Engaging Industry in Flexible Learning:

Feedback to FLAG based on conversations with industry

Felicity Mildon
Felicity Mildon and Associates
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Introduction

This report sets out the key findings and recommendations from the “Engaging Industry in Flexible Learning” research project.

Briefly, this project was undertaken as exploratory research to assist the Flexible Learning Advisory Group (FLAG) to strengthen the engagement of industry clients with the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (the Framework). This included identifying potential flexible learning strategies and activities, which could be undertaken through the Framework in 2004 and beyond to meet the needs of industry. The findings will be used to inform FLAG’s planning for 2004 and beyond.

The objectives of the project were to:

- Identify industry’s knowledge and familiarity with flexible learning, in particular, taking into account e-learning, blended learning and online options
- Identify potential industry partnerships for FLAG to enhance the take-up of flexible learning in industry
- Identify strategies for FLAG to engage more effectively in 2004 and beyond.

The scope of the brief was to identify practical answers to the following key research questions:

- How can flexible learning enhance learning and skilling to better meet industry needs?
- What have been the successes so far in implementing flexible learning?
- What are the challenges/difficulties/issues in implementing flexible learning?
- What is industry’s experience of the Flexible Learning Framework (both knowledge of and experience with)?
- What could the Framework provide (or do differently) to meet industry’s needs?
- What are the most relevant and appropriate strategies for communicating with and advocacy to industry? Who are the key contacts? Why are they important?

For the purpose of this report, industry was divided into four broad groups:

- both public and private sector organisations (excluding the TAFE and university sectors) who deliver training (either for their staff, fee paying students and/or other related individuals eg suppliers)
- relevant industry bodies or professional associations (eg Business Council of Australia, Australian Institute of Training and Development etc)
- suppliers or providers of e-learning content or technology (eg LMS platforms)
- other related organisations (i.e. government agencies supporting flexible learning – eg Dept of Infrastructure – Victoria).
Project Methodology

The following methodology was undertaken during the project:

- a brief review of recent research/articles on flexible learning issues (particularly in Australia)
- a review of Framework publications and resources
- the development of tailored interview questionnaires for each of the industry groups (refer Appendix 1)
- participation and attendance at the Net*Working 2003 conference
- and most importantly, conducting interviews with the individuals and organisations listed at Appendix 2.

While time intensive in the relatively short timeframe for undertaking this project, the interviews were critical to the overall effectiveness of the project, particularly as the majority of interviewees were not aware of the Framework. The personal approach provided the first real ‘engagement’ between most of the industry practitioners and the Framework, and was an excellent opportunity to communicate Framework initiatives and resources.

Only a small number of the organisations approached declined to participate in the research.

Finally, the definition of flexible learning in the research brief was used as the basis for all interviews i.e. a learner-centred and client-centred approach that uses a range of delivery methods to make vocational training more flexible for clients. These delivery methods include, but are not confined to, e-learning, blended learning and online learning. The range of electronic media includes the internet, intranets, extranets, satellite broadcasts, audio/video tape, interactive TV and CD-Roms.

Key Findings

Based on the research and interviews conducted, as well as my own knowledge of the industry, the following are the key findings from the research.

(i) Industry’s Knowledge and Experience with Flexible Learning

With some notable exceptions, the uptake of flexible learning in large and medium organisations is significant. While the scope of implementation varies significantly across organisations (ranging from 1% to 100% of training being delivered flexibly), several large organisations stated that between 40 – 60% of all their training is now delivered flexibly.

Consequently, many organisations have invested significant financial and other resources into the development and implementation of these strategies. Because of the relatively high costs of entry however, there is no evidence that small organisations are delivering training flexibly. As one interviewee commented, “The key issue in small organisations is whether training is on the agenda at all, let alone flexible delivery of training”.

There are also no clearly identified trends or patterns for flexible learning strategies across each industry group, as organisations implement different strategies based on their specific requirements.

The majority of flexible learning is delivered through self-paced online modules, with a small number of the larger organisations (three) using satellite technology to deliver training. Only one organisation interviewed used all main types of technologies in
delivering training (ie computer based, CD-Roms, satellite broadcasts and online learning).

