningful engagement in learning.<sup>23</sup> Pronunciation should be taught explicitly to all levels, including beginners, as well as incidentally throughout every lesson.<sup>24</sup> A guided reading program was used successfully to teach learners about how to read the types of materials which are required for success in further study.<sup>25</sup> Learners can be encouraged to develop their skills and confidence by taking on creative teaching or responsibility roles, such as teaching a group of teachers a skill, or introducing a guest speaker.<sup>26</sup> Content-based instruction in the form of project-based classes is used effectively to encourage deeper thinking and

21 LINCES ESL PRO Meeting the Language Needs of Today's Adult English Language Learner: Iss [https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/ELL\\_Increasing\\_Rigor\\_508.pdf](https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/ELL_Increasing_Rigor_508.pdf) Brief, p2, accessed 20/8/2017

22 Smith, J in Educational Theory and Practice, retrieved from <http://edtheory.blogspot.com.au/2013/02/habits-of-mind.html>

23 <http://atlasabe.org/professional/math-and-numeracy>, accessed 12/9/2017

24 Zielinski, B., & Yates, L as cited in Grant, L. (Ed.). (2014). *Pronunciation myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching*. Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Press, p.65

25 <https://bowvalleycollege.ca/programs-courses/english-language-learning/bridge>

26 [Bowvalleycollege.ca/student-resources/student-life/intercultural-centre](http://Bowvalleycollege.ca/student-resources/student-life/intercultural-centre).

engagement in topics of real interest to the learners.<sup>27</sup>

## 2.3 Models of Professional Development

The state of Minnesota has a somewhat unique model of PD for teachers of Adult Basic Education (ABE), which includes EAL and literacy learners. Three percent of State ABE funding is used to fund activities that support key aspects of ABE work across the state. These activities are known as supplemental services and are delivered by six providers in 2017/2018. A State-wide coordinator of PD liaises with these six organisations. Within this model, Government priorities and latest research are filtered into all education centres and thus to teachers in a systematic way. Clear guidelines for PD are set out in the Minnesota ABE standards,<sup>28</sup> including that multiple evaluation strategies are used; that PD enhances practitioners' abilities; that it fosters collaboration from local to national levels; that it includes collection of multiple sources of data and that leadership at local and state levels promote effective PD.

The model used in Minnesota has resulted in a systematic approach to the delivery and oversight of PD throughout the state and is one which could definitely inform the approach in Victoria.

The Fellow met with the faculty from ABE Teaching and Learning Advancement System (ATLAS), which is a division of Hamline University, as well as with staff from Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC). ATLAS and MLC are two of the six organisations delivering PD in the state.

The other model researched was the British Council English Agenda Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework, which describes the overall competence and the kinds of professional knowledge, understanding and skills

associated with the role of a teacher.<sup>29</sup> It is used to help teachers, and those involved with the professional development of teachers, to develop supportive teacher education. The framework identifies four stages of development that differentiate between levels of understanding, knowledge and skills in relation to each professional practice. Professional learning activities appropriate to the needs of the teachers are then offered. There is an extensive selection of online resources available to teachers and managers, with teachers able to self-select or be directed by their managers where appropriate.<sup>30</sup> Aspects of this model could inform a framework for managers as well as teachers, in which PD needs of individuals are identified and then responded to more methodically.

<sup>27</sup> Duke, N. K. (2015). *Now is the time for project-based learning*. Retrieved from: <http://pdkintl.org/blogs/learning-on-the-edge/now-time-project-based-learning/>, accessed 22/9/2017

<sup>28</sup> <http://atlasabe.org/pd-system/mnabe-professional-development-standards>

<sup>29</sup> <https://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/continuing-professional-development/teacher-educator-framework/about-teacher-educator-cpd-framework/about-teacher-educator-framework>

<sup>30</sup> <https://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/continuing-professional-development>

## 3. Personal, Professional and Sectoral Impact

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It is exciting for the Fellow to be part of the discussion of the best ways to approach the professional development of EAL/Literacy teachers.

