NETWORKING for QUALITY

SHARED PURPOSE, SHARED SUCCESS

Best Practice Networking in South Australia

THE LEARN NETWORK

Department for Employment, Training and Further Education

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL TRAINING AUTHORITY
NETWORKING FOR QUALITY

SHARED PURPOSE, SHARED SUCCESS

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Executive Summary

Purpose of the report
The purpose of this report is to describe and comment on the LEARN Network, the network of learning resource centres of TAFE in South Australia, in the context of best practice. It discusses a theoretical basis for relevant concepts of best practice, and then considers aspects of the Network within this framework and makes recommendations for future development. The Network's activities in the sphere of information literacy illustrate the description. Discussion of the New South Wales Library Network and the Queensland Open Learning Network is included to provide the contrast of one network with a different purpose, and one with a similar purpose operating in a different state environment. Performance indicators for successful networking are identified.

Description of LEARN
LEARN, the South Australian Learning Resources Network, includes the staff of all the learning resource centres of TAFE Institutes in South Australia. There are ten Institutes in all, comprising more than thirty-three campuses. Included in the membership are specialist services such as the TAFE ABN (Australian Bibliographic Network) Unit and the Open Learning Information and Materials Clearing House (OLIMCH), both located at Adelaide Institute.

Part time funding is provided to support a Network Coordinator, with administrative assistance, and an Executive Officer for the LEARN Planning Group.

The structures of LEARN include:

- the LEARN Planning Group (LPG), with representation from all Institutes
- permanent and ad hoc working groups to coordinate activities and keep a watch on areas of interest (listed in full in Appendix 2)
- two specialist LEARN services, the TAFE ABN Unit and the Open Learning Information and Materials Clearing House (OLIMCH)
- a newsletter, Networking, which is issued four times a year
- general meetings of LEARN members which take place once a term
- an Internet mailing list to which all members can subscribe
- broader-based work in operational areas, such as reviews of member LRCs.
History of LEARN

LEARN was launched in August 1989. It succeeded the LRC Group which had previously looked after the interests of TAFE libraries. In the late 1980s a number of key people agreed that there was a need for a group with a wider brief to enable LRCs to support important TAFE policies and initiatives such as open learning, particularly recognising the growing importance of resource-based learning. Communication and sharing of resources were important objectives for the new group.

Networks and networking

It was the original intention of this paper to discuss best practice in networking. Study of the literature, however, suggests that a more profitable direction is to consider networking as an element of best practice in management. The vocational education and training sector is grappling with enormous structural change as it attempts to put in place policies of competency-based training, user choice and customer focus. Both public and private sections of the sector are learning how to manage these changes. The demands of such an environment require teamwork for success. Among the management and organisational development models which are relevant are knowledge networking and the learning organisation. Two views of these models are summarised.

Towards a best practice model

The two models considered are John Burgoyne’s approach to Peter Senge’s model of the learning organisation, and Charles A Savage’s model of knowledge networking.

The table over the page summarises the aspects of Savage’s and Burgoyne’s views discussed, and places beside them characteristics of the LEARN Network for comparison.
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<tr>
<th>Savage</th>
<th>Burgoyne</th>
<th>LEARN</th>
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<td>6. Interrelation of concepts • strong leadership • shift from control to commitment; monitoring to motivating; command to conducting • management as dialogue</td>
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<td>28. Strong leadership evident 29. Successful 'managing up' to the Department 30. Some tasks uncompleted 31. Need guidelines for problem-solving 32. Some agenda items need to be dealt with</td>
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Best Practice Networking in South Australia
Best practice and the LEARN Network

In this section the elements of LEARN summarised in the table above are discussed in more detail.

LEARN case study: information literacy

An information literate person needs skills that not only involve the location of information but also include the critical evaluation and selection of information sources and the appropriate organisation and use of information found.¹

In keeping with the educational focus of the Network, information literacy has been a topic of importance from the earliest days. LEARN has put a good deal of effort into placing information literacy on the TAFE SA agenda, by means of work with curriculum and program groups, and later through involvement with national projects which resulted in publications. In this sphere, LEARN has supported the national and state agendas relating to the introduction of competency-based training, flexible delivery and lifelong learning. While not all TAFE SA lecturing staff and program managers have as yet universally accepted the importance of information literacy, good progress has been made.

Discussion of other networks

A number of other networks exist in the vocational education and training system nationally. The term 'network', indeed, is used to cover many different models. In order to acknowledge this diversity, two short examples are given of networks that operate in quite different ways from LEARN, in very different contexts. They are not discussed in depth, and are not intended to form a comparison with LEARN. The networks are the TAFE NSW Library Network and the Queensland Open Learning Network.

Performance indicators

Performance indicators are included to offer to library and LRC networks some guidance in networking. They are not intended to cover the operational aspects of LRC services, since these have been comprehensively dealt with in Focus on Learning. It is intended that the performance indicators may be easily adapted to suit the needs of other types of network.

Recommendations

Fourteen recommendations are made about ways in which the work of LEARN may be developed, supported or enhanced.
Introduction

The purpose of this report is to describe and comment on the LEARN Network, the network of learning resource centres of TAFE in South Australia, in the context of best practice. It discusses a theoretical basis for relevant concepts of best practice, and then considers aspects of the Network within this framework and makes recommendations for future development. The Network's activities in the sphere of information literacy illustrate the description. Discussion of the New South Wales Library Network and the Queensland Open Learning Network is included to provide the contrast of one network with a different purpose, and one with a similar purpose operating in a different state environment. Performance indicators for successful networking are identified.

LEARN is by no means the only successful educational network operating in Australia today. It is a body which has adopted a focus on service and has also developed in a way that suits its members and the structures within which it operates. Other state systems have different structures and different needs. Nevertheless, there are some conclusions which can be drawn from studying LEARN which are applicable in many situations. The vital aspects of LEARN can be summarised as follows.