While some organisations incorporate the use of online tutors and moderators as part of their course design, their overall use is limited. The use of chat and noticeboards is also limited at this stage.

Generally, the use of CD-Roms is declining, despite their rich graphics and interactivity. The main reasons for this decline are difficulties with version control, in recording and validating assessment results and poor integration with training administration requirements.

A number of private education providers stated that 100% of their training is now delivered flexibly i.e. learners can choose to complete their courses either online or in the classroom. One provider stated that while the majority of their training was currently delivered face to face, technology was actively used in the classroom and also provided additional resources and support materials for learners outside of the classroom environment.

Only a few of the organisations had introduced blended learning solutions, with many offering either classroom or flexible learning based on the subject matter being taught i.e. the main training being delivered flexibly includes compliance and technical training, whereas “soft skills” training (with a small number of exceptions) is primarily taught in the classroom. A number of organisations however had introduced a “top and tail” approach to supervisory and management training i.e. pre-reading and post course assessments and materials are delivered online, with the training delivered in the classroom.

With the exception of private education providers and a small number of large companies, the majority of training delivered flexibly is not linked to nationally recognised qualifications.

Interestingly, one organisation felt that it had swung the pendulum too far in the introduction of flexible learning and were now planning to wind back some of the 60-70% of their training being delivered online. This was primarily because the organisation had mandated the use of online training for its technical and compliance training and the belief by the interviewee that flexible learning did not meet the learning styles of all learners. He also noted that there had been some resistance because of poor instructional design in the early phases of implementation. Most other organisations however were planning to increase the amount of training being delivered flexibly.

Of the organisations interviewed who are not currently delivering training flexibly (excluding peak bodies and professional associations), most are planning to introduce flexible learning initiatives within the next 12 months.

Strategies for implementing flexible learning also varied significantly, including:

- providing individuals (or managers) with the choice of either online or classroom modules
- mandating the use of online learning (particularly for compliance and technical training)
- introducing online learning as an ‘optional extra’ i.e. individuals can access modules voluntarily and in their own time for training not generally delivered by the organisation (e.g. some professional development courses such as time management, career development etc) and,
- a combination of these.
For enterprises, the main reasons for introducing flexible learning include reduced training costs (though it is acknowledged that this will not be realised in the short term because of the high entry costs); and reduced time to achieve competence (particularly in product knowledge and compliance training for those organisations with geographically remote workforces).

The other key reasons for introducing flexible learning included improving access and equity to training (particularly for geographically remote staff and shift workers), improving the quality and consistency of training delivered, and enhanced record keeping and training administration. Improving staff morale and ‘creating a learning culture’ were also cited as key drivers by several organisations.

Private education providers are implementing flexible learning to reduce training costs, provide access to geographically remote students and to expand their markets, particularly for overseas based students.

(ii) Successes in Implementing Flexible Learning

Successes to date in the introduction of flexible learning include:

- relatively high take up rates and satisfaction ratings from learners (particularly those in remote locations)
- reduced training delivery costs for trainer salaries, travel, accommodation and administration costs (despite the high entry costs)
- reduced time to achieve competence (eg 4 weeks to train 5000 staff in a new product launch, compared to 12 months in the classroom)
- improved staff morale, including an increase in individuals taking more responsibility for their learning
- increased ability to ensure that staff are trained quickly, efficiently and consistently in compliance and regulatory requirements (particularly in the Financial Services Industry)
- improved access and equity, particularly for individuals in geographically remote locations.

The key measures used to evaluate the success and effectiveness of flexible learning include the number of participants, completion rates, assessment outcomes and learner satisfaction. Other measures used include representation of equity groups, cost of training, feedback on course content, changes in staff behaviours (particularly for the small number of management and interpersonal skills programs delivered online).

All private education providers made the comment that from an assessment and results perspective, some of their best students were those who completed their courses online, primarily because they believed the learners were more self directed and motivated.

Three case studies of organisations that have successfully implemented flexible learning strategies are included at Appendix 3.