The Fellowship has opened doors, giving the Fellow opportunities to connect with practitioners and researchers and share learnings in Australia and internationally. She has disseminated her Fellowship learnings at a local level in her own organisation and with other Learn Local providers, as well as more broadly at a Learn Local Forum. She presented at the 2017 VALBEC conference and was featured in the November 2017 Fine Print journal. Volunteering with Teachers Across Borders (TAB) in Cambodia in July 2017 allowed the Fellow to trial some PD approaches with Cambodian teachers of English and to further her investigations into different models of PD by creating professional links with practitioners from the P-12 sector in Australia and the Further Education sector in Sweden. Being involved in the Skills First Quality Workshop presentations allowed the Fellow to continue the discussion about approaches to improving the quality of delivery in the Learn Local sector with personnel from the Department of Education.

The Fellow was pleased to be invited to share the Carringbush Adult Education journey of upskilling teachers in their knowledge of pronunciation concepts and confidence in teaching pronunciation at a VicTESOL Workshop in May 2017 and Symposium in August 2017, as well as at the Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching (PSLTT) Conference in September 2017 (Appendix Four). Being a participant at PSLTT enabled the Fellow to learn more about current research into bridging the gap between research and classroom practice as it relates to the teaching of pronunciation and to make contact with well-known researchers and practitioners in the field.

She was pleased to be invited by Victoria Polytechnic to be part of the planning group which is developing a series of workshops for Learn Local teachers for early in 2018 and looks forward to collaborating with a 2017 ISSI Fellow on upcoming professional learning projects.

## 4. Recommendations and Considerations

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The Fellow recommends that HESG works closely with key stakeholders to develop a more comprehensive model of PD for teachers of EAL/Literacy in the Learn Local sector. This model could include:

- » Requirements for all teachers to participate in a minimum amount of PD each year (as is required in the P-12 sector<sup>31</sup>) If a certain amount of PD is mandated, teachers will be better supported to continually improve their knowledge of current research into best practice teaching strategies, especially if the PD required incorporates opportunities for reflection and collaboration with colleagues and is not merely occasional one-off workshops. Those responsible for ensuring compliance with this new requirement would work with others in the sector to improve the quality of the PD provided to teachers.
- » A more transparent system underpinning what type of PD activities are required and who is responsible for providing these. The type of PD required should include opportunities for teachers to learn from research, from colleagues and from mentors. The approach needs to be a systemic one, in which each provider is supported to meet the new PD requirements by a coordinating body. This body would deliver PD, liaise with providers, conduct research, liaise with HESG and provide mentoring.
- » An expectation that the approaches to PD provided include opportunities for teachers to reflect on and engage with research which informs their classroom practice. One-off workshops should be avoided, as these do not tend to promote change in teaching practices. Teachers need to have opportunities to read research and reflect on how it could be applied in their own classrooms and this needs teachers to be able to meet and reflect with colleagues over several sessions and to take the time to trial new approaches and to learn through this process.
- » An expectation that the approaches to PD provided include opportunities for teachers to collaborate with and learn from other practitioners. Teachers have a lot of wisdom and experience to share and the PD opportunities provided should provide a platform to encourage this. Teachers can gain valuable ideas from observing each other, by being observed by management (when this is done for development, rather than evaluation), by collaborating with colleagues to design lessons and by reflecting on the outcomes for learners.
- » That HESG works closely with PD providers to ensure Government priorities are properly realised through PD for teachers. If the system of PD is a coordinated one, HESG can be an integral part of the process of ensuring that PD targets are on track, that new Government initiatives or priorities are being communicated to and implemented by providers and that learners are benefitting from their teachers' improved teaching approaches.

## 5. References

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## 6. Acknowledgements

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### International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute)

The ISS Institute exists to foster an aspirational, skilled and smart Australia by cultivating the mastery and knowledge of talented Australians through international research Fellowships.

The International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute) is proud of its heritage. The organisation was founded over 25 years ago by Sir James Gobbo AC CVO QC, former Governor of Victoria, to encourage investment in the development of Australia's specialised skills. Its international Fellowship program supports a large number of Australians and international leaders across a broad cross-section of industries to undertake applied research that will benefit economic development through vocational training, industry innovation and advancement. To date, over 350 Australian and international Fellows have undertaken Fellowships facilitated through ISS Institute. The program encourages mutual and shared learning, leadership and communities of practice.