- At the developmental stage, there was a fortunate conjunction of educational developments in the Department for Employment, Training and Further Education (such as the trend to open learning) and the Department's senior personnel whose experience with libraries gave them a vision of how LRCs could contribute to these developments. These people have continued to be active champions of LEARN.
- The establishment of LEARN included not only moral support from senior staff but financial resourcing.
- The traditional culture of librarianship includes a high value placed on the sharing of resources and of experience.
- The structure of LEARN has fostered a combination of strong leadership and broad participation by members.
- At an early stage, LEARN developed a clear focus on its goals, and this focus was shared by the membership.
- While the purpose of LEARN is to benefit its clients, its activities provide evident benefits to its members, who clearly feel that the time they invest in LEARN activities is productive to their immediate work requirements and to their sense of empowerment.
- LEARN communicates widely about what it is doing and what it intends to do, and this communication extends not only to members but also to the wider TAFE community and to the Department, so that the Network is effective in 'managing up' as well as in managing itself.
The Final Report of the ANTA National Flexible Delivery Taskforce affirms the importance of networking:

Networking is an important strategy in promoting flexibility in meeting the needs of clients. It has benefits for providers, industry associations and clients.

Benefits include:
- opportunities to share specific skills and talents to more efficiently and effectively meet the needs of clients, and
- opportunities to meet the specific needs of clients requiring national delivery.

The development of cooperative networks has considerable merit as a strategy directed at extending flexible learning systems in industry.

Advantages include the capacity of networks to:
- foster resource sharing
- contribute to the breaking down of sectorial barriers to collaboration leading to new alliances for learning in industry, and
- contribute to promoting innovation and the dissemination of ideas and models of good practice.

Flexible delivery aims to encourage and facilitate cooperation between providers through partnerships, joint ventures and other mechanisms to develop new and innovative approaches. Project based alliances between providers have the potential to improve responsiveness to client needs in cost-effective ways.

Given this national view of the vocational education and training sector as a whole, it might be expected that LEARN, as a successful network, will contribute not only to the effective operation of learning resource centres in South Australia, but to the operation of TAFE SA Institutes and of the VET sector as a whole. This report examines the ways in which this is the case.
Description of LEARN

The purpose of the LEARN Network is firmly grounded in the purpose of learning resource centres for South Australian TAFE, which is not only to make learning resources available to students and staff, but also to ensure that students have the skills to locate and use information effectively in their work and personal lives.

The Learning Resource Service should be a provider of educational services and programs which will facilitate people’s ability to find, evaluate and use information effectively in their personal and professional lives.

The capacity to locate, sift and sort information in order to select what is required and present it in a useful way, and evaluate both the information itself and the sources and methods used to obtain it, has been identified as a key competency, not only essential for effective participation in work but also for effective participation in further education and in adult life more generally.

Learning to learn and information literacy skills are essential for students to fully participate in student centred and flexible approaches to learning. All clients need to learn how to access and use information.

LEARN, the South Australian Learning Resources Network, includes the staff of all the learning resource centres of TAFE Institutes in South Australia. There are ten Institutes in all, comprising more than thirty-three campuses. Included in the membership are specialist services such as the TAFE ABN (Australian Bibliographic Network) Unit and the Open Learning Information and Materials Clearing House (OLIMCH), both located at Adelaide Institute. More details about the operations of LEARN can be read in the 1994 report, Towards Eupraxophy: Learning Resource Management and Service Models for Flexible Delivery.

Staff working in LRCs include a variety of roles: Library Managers, Lecturers, Lecturers’ Assistants, Librarians, Library Technicians, Library Assistants and clerical staff. All these staff are members of LEARN, though activities are generally dominated by the more senior classifications.

Through its peak committee, the LEARN Planning Group (LPG), LEARN reports to LSRSC (the Learning Systems and Resources Standing Committee, formerly LSREC, the Learning Systems and Resources Executive Committee), currently chaired by the Director of Adelaide Institute, which reports directly to the Chief Executive of the South Australian Department for Employment, Training and Further Education.

LEARN includes a number of structures which help it to perform its functions and which also contribute to its visibility.
1. A position of LEARN Coordinator is funded at 0.5, together with some administrative support.

2. The LEARN Planning Group (LPG) consists of a representative from each Institute. Its role is 'to plan for the development of facilities and staff on a system wide basis, advise on annual resource requirements for the network and coordinate network wide services'. In essence, the purpose of LPG is to guide the network's operations and to provide an avenue for dissemination of information (in all directions) through the network. Part-time executive support for LPG is funded by LSRSC.

3. A number of permanent working groups coordinate specific activities or keep a watching brief on areas of particular interest to the Network. These are:
   - Budget
   - Staff Development
   - Information and Communication Technologies Advisory Committee (LICTAC)
   - METAmarc Users Group
   - Joint Automation Working Party
   - LEARN Program Plan
   - Information Literacy
   - Best Practice Implementation Group.

4. In addition, ad hoc working groups are formed as needed; these may have a short or longer life span, and are disbanded when their purpose has been achieved. (*see Appendix 2).

5. The newsletter Networking is issued 4 times a year, to LEARN members and to a wider readership within and outside TAFE SA.

6. LEARN meetings, to which all members are invited, are held once a term, and include reports on items of interest, discussions on future directions, and staff development activities.

7. An Internet mailing list has been established, to which all LEARN members can subscribe, and this is used to circulate items of information and news, and to seek advice.