(iii) Challenges and Issues in Implementing Flexible Learning

Despite the successes identified above, most organisations stated that there were still significant challenges in implementing flexible learning strategies. In addition to the high entry costs, the barriers to implementation of flexible learning include:

- resistance to change, particularly from senior management (cost), individual learners (training is an event and an opportunity to be away from the workplace), learning and development professionals (fear of
lost jobs or a diminution of their role) and managers (it should be taught in a classroom)

- technology and bandwidth issues (particularly access to PCs and multiple platforms within organisations)
- the skills levels of learning and development staff (both from a technical, change management and project management perspective)
- the PC literacy and skills of learners (particularly older learners) and,
- poor instructional design (online publishing rather than online learning) leading to high levels of dissatisfaction from learners.

Some organisations also cited initial problems with IPR and copyright issues. Another problem for some organisations was that they had introduced a mandated approach to flexible learning, which was eventually reversed because of strong internal opposition to its compulsory nature.

Several interviewees (primarily suppliers and providers) stated that there was still a strong “fear of failure” among Human Resources and Learning and Development professionals about flexible learning (particularly because of the high entry costs) and a belief that it was not actually delivering, despite “all the hype”. Some of these perceptions were attributed to the concern that e-learning did not adequately meet all learning styles.

While these attitudes may change over time, this highlights the need for a clear and comprehensive communication strategy about the benefits of well-constructed flexible learning strategies.

Finally, the major reason cited by many interviewees for the success or failure of flexible learning strategies was the quality (or absence of) an effective change management strategy. Having clear and agreed objectives, managing effective relationships with key stakeholders, providing practical support and information to learners and marketing and communicating “wins” were seen as essential to successful implementation. This highlights the need for professional development activities to incorporate both change management training, as well as the relevant teaching and technical skills required for flexible delivery.

(iv) Industry’s Knowledge of the Framework

With the exception of Toolboxes, the majority of organisations had a very limited knowledge of the Framework (only ten people interviewed had heard of it and only a few had used Framework products and resources). This is consistent with the findings from the marketing research into the 2003 Framework communications plan and activities undertaken by Quay Connections for the Communications and Leadership program.

Of concern however was that for those who had heard of the Framework, many felt that it applied to TAFE colleges only.

This was particularly relevant for those organisations who were not RTOs, as they had more limited access to national training information generally. The main reason for organisations not becoming RTOs was the strongly felt concern that it was complex, administratively burdensome and bureaucratic. Most of these organisations however had formed strategic partnerships with RTOs who delivered both accredited and non-accredited training on their behalf.

There were also important differences however between enterprise practitioners and private education providers. ACPET members were more aware of the Framework than their company based colleagues, primarily because of the recent workshops.
undertaken by the Framework and ACPET, as well as the involvement of ACPET members on LearnScope committees. This reinforces the need for Framework members to form strong relationships with key professional and peak industry bodies.

In addition, many enterprise practitioners felt isolated from their colleagues, did not know what other organisations were doing regarding flexible learning, and with the exception of vendor initiated functions, had limited ‘independent’ information about what was happening in the broader industry. This was particularly relevant for those who were not members of any professional associations.

Despite these differences, when taken through the Framework publicity material, the majority of interviewees were genuinely surprised and impressed with the depth and scope of the resources available. Most commented that they believed the materials would add value to their e-learning strategies (“If only I’d known about this 12 months ago”), and were keen to find out more about how the Framework might be able to assist them.

There was unanimous support for improved communication with and from the Framework, in conjunction with targeted professional development activities. Some expressed the concern however that because of the perceived complexity of the national training system, any activities would need to be “short, sharp and business focussed”, and most importantly, used language that they understood.

Despite these reservations, most were keen to contribute, either through participating in networking and professional development activities, hosting events and sharing information. Several also indicated that they would be willing to sit on various Framework committees and working groups.

To conclude, the research has found that the uptake of flexible learning in Australia (particularly in large and medium organisations) is significant. Given the successes experienced by organisations and despite the concerns that exist (either real or perceived) about flexible learning, the Framework has a real opportunity to actively partner with industry to support the accelerated uptake of flexible learning in Australia.

The next section of the report highlights some critical issues the Framework will need to address to ensure that it effectively engages with industry.