At the heart of the ISS Institute are our individual Fellows. Under the International Applied Research Fellowship Program the Fellows travel overseas and upon their return, they are required to pass on what they have learnt by:

- » Preparing a detailed report for distribution to government departments, industry and educational institutions
- » Recommending improvements to accredited educational courses
- » Delivering training activities including workshops, conferences and forums.

The organisation plays a pivotal role in creating value and opportunity, encouraging new thinking and early adoption of ideas and practice. By working with others, ISS Institute invests in individuals who wish to create an aspirational, skilled and smart Australia through innovation, mastery and knowledge cultivation.

For further information on ISS Institute Fellows, refer to [www.issinstitute.org.au](http://www.issinstitute.org.au)

### Fellowship Sponsor

The Fellow would like to acknowledge the Higher Education and Skills Group (HESG) of the Department of Education and Training, Victorian Government, who provided funding for this fellowship. HESG is a Victorian government organisation that facilitates participation and achievement in senior secondary and tertiary education and training by supporting partnerships between providers, employers and the community. HESG has shown great support and commitment in funding this Fellowship and providing the opportunity to expand the Fellow's knowledge and the capability of those who work in the sector.



## Fellowship Supporters

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- » Meg Cotter: Co-Chair, VALBEC
- » Liz Keenan: Teacher and Teacher-Mentor, Carringbush Adult Education & 2015 ISS Institute Fellow

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- » Astrid Liden: ABE Professional Development Coordinator, Minnesota Department of Education
- » Patsy Egan, PhD: Director of ATLAS, Adult Basic Education (ABE) Teaching & Learning Advancement System, Minnesota
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- » Nicky Olalde: Teacher, Lyndale Neighbourhood Association, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

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- » Tahira Ebrahim Centre Liaison Officer Intercultural Centre, Bow Valley College, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
- » Kelty Christensen, Learner Engagement Officer, Intercultural Centre, Bow Valley College, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
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### London, UK

- » Fiona Dunlop, Academic Director, Wimbledon School of English

# 7. Appendices

## Appendix One: TESOL Conference, Seattle, 21st – 24th March 2017

With over 6000 participants at this conference, there was a great variety of learning opportunities in the form of presentations, Special Interest Group Panels, extended workshops, “coffee talks” and poster presentations.

The sessions the Fellow attended were in four areas:

1. PD strategies
2. Reports on PD research projects
3. Pedagogy approaches to teaching adults with interrupted schooling
4. Pedagogy approaches to teaching pronunciation and numeracy

The Fellow attended several Special Interest Group panel presentations related to teaching adult learners. These included:

*Connecting Research to Practice: Serving Adult Emerging Readers* presented by Jenna Altherr Flores, University of Arizona USA; Martha Bigelow, University of Minnesota USA; Patsy Egan, Hamline University USA; Raichle Farrelly, Saint Michael's College, USA; Rosie Verratti, Howard Community College, USA. This research-to-practice panel included Second Language Acquisition (SLA)-informed recommendations for instruction, assessment and teacher education. Participants received ideas for balancing literacy and language, embracing loss due to migration, using mobile devices and employing multimodal design in literacy assessments and classroom pedagogy.

*Preparing Adult ESL Teachers to Meet Today's Rigorous Language Demands*, presented by Patsy Egan and Betsy Parrish from Hamline University, USA. As EAL learners in today's world require rigorous instruction that moves beyond life skills, the presenters referred to the LINCS materials on meeting the language demands faced by today's ELLs, which have been developed for teachers and administrators. Participants were able to sample these professional development resources on infusing academic language and critical thinking into instruction

*Adult ESL + Math: Study Circle Exploring Language and Numeracy*, presented by Patsy Egan, Hamline University, USA, in which participants heard about the contents of the study circle and insights into how it works as a strategy for PD for teachers, as well as how to access the study circle facilitator guide and supporting materials.

The Fellow attended a practical all-day workshop *Techniques for Teacher Observation, Coaching and Conferencing* with Christopher Stillwell University of California (Irvine), USA. This workshop explored guidelines for maximising the benefits of observations and conferences. Topics included etiquette of observation, ways of promoting reflection and techniques for giving useful feedback that recipients can comfortably hear.