8. Broader-based work in operational areas, such as reviews of LRCs, has taken place over the years. At present a review is being conducted of the LRCs of Spencer Institute to ensure that they work well in concert. This, and similar reviews of other LRCs, involve a variety of people from the Institute to ensure that the LRCs are customer centred. They result in recommendations for improvement and future directions.
History of LEARN

LEARN, the South Australian Learning Resources Network, was launched in August 1989, with the mission to increase access to and participation in SA TAFE courses through the more effective use of learning delivery systems and resources, and to improve the quality of the learning experience.

Before the establishment of LEARN there had existed for some years a group with a function of developing TAFE library services. In 1973 there were no TAFE libraries as such (in fact, even the term TAFE had not yet been coined); there were little more than accumulations of books for teachers’ use. In 1975 a group of seven teacher-librarians decided that there was a need to cooperate to improve library services through liaison with the then Department of Further Education on the design and development of libraries. The group included metropolitan colleges and country representatives from Port August and Whyalla.

By 1976 this group had increased to fourteen members, and in 1977 a constitution was prepared to establish the group as a departmental working party. All TAFE college libraries were included in the group, but only senior staff were members.

The group set its own directions, and meetings tended to cover a wide variety of topics, which were mainly of a day to day operational nature. Links were made with the Victorian and New South Wales TAFE library groups. In 1977 the first national conference of the TAFE section of ALIA (the Australian Library and Information Association) was held in Mount Gambier as a cooperative effort between South Australia and Victoria.

With a gradual increase in library staff, the group became known as the Library Resource Group so that it could encompass everyone in the Department with involvement in library services, and in 1983 its constitution was changed to formally include all these staff. This was an important step and a reflection of increasing staff numbers and changing staff structures. The group met at different colleges to emphasise its role in serving all college libraries.

Until the mid 1980s, the focus of attention at meetings remained very much operational, but at this point a gradual change to a stronger focus on educational matters became apparent. In 1986 the LRC Reference Group was formed. This group was more strongly connected with the Learning Resources Branch of the Department, so that it could more easily develop a broader perspective. In particular, the Reference Group was able to strengthen the links between LRCs and curriculum issues.
In the latter half of the 1980s the LRC Reference Group came to the view that a broader network was desirable, and started to consider a new role and a change of name. It was considered by a number of key people that the structure of the network should be formalised, and departmental resources used to support it. This view was countered by a fear in some quarters that such a development would lead to a dominance by Adelaide College, perceived to be well resourced and powerful.

From the Department's point of view, it was clear that three things were happening in LRCs:

- some were relatively small, and struggling to manage on small budgets and staffing levels
- each was autonomous and trying to provide everything its clients needed, so that there was some duplication of effort on matters such as cataloguing
- a basis for sharing information already existed in the LRC Group, which met regularly with a good cross-section of LRC staff in attendance.

A strategy was adopted within the Learning Resources Branch of seeking key people in the LRC culture who could support new and innovative approaches to system-wide learning delivery methodologies which included resource-based and open learning. Fortunately, there were people within the Learning Resources Branch and Adelaide College who had the necessary educational and library expertise, policy understanding and networking skills to carry forward this strategy.

Once agreement was obtained on the concept of the network, the key players started work immediately. A small amount of funding was provided by Learning Resources Branch, and members funded their own activities from within their budgets.

It was considered vital that the new network should demonstrate achievement at an early stage, and this was achieved both by formative Network meetings and by a number of substantial outcomes such as the LEARN catalogue, the early development of OLIMCH, completion of stage 1 of automation, and the beginning of the Learning Services project (information literacy), as well as a number of publications and staff development activities.

Funding for TAFE college library activities had previously been allocated directly from the Learning Resources Branch rather than through colleges. This had produced a sense of isolation for many LRC staff, although LRC budgets were assured. Not long after the formation of LEARN this was changed to an allocation within college budgets. Library Managers were nervous at first that this allocation would be eroded if their colleges were not strongly supportive of libraries, but in fact the statewide move towards resource-based and open learning meant that college Directors became more aware of the importance
and potential of their libraries. An important move (from the point of view of LEARN) that took place in 1988/89 was the relocation of the Learning Resources Branch (which had previously been a separate entity) within the Curriculum Division of the Department. This move meant that developments in learning resource centres were connected with the mainstream of TAFE educational developments, rather than being on the periphery.

The concept of a network was one which LRC staff accommodated without difficulty, since library culture includes sharing and systematic approaches. Few remained within TAFE of the 'custodial' librarian mould; those who did remain were happy to embrace aspects of LEARN that were of direct advantage to their LRCs, such as the LEARN catalogue. The 'two-way street' nature of the Network was apparent to everyone; sharing provided benefits for everyone's ability to improve service to their own students. The support from LRC staff was strong, partly because they had always seen themselves as being relatively low in the pecking order in colleges, and had to develop their own strategies (such as the sharing of resources) in order to improve services to meet student and staff needs.

The vision of the new Tea Tree Gully College of TAFE, put forward in a paper circulated in 1986, was also important to the view of libraries in TAFE because of the importance it placed on the role of the learning resource centre in open learning. The model in place at Tea Tree Gully is different from that of most Institutes. Recognition of the importance of access to, and management of, learning resources has led to the establishment of a number of learning assistance centres (LACs) associated with teaching centres rather than a single LRC. The high profile of this campus has given prominence nationally as well as in South Australia to the role of the learning resource service.

Within this culture, the reasons for the establishment of LEARN can be summarised as follows:

- The goals of TAFE incorporated not only training in a narrow sense, but also broader vocational education, coupled with the development of the skills needed for lifelong learning.
- LRCs play a key role in these goals not only as a source of information but also as a means of developing skills in locating and using information effectively.
- Networks are a good means for lifting quality of service because of the opportunities they provide for sharing and building upon the collective human and material resources they include.
- It was the Department's view that LEARN would enable LRCs collectively to achieve a place and status within TAFE SA that they could not easily achieve individually.
There was a need to improve equity between metropolitan and country locations, where there was a tendency towards duplication of effort in small autonomous LRCs in matters such as cataloguing, while some, especially in the country, were struggling to cope on quite small budgets.