**Some Critical Differences**

As outlined above, many of the interviewees were unaware of the Framework and for those who had heard of it, many believed it was a TAFE strategy only. Given its link with the national training agenda, many also expressed concern that it would be cumbersome and administratively bureaucratic.

While some of these perceptions can be attributed to a lack of communication from and understanding about the Framework, it is a major issue that could seriously undermine efforts to actively engage with industry.

At the Net*Working 2003 conference, one presenter described the implementation of flexible learning in Australia as “operating in two parallel worlds” i.e. the VET and private sector approaches.

It is therefore essential to identify some of the critical differences between the two sectors so that any new strategies undertaken by the Framework can better bridge the “two worlds”.

Briefly, from an enterprise perspective, these include:

- the recognition that industry is diverse and fragmented and will require multi-channelled communication strategies. This is particularly
important as many practitioners feel isolated from their colleagues and are often unaware of what is happening in the broader industry.

- the use of significantly different language and paradigms for workplace learning. This is probably the most critical difference, as many industry practitioners do not identify with VET terminology (e.g. students vs learners; teachers vs facilitators and training vs learning are just three simple but illustrative examples of these differences, let alone the concerns about the jargon and acronyms associated with the national training system). More importantly however, while ‘training’ is seen as a key component of workplace learning, it is one of many strategies that facilitate learning and professional development. As there is an increasing emphasis on the importance of informal learning activities such as coaching, mentoring and on-the-job learning, VET is perceived (albeit rightly or wrongly) to be related to formal training only. While these differences may not appear significant, they were consistently mentioned by interviewees as a key concern about engaging with the Framework (“I’m concerned I’ll feel like a foreigner in another land”).

- The majority of leaning in organisations is linked to identified business needs and while qualifications are a “nice to have”, they are not the key driver for workplace learning in many organisations.

- There is also an increasing trend to use new types of systems to enhance employee performance, particularly the use of “employee performance support systems” i.e. by using key word search functions, providing just-in-time information on relevant topics or issues e.g. product knowledge, company policies etc. This can include quick and easy access to “chunks of training” (learning objects?), which is a very different form of delivering traditional course or module based training. Over time, online courses may become just one tool in the technology training kitbag for enhancing employee performance.

- Finally, the roles of learning and development professionals vary significantly across organisations, particularly with the increasing trend for a large percentage of training (if not all training) to be outsourced to external providers. While some practitioners continue to deliver training themselves, particularly in technical areas, there is a new focus on internal consultancy roles, which require broader business skills in contract, project and relationship management. There is also an increasing emphasis on coaching and change management skills.

While the differences do not appear to be as significant for private education providers (education is their core business), some concern was also expressed about VET terminology and the need for private providers to respond quickly to emerging market needs.

Despite these critical differences, the project has generated interest in the Framework and as stated above, the majority of interviewees wanted to find out more about the Framework and were willing to participate in Framework related activities. The key challenge for the Framework is to ensure that the strategies that are implemented acknowledge and recognise the issues identified above. The next section of the report sets out the recommendations that can assist FLAG achieve this.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made to assist FLAG more effectively engage with industry and comprise both strategic and tactical activities. The recommendations are divided into four broad groupings: Communication, Involvement and Professional
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Development; Raising the Profile of Flexible Learning; Research Activities; and Other Recommendations.

(i) Communication, Involvement and Professional Development

To assist FLAG establish strong links and relationships with industry, the following are recommended:

- actively seek and involve industry representatives in all key Framework activities and bodies, including at least two permanent representatives on FLAG. (possible representatives are highlighted with an asterisk in Appendix 1)

- as an interim (or additional) measure, consider establishing an Industry Advisory Council comprising representatives from the various sectors and jurisdictions (given the concern about relevance and ‘business focus’ however, this would need to have very clear terms of reference and have real input into Framework strategies and activities)

- establish more effective strategies for communicating with industry, both directly to individuals and organisations as well as through relevant industry bodies and professional associations. (such as the joint workshops recently run between ACPET and the Framework in Queensland).

