The first toolbox

The first series of toolboxes were piloted in 1998. The developers, who included RTOs working in collaboration with multimedia firms and instructional design experts, produced leading-edge training resources in certain industries. These include: tourism and hospitality; printing and graphic arts; metals and engineering; water; financial services; agriculture; information technology; workplace training and assessment; and aged and disability care.

The toolboxes feature a range of different learning resources, including a model training program. This plug-in-and-play training program includes assessment instruments linked to the training package, which create a self-contained learning sequence for students.

Teachers customise materials to suit the needs of learners by selecting whichever resources they need. This gives teachers real flexibility to craft the shape and content of learning. For example, teachers may wish to expand on certain learning points in the toolbox, and can easily add their own material, such as local video case studies or suggested background readings, to the learning sequence. Customising information in the toolbox requires a few clicks of the mouse, so teachers can easily update or review the training program.

Where now?

A second series of toolboxes is now under development, and samples of these products are available from the toolbox web site at www.antagovau/toolbox. These new products have a strong focus on effective teaching and learning strategies and are designed, like their predecessors, to be portable, flexible and customisable.

Series Two products allow training organisations to use whatever type of online delivery system that suits them. This flexibility in operating systems saves the training providers money while they are developing their capacity to provide on-line training. Fifteen toolboxes will be completed in the second series, and will cover selected competencies in the following training packages: chemical, hydrocarbon and oil refining; information technology; business services; administration; transport and distribution; community services; horticulture; financial services; hospitality; retail and film, TV, radio and multimedia. A full list of the competencies being developed is available from the toolbox web site.

Developers are currently being selected for a third round of toolboxes. Details of the training packages to be covered in the new products are being released in late September.

Where do you get them?

Series 1 toolboxes are available from Australian Training Products, and prices range from around $140 to $570 (including GST). Series 2 products will be available from early 2001 and are expected to be similarly priced. Free help desk services are available to all purchasers of toolboxes for assistance with installation and use of the product. Contact details are available on purchase.

Sandra Lerch, project officer, Flexible Learning, Australian National Training Authority. For more information on Series 1 products, contact Australian Training Products Limited on (03) 9630 9836 or email sales@apl.net.au