The existing LRC group provided a basis for sharing information, and a good cross-section of attendance to build on.

Though a culture existed with emphasis on client service, there was room, and need, to improve in this area.

LRCs were seen as a vital support service to the statewide development of open learning.

The early years of LEARN were not without their stormy moments. The ABN Unit saw itself, and was seen by others, as a service to Adelaide College; it took determination to change horizons to a system-wide service. Tensions arose, too, when LPG was given the task of examining budgets and finding ways for LEARN to develop its own financial stability rather than relying on central funding. But the tensions were resolved quite quickly as LPG learned to adjust to its management role.

In the seven years since its inception, LEARN has become strong and influential within South Australian TAFE.

LEARN members have participated in the development of six national open learning staff development modules; in the preparation of Focus on Learning, a national publication giving a framework for the provision of learning resources, library and information services; in the collection of statistics and information published in The State of Learning Resource Centres in TAFE SA; and many other activities. The services of OLIMCH have expanded over the years, so that it forms a very valuable resource to support open learning, though one which Institutes could make more use of than they do. OLIMCH staff prepared a booklet on the language and structures of the training reform agenda which was useful not only to LRC staff but to people in vocational education and training nationally to help demystify the proliferating bodies and acronyms which appeared during the restructuring of the early 1990s.

Stakeholders in LEARN include several groups, and all have both proprietorial and client interests in the network. That is, each has an interest, either as a member or a funding provider, in contributing to the continuance and success of the network, as being of relevance to its own purposes, and each has an interest in making use of the services or benefits offered by the network.
Stakeholders can be identified as:

- Member LRCs
- Individual members (LRC staff - Library Managers, Librarians, Library Technicians, Lecturers, Lecturers' Assistants, Library Assistants, clerical staff)
- Institute Directors
- Institutes of which the LRCs are part
- TAFE SA as a whole
- Department for Employment, Training and Further Education
- Community libraries. (Joint use with TAFE)
Networks and Networking

It was the original intention of this paper to discuss best practice in networking. Study of the literature, however, suggests that a more profitable direction is to consider networking as an element of best practice in management.

Current management theory suggests that in the present time of intense competition and rapid change, necessitating a strong focus on quality and rapid response to customer demands and other aspects of the environment, the traditional rigid, hierarchical model of organisations is changing to a flatter, more fluid structure. In many cases, the emphasis is on tasks and teams rather than jobs and departments.

It would be difficult to work in the vocational education and training sector without being aware that the environment and structures are changing constantly. Nationally, the movement is towards competency-based training and the ever increasing impetus towards user choice and the right (and necessity) for industry to influence training outcomes, methods and structures. This has brought heavy pressure to bear on TAFE systems to compete with each other and with the growing number of registered private providers. This has led to changes in the nature of training, in working conditions and in job roles for many staff. In South Australia one of the major structural changes has been the amalgamation of TAFE colleges to form ten Institutes, and then their banding together to form TAFE SA within the Department for Employment, Training and Further Education.

It is clearly vital that the Department is able to adapt to these changes, and it is not only individuals who must learn new ways of operating, but organisations too. Peter Senge's vision of the learning organisation is particularly apt in this environment. Senge views learning organisations as those ‘...where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.’

What are the most pressing demands on TAFE Institutes which may affect the way in which they manage themselves and in particular their LRCs?

There is a strong expectation from government, partly expressed and partly by implication, that the most pressing business of TAFE is to cater for the needs of industry. One of the most used of today's catch-phrases is 'customer focus', and TAFE is therefore grappling with the problem of how to become aware of who its customers are, and how to be responsive to their needs. One of industry's commonest complaints about TAFE has always been that it is slow to respond to demands for new or updated courses. In the past, TAFE had a virtual monopoly of training provision. Now, however, enterprises can provide their own training by obtaining registration as a private provider, or can buy services
from a commercial private provider. In addition, the availability of flexible delivery methods means that, if TAFE is the answer to a particular training need, the enterprise need not buy training from the nearest TAFE provider but from almost any TAFE provider in the country. Add to this the increasing globalisation of training, particularly using on-line delivery methods, so that national boundaries are no longer a constraint, and it is clear that TAFE institutes, in order to survive, must be managed in a way that maximises their responsiveness to client needs.

Industry is equally in a state of flux, and so TAFE is learning not only to be responsive to present needs but to be sensitive to directions of change and predict future needs. This leads to a need for flexibility in how, when, and where programs are delivered, as well as in their content, to cater for increasingly flexible and variable ways of working.

All these changes make heavy demands on the ingenuity and innovation of staff, and result in a need to draw on skills of all types of staff. This is taking place in an environment of reducing public sector expenditure. In this situation, teamwork is vital for effectiveness, and, it may be speculated for the survival of staff morale.

Among the management and organisational development models which are relevant to this environment are knowledge networking and the learning organisation. Two views of these models are summarised below, before examining aspects of the LEARN Network which can be identified as best practice in this context.
Towards a Best Practice Model

The Learning Organisation

John Burgoyne, in a recent article, taking forward Senge’s notion, suggests the following about learning organisations:

- the organisation as a whole (rather than, or as well as, the individuals within it) changes its ways of working in a fashion that can be called learning
- the organisation enriches rather than exploits the context in which it operates
- the organisation maintains excellence over a period of time, and in changing circumstances
- the organisation tends to ‘achieve change in a relatively smooth and gradual way rather than through periodic major crisis’.

Such a way of working is consistent with the educational aims of TAFE SA and of LEARN, and so offers some useful criteria against which to judge LEARN.