There were opportunities to visit schools, with the Fellow choosing to visit Casa Latina, an adult education centre which empowers low-wage Latino immigrants to move from economic insecurity to economic prosperity. Grounded in the Popular education model, participants are encouraged to lift their voices to take action around public policy issues that affect them, gaining confidence and skills through leadership programs, gaining employment through the Day Worker Center and

committees which support the rights of the worker. The ESL classes are delivered as discrete lessons, so people can participate on the days they do not have work, with all content based on actual workplace issues which have been problematic for students in the past.

Coffee Talks are a way for a small group of nine colleagues to discuss a current topic of interest with a leading TESOL expert. The Fellow attended one with Amanda Baker, University of Newcastle, Aust: *Pronunciation Pedagogy and Teacher Development in TESOL*, one with Donna Brinton, Consultant, USA: *Integrating Content and Language – a Flexible Architecture* and another with Tom Farrell, Brock University, Canada: *Reflective Practice for Language Teachers*

The Fellow also attended other presentations, including:

*Establishing, Sustaining and Facilitating Teacher Engagement in Professional reading Groups* by Marilyn Abbott, University of Alberta, Canada, in which the results of focus group interviews and questionnaires administered to adult ESL instructors who participated in monthly professional reading groups were reported, including participants' perspectives on the benefits, challenges and factors affecting their research engagement. Strategies for establishing and maintaining effective reading groups in ESL programs were also presented.

*Empowering Practitioners Through Engagement with Professional Development*, by Vanessa Armand and Sara VanDanAcker, Tokyo International University, Japan, which reflected on work encouraging professional development at an EFL program in Japan and offered participants practical ways of overcoming professional development obstacles within a program.

*Enriching Traditional Roles Through Collaborative Professional Development*, by Mackenzie Bristow and Peggy Wagner, Emory University, USA, in which the presenters modelled frameworks and strategies for attendees to create a professional development project that encourages a supportive, empowering culture of collaboration between participants of differing institutional roles.

*Teaching for Success: A Global Approach to Continuing PD Framework for Teachers*, Alison Barrett, British Council, UK: The presenter introduced the British Council approach to teacher professional development, grounded on a progressive model of reflective diagnosis, leading to action for change. Participants learnt how freely available materials developed by the British Council could be used.

*Teaching Pronunciation: Simplicity is the Key*, Judy B Gilbert, Consultant, USA: This presentation outlined a simple system of music cues basic to spoken English, which should be learned before time is spent on more detailed topics. Participants practiced teaching the core concepts with gestures and practical tools.

*Keeping it Real: What Works for Adult Emergent Readers*: Lindsey Crifasi, Rebecca Crawford, Heather Tatton-Harris, Carlos Rosarios International Public Charter School, USA: In the growing field of study of adult emergent readers, the presenters bridged research to practice to illustrate how classroom routines and soft skills anchored in contextualised, immediately relevant lessons help learners make literacy connections. Participants received tips and materials to try in their classrooms.

*Practical Tips for Teaching Math to Adult ELAs*: Rosie Verratti, Alena Yanushka-Ray, Howard Community College, USA: Basic numeracy skills are often lacking in learners with limited or interrupted education. In this presentation, participants learnt how to increase adult learners' mathematical literacy by employing tricks and tools used by trained mathematics instructors.

*PD on a Shoestring*: Nikki Ashcraft, University of Missouri: This session presented three low cost PD activities that were implemented with volunteer teachers in an adult literacy program: Teacher share events, a Reading Circle and an online portal.

*The Stress Stretch: Body Movements for Rhythm, Stress and Intonation*, Marsha Chan, Mission College, USA: Participants learnt systematic gestures and other body movements to dramatise the key features of spoken English: phrasing, rhythm,

stress and intonation. Participants learnt how learners can improve perception and production of these essential elements of pronunciation and increase their oral intelligibility through kinaesthetic, visual, aural and oral modalities.

The Fellow attended the Adult Interest Section open meeting, at which attendees reviewed roles of the office bearers and plans for panel presentations at TESOL 2018 in Chicago.

The Fellow was also invited to participate in a meeting with members of MinneTESOL, consisting of Minnesota ESL practitioners from a range of teaching contexts, at which discussions were centred around initiatives to improve the quality of ESL services throughout the state of Minnesota.