- as many organisations are not RTOs (and are not planning to become RTOs), review the FLAG strategy that limits access to some programs to RTOs only eg LearnScope

- either as a Framework sponsored initiative and/or in conjunction with industry bodies or professional associations, introduce a range of networking and professional development activities for flexible learning practitioners in industry. e.g. bi-monthly networking meetings around a topic, or half or full-day professional development workshops on key issues e.g. IPR, change management etc (a possible title is “PD Bytes”)

- actively seek industry involvement in Net*Working conferences, both as keynote speakers, presenters and participants

- in addition to LearnScope and Flexible Learning Leaders programs, consider implementing sponsorship for shorter, more targeted professional development activities e.g. attendance at international conferences or relevant short courses (most organisations said they could not release their key staff for programs such as Flexible Learning Leaders)

- consider coordinating a mentoring scheme to support new practitioners in flexible learning i.e. partnering them with highly experienced practitioners from either within or across industries, including TAFE

- identify and/or develop publicly accessible training and professional development resources for online tutors and moderators.

Given the scope and breadth of the above recommendations, it is highly recommended that the Framework appoint full-time, dedicated resource(s), (Industry Liaison Officers?), to manage the development and implementation of the above strategies. Briefly, these roles would be responsible for liaising and communicating with individuals, organisations and the various peak bodies and associations, coordinating representation on relevant Framework bodies and activities, and coordinating the development and implementation of various professional development activities.
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It is highly recommended that successful applicants have practical experience in implementing flexible learning strategies and programs in industry, together with excellent communication, project management and relationship management skills.

(ii) Raising the Profile of Flexible Learning

To raise the profile and benefits of flexible learning with industry, undertake the following:

- establish strong relationships and partnership activities with a broad range of peak industry bodies and professional associations
- implement a national “Flexible Learning Week”, which showcases successful flexible learning strategies across all sectors, together with a range of professional development and communication and information activities
- consider introducing a national award relating specifically to flexible learning initiatives (which could be implemented through both the ANTA awards and by sponsoring other flexible learning awards currently run by organisations such as the Australian Institute of Training and Development etc).

(iii) Research Activities

The following areas were identified by interviewees as potential future research topics:

- given the significant resources invested in the development of Toolboxes, evaluate their uptake and effectiveness
- identify what strategies are being put in place both in Australia and internationally to support the uptake of flexible learning in small to medium organisations
- identify the most effective strategies for measuring and evaluating ROI for flexible learning initiatives
- examine what strategies/opportunities could be put in place for organisations to offer free or inexpensive access to flexible learning activities for community and not for profit organisations.

(iv) Other

The following “whole of government” recommendations were suggested to better support the development of the local flexible learning industry in Australia:

- investigate what the commonwealth and state governments are doing (or could be doing) to better support the development of the local content and LMS industry, particularly in relation to potential export markets
- work with Treasury, Finance and the ATO to review the current Research and Development tax incentives for the development and application of new technologies to support flexible learning initiatives.

Conclusion

In summary, the key findings from the research are that there is a large uptake and significant industry experience with flexible learning; that with the exception of private education providers and a small number of companies, most training delivered flexibly in industry is not linked to nationally recognised qualifications; and the major reasons for introducing flexible delivery are to reduce training costs, improve access to and the
quality and consistency of training and to reduce the time to achieve competence. Despite the significant challenges organisations face in successfully implementing flexible learning, there have been many success stories to date.

From a Framework perspective, the majority of industry representatives were unaware of the Framework and the range of resources available. Most believe however that the resources could add value and are keen to find out more about them. There is also a strong interest in sharing information and participating in relevant Framework initiatives, including sitting on various representative and advisory groups. There was also very strong support for the above recommendations.

While there is some concern that the Framework could be complex and bureaucratic, most individuals believe that if implemented appropriately, the recommendations identified above will provide a sound platform for better supporting and engaging industry in flexible learning.
Appendix 1

Questionnaire (Organisations)

1. Can you tell me briefly about your organisation?
   - # of staff
   - # of students/learners/members etc
   - other

2. Do you train others (eg suppliers/customers/others etc)? List details.

3. Are you an RTO? (Reasons)

4. If not an RTO, are you planing to become an RTO? (Reasons)

5. What training/qualifications do you deliver? (List)
   - technical/business skills
   - compliance
   - Management/general people skills
   - Other

6. In delivering training, have you used any of the following?
   - Computer based learning
   - Web based (online) learning
   - Virtual classrooms (web or satellite)
   - Satellite broadcasts/interactive tv
   - Other Distance education (non technology)
   - Other (List)

7. If no, are you planning to introduce?
   When?
   Reasons?

8. What training is delivered flexibly (or will be?)

9. Approximately what % is delivered flexibly?

10. How long have you been delivering flexibly?

11. Do you offer any blended solutions? (List)
12. What are your key priorities in terms of skills/knowledge development?