Burgoyne proposes eleven characteristics of the learning organisation, many of which are observable in the LEARN Network. These can be summarised as follows.

A learning approach to strategy

Deciding collectively what to do, and then doing it, then checking whether the plan worked, is a mark of a learning organisation. Frequently, too, such an organisation will include contingency plans for flexibility.

LEARN Birthday Cards each year celebrate what has been achieved during the year. Achievements can be checked against the objectives of working groups and projects.

Participative policy making

Policy is likely to be better and more successful if as many people as possible have a say in the making of it.

Even if I disagree with policy that’s developed, if I go along with it quite willingly because I know I’ve had a chance to say what I think, and I know I’ve been listened to”, said one interviewee for this project.
Informing: open information systems

Those who have access to the information current within the organisation are able to form a view about what is going on. This ability contributes to their individual learning process. Information technology can also be used in an open way, thus further increasing the ability of people to gain access to information.

**LEARN meetings** are a source of information about what is happening in LRCs and about what is happening in the wider world. LEARN members use the contacts they make and renew at LEARN meetings to offer and seek more information about items of interest.

**Networking**, the LEARN Network newsletter, has been a very effective vehicle for sharing information across the Network and beyond from the beginning.

**Contributions to Networking**

The LEARN Catalogue is a vital tool for efficiency and effectiveness of service to the clients of LRCs and is also an open information system for LEARN staff.

**Formative accounting and control**

Most information about accounting and control procedures becomes available at the end of an accounting period. If, instead, people can have access to it continuously, they can use it to inform their work and learn from the results.

**The State of LRCs in TAFE SA** contains statistical information on many aspects of LEARN, including collections and expenditure, which LEARN LRCs can use to guide their performance.

**One of the roles of LPG is to ensure that information about LEARN's priorities and activities flows between the Network and the Department, and that Departmental information flows to LEARN members.**
Mutual adjustment between departments

Departments themselves can make adjustments to their relative roles, rather than being controlled from above.

LEARN committees and working parties are self-focusing task teams which develop their own objectives and strategies.

Reward flexibility

Working conditions and rewards are flexible and applied in a way that reinforces learning.

LEARN management gives all of us the chance for our share of the limelight if we want to make a presentation, and we are always given credit publicly for the efforts we make, even if we only make a small contribution.

Adaptable structures

Structures and procedures can be changed relatively easily and cheaply.

Committees and working parties are set up when needed, and disbanded or refocused when their task is finished.

Boundary workers as environmental scanners

People interacting with the outside environment pick up a lot of information about what is going on, and how the organisation is doing.

LPG members, and especially the Network Convener, make sure that they regularly meet with people from the Department so as to maintain their awareness of developments at the broader South Australian and national level.

Understanding of the needs of staff across the whole of TAFE SA for information about national directions in the vocational education and training sector prompted OLIMCH to develop the booklet Language and Structures of the National Training Reform Agenda.
Inter-organisational learning
Transfer of learning and practice between the organisation and other organisations with which it works.

The development of Keys to Information Literacy encouraged the member LRCs of LEARN to learn from each other's experience and ideas.

Learning culture and climate
Making mistakes is a part of learning, and should be learned from rather than penalised. But it should not be necessary to make the same mistake repeatedly.

"People discuss their work pretty openly at LEARN meetings, and most of us don't mind admitting to some of our mistakes. I find I learn a lot from other people that way."

Self-development opportunities for all
The organisation can lead and resource self-development for all its members.

"Staff development workshops on information literacy held at LEARN meetings have been well attended, and because of demand, additional workshops have been held during the year."

Best Practice Networking in South Australia
Knowledge Networking

Charles A Savage proposes that the wealth-creating capacity of organisations lies principally in the knowledge, capabilities and aspirations of their people, but only some of this capacity is captured and embedded in procedures and structures. In the educational context, it is plain that the capacity to lead customers (i.e. students) to the outcomes they require is very much dependent on the people in the organisation. Structures and services such as LRCs, information literacy programs, and learning resources are only as effective as the people who operate them or make them available. Savage introduces the concept of 'knowledge networking', in which a strongly synergistic effect is produced when the learning from past experience is shared between people and translated into planning for the future even though the future cannot be predicted.

In both large and small organisations, there is a tendency for management hierarchies to flatten. Companies are using cross-functional task teams both internally and externally. Though companies still incorporate departmental structures, and people within them still have 'jobs', there is a greater recognition of the role of well-defined, multiple cross-functional teams.

The word 'vision' is over-used in TAFE, often in an unimaginative way. Savage uses the term in an almost literal way, suggesting that organisations must have a clear view not only of what they want to achieve but of what their clients want to achieve, so that it is the organisation's job to use its abilities to help its clients to achieve their aims. Educational organisations, therefore, have the job of using their abilities to inform, lead and support so that their clients can achieve their own aims of using educational achievement to reach goals of employment, further study or personal development.

At the present time, and increasingly in the future, knowledge, and the ability to find and acquire it, are critical attributes of workers in any organisation. In such an environment (and particularly at a time of radical change in thinking about how education and training should take place), it is vital that people within the organisation are prepared to teach and learn from each other. This is more likely to take place when people see themselves not as individuals with roles quite separate from each other, but as nodes in a network, supporting each other and being supported. And if this attitude is developed, in a climate of trust and openness, there is less need to concentrate on matters of command and control, and more opportunity to consider what is the best way to tackle the task at hand. Teams working in this way can be task-focused rather than job-focused; and multiple teams can work in networks, across functions and across organisations.
A climate of trust and openness, at a statewide level, is not easy to achieve. Savage's concept of knowledge networking requires a degree of trust if it is come into being, but is likely also to result in far greater trust and cooperativeness. He identifies five 'conceptual principles'.