## Appendix Two: Bow Valley College, Calgary, Canada

The Fellow initially became aware of the innovative work being done at BVC, when she came across their ESL Literacy Readers, a series of high quality, theme-based readers for adult ESL literacy learners with carefully chosen themes that are relevant to adult learners. After further researching the scope of the work being done at BVC, the Fellow made contact with the Director of the Centre for Excellence in Immigrant and Intercultural Advancement (CEIIA), Diane Hardy, with a view to investigating their innovative approaches to PD for EAL/Literacy teachers.

The CEIIA is an established leader in the delivery of professional development to Canadian ESL/Literacy practitioners, enabling educators to better meet the needs of diverse learners. The Centre is committed to building capacity in teaching and learning, and share their expertise in numerous ways. Centre experts facilitate both face-to-face and online professional development opportunities that allow practitioners to reach beyond their classroom walls and tap into a wider network of resources and support. The Centre has also produced a wealth of resources that have been developed and vetted by ESL literacy experts. These include

Stories from the Field, which is a series of stories that explore innovations in ESL literacy programming that have been spearheaded by the CEIIA. In addition, they host the ELL Training Network, an online space for ELL practitioners to access PD workshops, webinars, resources and information, as well as the VESL Network, which supports the PD of volunteer tutors through six (6) face-to-face workshops each year.

## Appendix Three: Minnesota Model of PD for teachers of Adult Basic Education (ABE)

Three percent (3%) of state ABE funding is used to fund activities that support key aspects of ABE work across the state. These activities are known as supplemental services and are delivered by 6 providers in 2017/2018.

Organisation	Service Provided
Literacy Action Network (LAN)	» Membership organisation that represents ABE professionals across the state
	» Lobbies the Minnesota legislature in support of ABE
	» Provides additional program quality support services
Adult Teaching and Learning Enhancement System (ATAS)	» Provides all ABE practitioners in Minnesota access to high quality professional development opportunities,
	» PD can be in-person events held across the state as well as activities that can be accessed online.
Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC)	» Support for volunteer engagement in ABE programs, through recruitment and training of volunteers.
	» Support for ABE volunteer managers and
	» Oversight of Adult Literacy Hotline
	» Oversight of Distance Learning in the state

Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA)	Support to ABE programs and practitioners across Minnesota in the areas of:
	» regional transitions coordination
	» support for workforce development collaborations
Minnesota ABE Disability Specialists (PANDA)	Provides expertise, training and support to Minnesota ABE practitioners in serving students with physical or neurological disabilities
Southwest ABE	Provides support and resources for standardised testing in Minnesota ABE programs

## Appendix Four: Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching (PSLTT) Bridging Second Language Research and Teaching - Conference at University of Utah 1st - 2nd September 2017

The Fellow did a poster presentation with her colleague, Liz Keenan.<sup>32</sup> In addition, she attended a number of sessions, including:

- » *A roadmap for bridging research and practice in pronunciation teaching:* Isabelle Darcy, Indiana University, USA
- » *The Non-pronunciation teacher's guide to ESL pronunciation teaching:* Jenelle Cox, Brigham Young University Lynn Henrichsen, Brigham Young University
- » *The effects of listener proficiency on comprehension and intelligibility of accented speech* Okim Kang, Northern Arizona University Hyunkee Ahn, Seoul National University Meghan Moran, Northern Arizona University Soon Park, Seoul National University Kang, Ahn, Moran, Park

- » *Teacher cognition of English intonation: case study analysis of knowledge, beliefs, and thinking that inform instructional practice:* Alison McGregor, University of Texas at Austin Beth Zielinski, Macquarie University Colleen Meyers, University of Minnesota, Marnie Reed, Boston University
- » *Types and sources of knowledge about pronunciation teaching* John Murphy, Georgia State University
- » *Improving teacher expertise in pronunciation instruction: A study circle model* Andrea Echelberger, Minnesota Literacy Council Suzanne McCurdy, Hamline University Betsy Parrish, Hamline University
- » *Learners' attitudes towards visual feedback in pronunciation teaching* Ivana Lucic, Iowa State University

32 <http://www.issinstitute.org.au/wp-content/media/2017/04/Keenan-Final.pdf>



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