13. What were the reasons for introducing flexible learning? (List)
   eg. Reduced training costs
       reduced training time
       equity and access
       remote workforce
       to be a leader
       to remain competitive
       Other?

14. What have been the successes to date?

15. How do you measure success/effectiveness?

16. Have you had any “failures”? (List Reasons?)

17. What are the current challenges/issues you face in developing/implementing flexible learning?

   - Resistance to change
     - trainers
     - managers
     - individual staff
     - senior management
     - others (list)
   - Technology/bandwidth issues
   - Cost
   - Skills levels of L&D staff
   - IPR/Copyright issues
   - Content development
   - Other (List)

18. What strategies are you putting in place to address these issues?

19. Have you heard of the Flexible Learning Framework?
   (If yes, what do you know about it?)
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20. Have you heard of any of the following programs/services?

- LearnScope
- Networking Conferences
- Flexible Learning Leaders
- Toolboxes
- Other:
  - EdNA
  - Newsletter
  - Legal Issues in flexible learning
  - Flexways
  - Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework
  - Skills Assessment for Computer Based Learning
  - Website: flexiblelearning.net.au
  - Access and Equity in Online Learning
  - Quality Auditing in Online Learning
  - Australian Flexible Learning Community
  - Online Guide to Resource Catalogue

21. If yes, have you used any of them?

22. If yes, how valuable were they? (List Reasons)

23. If no, reasons?

24. Would any of the above be of interest? (Specify)

25. What other assistance could the Framework provide to assist you (or your organisation) to implement flexible learning? (List, including reasons)

26. FLAG would like to involve industry reps more in the Framework. Would you be interested in getting involved in any of the following?

- Sitting on task forces
- Sitting on project groups
- Hosting meetings of industry reps
- Contributing articles
- Speaking at networking functions
- Mentoring others (eg people just starting to learn about flexible learning)
- Other (list)
### Appendix 2

**Organisations and Individuals who participated in the research**

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Organisation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Helen Zimmerman</td>
<td>Managing Director&lt;br&gt;Ashley College of Learning (ACL)</td>
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<td>Conrad Spendlove</td>
<td>General Manager&lt;br&gt;Sales &amp; Marketing&lt;br&gt;Adacel Simulation Learning</td>
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<td>Arndria Seymour</td>
<td>Learning &amp; Development Manager&lt;br&gt;Alianza</td>
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<tr>
<td>John McLachlan</td>
<td>Head of Learning Infrastructure &amp; Reporting&lt;br&gt;ANZ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Ryan</td>
<td>Managing Director&lt;br&gt;Australian College of Applied Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathy Rankin</td>
<td>Policy Adviser&lt;br&gt;Education &amp; Training&lt;br&gt;Australian Business Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Hall</td>
<td>Executive Officer&lt;br&gt;Australian Council for Private Education &amp; Training (QLD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Facer</td>
<td>Executive Officer&lt;br&gt;Australian Council for Private Education &amp; Training (NSW/ACT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Makim</td>
<td>General Manager&lt;br&gt;Education, Training, Research &amp; Surveys&lt;br&gt;Australian Institute of Management (NSW)</td>
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<td>Adrian Morgan</td>
<td>Chief Executive&lt;br&gt;Australian Institute of Training &amp; Development</td>
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<td>Pam Potter</td>
<td>Consultant&lt;br&gt;People &amp; Organisational Development&lt;br&gt;Brisbane City Council</td>
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<td>Maria Tarrant</td>
<td>Director Policy&lt;br&gt;Business Council of Australia</td>
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<td>Annette Turner-Duggan</td>
<td>Education &amp; Training Advisor&lt;br&gt;Business SA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Con Kittos</td>
<td>Chairman &amp; CEO&lt;br&gt;Asia Pacific&lt;br&gt;click2learn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Gleeson</td>
<td>National HR Manager&lt;br&gt;Climate Technologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carmel Speer</td>
<td>Learning Strategies Manager&lt;br&gt;Coles Myer</td>
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<td>Richard Manning</td>
<td>Compliance &amp; Competency Management Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Vicky Barlow</td>
<td>Workplace Development Manager&lt;br&gt;Conrad Treasury Casino</td>
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<td>Sec Maljanek</td>
<td>Performance &amp; Capabilities Development Manager&lt;br&gt;Crown Casino</td>
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<td>Margaret Hamilton</td>
<td>Dean</td>
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<td>Centrelink Virtual College</td>
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<td>Peter Nelms</td>
<td>Training Manager</td>
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<td>Defence Safety Management Agency</td>
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<td>Murray Judd</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<td>Training Reform</td>
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<td>Dept of Education, Science &amp; Training</td>
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<td>Katherine Coultas</td>
<td>Project Manager- e-learning</td>
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<td>Craig Walker</td>
<td>Education &amp; Training</td>
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<td>Martin Holman</td>
<td>Technical Training Team Leader</td>
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<td>Christine Maingard</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
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<td>Australia &amp; NZ</td>
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<td>Holden College (Raytheon Professional Services)</td>
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<td>Managing Director</td>
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Appendix 3 – Three Case Studies