Peer to peer knowledge networking

The first is 'peer to peer knowledge networking'. This proposes that the people (and technologies) in networks should have ready access to people and information wherever they are located. Communication takes place directly, without filtering through a hierarchy, so that it is possible to go straight to the source of the required knowledge. This is based on the assumption that those who are superior in rank are not necessarily superior in knowledge; all people may be 'expert' within their own sphere. It is thus possible to value the differences between people, and to accept and build upon the strengths of everyone.

Knowledge networking requires a 'teamwork of teams', where the teams are small, well defined and well staffed. Their meetings include a sharing of learning, insights and challenges. The efforts of individuals and of teams are cross-fertilised. While they are working on specific tasks, they maintain their awareness of the broader horizon. Savage contrasts sports teams, where the rules are known, the roles predetermined, and the task is the circumscribed one of beating the other team, with 'dynamic teaming', where rules are evolved as the work proceeds, roles are fluid, and the task, collaborating with other teams, is open ended. Though the model that Savage advocates is still evolving in vocational education and training, all those who work in this sector are certainly familiar with changing rules and, for many, evolving roles. An advantage of Savage's view is that it provides a model within which these things can happen with a degree of comfort and acknowledgment, rather than the uncertainty and fear with which many educators are grappling.

In order to work well as 'dynamic teams', the people within each team must understand how their individual activities and those of the team fit within a broader context. Some commonality of understanding must be present.

Savage acknowledges that some levels of authority are still needed within organisations, since decisive leadership from the top is sometimes required. Even here, however, better results are obtained when leaders listen actively to their teams.

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LEARN is built on a foundation of active and open communication between members. The focus and goals of the Network are clearly identified, and reiterated in LEARN publications.
Keys to Information Literacy, a publication in print and disk format, was funded by LSREC in 1995. Its purpose was to find out what information literacy programs and materials already existed within the LEARN Network, and then to develop materials which could be adapted for use within individual Institutes. This would allow sharing information about successes and failures, and promote a cohesive approach to information literacy across the Network. The project was described as a 'generic learning services package' to emphasise the autonomy of Institutes in making decisions about how to structure and support their own information literacy programs.

Keys to Information Literacy deliberately includes a range of examples of information literacy materials from several Institutes.

Integrative process

Savage’s second concept is the ‘integrative process’. In a constantly shifting environment, it is necessary to identify and act upon patterns that are significant by being in constant touch with the thinking of others. In fact, he says, ‘seeing the significant patterns together as teams is the challenge of any enterprise’, instead of considering only the part of the pattern that touches us. In the vocational education and training context, an example might be the necessity for training providers to be aware, when planning course profiles, of the shifting balance between industry and government funded programs, and between private and government providers.

Individuals and teams, then, must be aware of the patterns developing inside and outside the organisation, and this awareness requires perception, judgement and also the will to act. This process is fluid, rather than fixed, and requires ‘dynamic reconfiguring of ideas, people, processes, and resources, the process we call knowledging’. In this process, the experience gained over the years enables people to recognise, understand and act upon significant patterns. It is clear, then, that this continuous change is incorporated in an ‘integrative process’ rather than in a single act of integration.

LEARN meetings include discussion of 'big picture' issues as well as operational matters.

LEARN Birthday Cards, by summarising achievements over the year, indicate the pattern of development of LEARN.

The National ALIA TAFE Section conference held in Adelaide in 1991 and organised by many LEARN members typifies the Network’s concern with the ‘big picture’. The Finn Report was high on the agenda, as were other large-scale issues and developments in the vocational education and training sector.
Work as dialogue

The third concept is ‘work as dialogue’. Savage reminds us how difficult it is to define ‘work’, suggesting that our views of what work is are largely determined by the context in which we live. Our present views are coloured by thinking prevalent in the industrial era. Many of the restrictive aspects of the way we work, such as the fragmentation of tasks and the double-checking procedures, are deep-rooted in the distrust inherent in the division and subdivision of labour of the industrial era.

Savage, however, defines work as something that involves processes and products. There is, he says, ‘a significant difference between work in which we are engaged - listening, envisioning, and remembering - and work in which we are just doing what we are told. When we understand the process and the product within their context, we can engage more fully with them. In our engagement with the process, we give form to our visions for the future, and to do this, we make use of the knowledge we bring with us from the past. Mastery of the process and the product enable us to see improvements or variations that can be made. Savage sees this iterative thinking and action process both as a dialogue with the self and one that takes place between oneself and others. Human networking is the action of sharing our experience, knowledge and vision with others. As Savage points out,

we gain recognition not only through seeing our own process and product, but through the process and product being seen by [others]. We may discuss the process and the product with someone else and together see aspects that neither of us had seen individually. We learn together and add further information to our knowledge. This is work as dialogue.

Human time and timing

The fourth concept is ‘human time and timing’. Savage contrasts ‘clock time’, which assumes a separate past, present and future, with ‘human time’, where past and future merge in a present which is only ephemeral. If we are guided only by clock time, we disregard the past as something we have left behind, and assume that the future is far ahead of us.
William James, who analysed the typical perception of the 'present' as about 12 seconds, also said that 'the past flows with us'. Savage illustrates this view with a musical example. In order to make sense of a piece of music, we need to carry the notes with us as they pass, until we start to understand their pattern. As we grasp the pattern, we start to anticipate the notes that are yet to be heard. If we were unable to carry forward the pattern from the past and anticipate the future, we would simply hear a jumble of notes.

Clock time is, of course, always important, but in human time we are able to develop our capabilities (our useable competencies) from the knowledge and experience we bring with us from the past, and, in the present, act in a way which anticipates the future.

In the work arena, the organisation's success will depend largely upon its ability to distinguish patterns and trends, and to adapt its own responses to these. Today, the opportunity for the organisation to take a leap forward may come unpredictably so that it is even more challenging and more important to be attuned to developing patterns and to interact with the market.

Returning to the musical analogy, interaction with the market can be likened to jazz improvisation: it is necessary to listen and to play the music at the same time; learning to do these things in parallel enables the organisation to make faster, more sensitive responses. No one person within the organisation can master all that is needed in such a complex situation, but a well developed team can do so.

Virtual enterprising and dynamic teaming

The fifth concept is 'virtual enterprising and dynamic teaming'.

'Virtual enterprising' is used to signify the departure from inflexible, predetermined job roles towards teamed capabilities, where the teams are cross-functional, defined and redefined as needed. The teams may include people from supplier or client organisations. Individuals may be members of several different teams. The teams may be geographically dispersed, communicating through technology as well as face to face.

Virtual teams may be formed by volunteers or by people assigned by others. They should be kept as small as possible and need not include representatives from all functions they impinge on (since knowledge networking should ensure that all interests are taken into account). The learning of the team will add to the knowledge base of the organisation as a whole.
Teams must find their own ways to focus on their tasks, rather than being directed externally. They must make out the patterns in the marketplace, among other organisations and within their own organisation, and must then design products, processes and service strategies to meet the needs. They may go through an iterative process of finding solutions until their plans mature. These are dynamic teams.

**LEARN committees and working groups act as 'virtual teams' whose members are in dispersed locations and can move between teams as necessary. Information technology is a vital support to the virtual teams'. The Internet list enables communication to occur rapidly between all members of the Network.**

**Interrelating the five concepts**

Finally, Savage proposes, the five concepts must be interrelated.

The networking of vision and knowledge allows virtual enterprises and dynamic teams to see the patterns of the present and to express their own patterns. Knowledge networking involves drawing upon visions and knowledge to develop quality actions in the present, in concert with a team. These teams of professionals are charged with recognizing, interpreting, deciding, and implementing responses to windows of opportunity that will meet both the customers' expectations and the teams' enterprise vision...

The five principles can only work together if there is strong leadership throughout the enterprise. If people at all levels rise to the occasion, they can help to define the enterprise's vision and add to its knowledge base. Strong leadership will be especially important on the multiple task-focusing teams. As we enter the knowledge era, virtual enterprises will shift focus from "control" to "commitment", from "monitoring" to "motivating", and from "commanding" to "conducting"...

Instead of "management by command" we move to "management as dialogue", where we foster strategy dialogue with our business partners.

While Senge is discussing the structure and organisation of enterprises, his views are extremely pertinent to the needs of TAFE in South Australia, and hence to the operations of LEARN.

At a very practical, down to earth level, the booklet *Networking: What it is and how to do it* offers advice about the purposes, structures and phases of networking. It states that:

The principal objective of forming a network is to improve the profitability of the participants, making them collectively more efficient and competitive.

The result can:
- improve skills at all levels.
- lead to a sharing of investment costs.
• increase availability of financial resources.
• improve market knowledge and access.
• increase ability to undertake training, research and development.
• improve work practices and production techniques.
• lead to economies of scale and increase leverage in negotiations.

It will be seen that LEARN has been able to achieve all these things to a greater or lesser degree.

The table below summarises the aspects of Savage’s and Burgoyne’s views discussed above, and places beside them characteristics of the LEARN Network for comparison.

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Best Practice and the LEARN Network

In this section, aspects of LEARN will be considered in relation to the good practice framework above. Both positive and negative aspects will be discussed, but it will be apparent that only minor criticisms can be made of this very successful network.

Peer to peer knowledge networking

Peer to peer knowledge networking is seen in both formal and informal activities of the Network. Informally, contact between members is easy, fostered by the contacts made and renewed at LEARN meetings, supported by the ‘LEARN communicating’ brochure, and conducted by telephone, e-mail and through the LEARN Internet list. Contact includes requests for information or ideas, and material circulated for information.

![Figure 1: Examples of postings to LEARN list](image-url)
One of the first achievements of LEARN at the formal level was the institution of a union catalogue for all TAFE colleges in South Australia. This enabled LRC staff and students to be aware of all holdings across the state. It has the potential to allow individual LRCs to concentrate on collections in their areas of high demand or specialisation, without depriving students of access to resources they need in other fields.

In a similar vein, the development of an inter-library loan policy and a strong culture of supporting inter-library loans means that the whole state's collection is potentially available to all students. This is of most value to students enrolled at small rural campuses. In some cases, the activity is also able to support university students in rural areas where the TAFE campuses perform a role in supporting the whole community, whether in joint-use libraries or simply as a community obligation. This is a vital aspect of high-quality customer service. It depends on the cooperative attitudes of staff, but it also tends to promote the culture of sharing that existed even before the Network existed as an entity. In the early days of LEARN, some librarians were less than enthusiastic about inter-library loans, particularly since the burden of effort was seen to weigh more heavily on the larger metropolitan libraries in favour of the smaller libraries. Whole-hearted support for the policy is still not quite universal, but those who dissent tend to keep a low profile.

LRC staff at country campuses particularly value the contact with their colleagues, since it is often the most effective way of finding out about statewide developments, whether relating to LRCs or other areas. Country people have always tended to develop informal networks for mutual support, and so it was an easy conceptual step to more formal networking. LEARN helped library staff, who often feel they do not quite fit in to educational or administrative frameworks, to find a niche. Their sense of isolation was thus reduced. In a physical sense, too, LEARN provides more opportunity for contact through LEARN meetings, where members can supplement their electronic interactions with face to face contact.

LPG members can, if they wish, participate in meetings by video conference. This gives the choice of travelling to Adelaide and building in useful incidental meetings and activities, or, on the other hand, saving the time and expense of a long trip.