Case Study 1

Organisation A is a private education provider operating both in Australia and overseas. With 250 staff and approximately 8000 students annually, the organisation has partnered with other RTOs (particularly in the university sector) to convert its qualifications and other training for online delivery in China, Vietnam and Thailand.

Unlike many other providers, the company’s international business operates on a business to business basis i.e. it licences its courses and materials to colleges and universities. Plans are also underway to open up its online training directly to overseas based students.

For its Australian students, technology is actively incorporated into classroom training, either through the use of CD-Roms and computer based learning labs, as well as out of classroom resources and support.

Measures of success include repeat customers, no difference in learning outcomes between classroom and online students, and reduced costs through a reduced teacher/student ratio.

Current challenges include the high entry costs and technological limitations with high numbers of concurrent users.

Case Study 2

As a large enterprise RTO, organisation B delivers both accredited and non-accredited training to 65,000 geographically dispersed and remote staff in Queensland.

Since 1998, the organisation has used a broad range of technology to deliver training including computer based training, CD-Roms, online, video conferencing and satellite broadcasts. The organisation delivers approximately 20% of its training flexibly, including technical, compliance and management development programs. It has also formed strategic partnerships with external providers who also deliver training flexibly on their behalf.

The reasons for implementation include the size and scale of operations, greater access and equity to training (a key part of B’s industrial agreement with unions) reduced training costs, and to ensure the quality and consistency of training outcomes.

Successes to date include improved access to training from remote and disadvantaged staff (eg indigenous employees), reduced training costs and improved training administration and record keeping.
Implementation challenges include:

- the size and scale of operations
- the computer literacy of staff
- access to PCs
- ensuring the quality of instructional design
- the significant costs associated with updating course materials when training packages change
- some industrial issues associated when training occurs outside of work hours.

**Case Study 3**

Since implementing online learning in March 2002, organisation C has converted approximately 60% of all training materials for online delivery. Mandating the use of online learning to approximately 3,000 staff and 5,000 agents, the company now delivers most technical, product knowledge and compliance training online.

A small suite of optional “soft skills” courses is also offered online and the company has recently introduced a more blended approach to its management training (all pre-course reading is done online).

As C is not an RTO and is not planning to become an RTO, all training is not linked to nationally recognised qualifications.

The main reasons for introducing online learning include reducing the costs of delivering “complex and onerous compliance training” to a geographically dispersed workforce, as well as a retention strategy for a highly mobile workforce.

Successes to date include reduced training costs and high satisfaction rating from learners.

Implementation challenges include multiple technology platforms, inexperienced managers who have difficulty rostering staff to take advantage of the new technology, and managing the high expectations of senior managers who see online delivery as a panacea for all training issues (especially cost reduction).
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