The model of technological interaction provided by LEARN is used in many ways. For example, Spencer Institute LRC is a self-managing work team spread over several campuses (which comprise most of the country area of South Australia), and staff find that e-mail is a effective way of interacting fast and frequently without wasting time. It is also far cheaper than long-distance telephone calls.
Some members consider that the dominance of managerial level members can lead to insufficient attention being paid to operational matters that may be the concern of other levels of library staff. It sometimes needs some pushing on the part of more junior members to have their interests heeded. But most members seem unafraid to put their views forward; as one person said, ‘we are in the communicating business’, and this is manifest at any gathering of LEARN members.

Earlier research conducted by LEARN revealed a perception that more ‘senior’ members had greater access to staff development, to an unfair degree. As a result, a special interest group for Library Technicians was set up, and all LEARN meetings now include a workshop on matters of special interest to Library Technicians and clerical staff.

Quite clearly the single most important aspect of the success of LEARN is the very strong sense of a common purpose, in which the advantages of sharing expertise and experience as well as resources override tensions between individual LRCs or Network members. A key to this is the homogeneity of purpose of LRCs themselves, even though they are diverse in size, staffing and other aspects, and in the consequent culture of sharing and cooperation prevalent among library staff. Further substantial factors are the partial funding of a Coordinator with administrative assistance, and funding of a part time Executive Officer for LPG.

By comparison, Open Net, the South Australian network of TAFE staff with an interest in flexible learning, has found it difficult to make a real impact on the Institutes. A number of valuable activities were undertaken by this network (particularly the publication of the Open Net newsletter, the Friday Forums, and the Flexible Delivery Road Show which visited every Institute), and a change of culture about open learning is certainly perceptible.

However, it has been a difficult task for the coordinator of Open Net to develop and maintain energy and cohesion in the Network. The people who made up Open Net were a diverse mixture of teaching and non-teaching staff with varied occupations and interests. They did not come together with a common interest as familiar and visible as an LRC, but as crusaders with a mission for change. It was therefore more difficult to identify the common interests that might bind the members. And they had a hard task to undertake, to act as change agents within their Institutes. LEARN, on the other hand, had a task that was not necessarily easy but far easier to define, and far easier for outsiders to understand since everyone in TAFE has at least an idea of what a library is and does.

LPG contributes greatly to the communication processes within LEARN. Since the amalgamation of colleges to form Institutes, it has included a member from each Institute, and so is a representative body, but, as there are only ten Institutes, it is not too large. The representatives are elected by the LRC staff in each
Institute, and not all are LRC Managers. LPG functions as a broadcasting and information gathering mechanism, as well as a direction-setting body, and so encourages the participation of all staff in policy-related as well as operational matters. In general this works well, though the quality and timeliness of information circulation is not equally good in all Institutes.

The Network structure is formalised to quite a high degree through the existence of committees and working groups, the careful documentation of their activities, and the system of meetings. This structure is publicised in Networking (LEARN’s Newsletter, published originally eight, and now four, times a year) and in other LEARN promotional material. The brochure Communicating, which gives contact details for all LRC staff, LPG members, ABN staff and OLIMCH staff, is widely distributed. It is therefore easy for new LRC staff to understand how LEARN works, and to make contact with other members who can help them to find their feet.

A source of cohesion across LEARN is the universal emphasis on quality of service to the clients of LRCs, the students and lecturers of TAFE SA.

One thing that makes it easier for LEARN to maintain its cohesion is that the population of South Australia is small, and more than three quarters of it is in the Adelaide metropolitan area. Both in work and personal life, people’s networks tend to interweave and overlap. This may in part account for the chatty, intimate tone that is often to be found in Networking. As a comparison, the staff of TAFE SA as a whole are roughly equal in number to those of Sydney Institute of Technology in New South Wales, but in South Australia that number supports forty to fifty points of service delivery.

OLIMCH is a formal structure that takes networking out beyond the LRC realm by providing services to all staff with an interest in open learning and flexible delivery, primarily those who wish to develop or acquire course materials. It offers a search service for course materials in Australia and overseas, and provides information about the latest developments in open learning and flexible delivery. It also conducts research and evaluation projects, and has been successful in tendering for a number of statewide and national projects. By acting as a visible source of materials and information, it has played an important role in the promotion of open learning and flexible delivery across the state, and is well known nationally.
Figure 2: OLIMCH world wide web page

The ABN Unit coordinates data input for the LEARN catalogue and also the catalogue for CALS, the Centre for Applied Learning Systems. Its creation was an early activity of the Network. The Unit is based at Adelaide Institute, but provides a statewide service. In the early days of the Network some members feared that the Unit would operate too much as the 'property' of Adelaide Institute, but a determined effort to make expertise, training and advice available to the whole Network has overcome this fear. The Unit now plays an important role in helping to ensure uniformity and adherence to national cataloguing standards across the network. The Unit has an expanding role in training which is likely to boom as imminent new initiatives take place with the redesign of ABN nationally.

Integrative process

LEARN has a high profile within TAFE SA. This is undoubtedly due in part to its early champions, including individuals within the Department who continue to act as supporters. It is also due to the emphasis that the Network has placed on communication and advocacy.

The newsletter Networking is circulated not only to LEARN members, but to Institute Directors and many other staff of TAFE SA and the Department. It includes articles on developments (in South Australia and elsewhere) on subjects relevant to LRCs; sharing of experiences in staff development activities, conferences and elsewhere by LEARN members; information notices; and, in
each issue, an editorial contributed by invitation from a senior member of TAFE SA or the Department, giving a personal view of a ‘big picture’ issue of the moment. An editorial policy has been adopted of encouraging a wide diversity of authors to submit articles. Networking is substantial in content, and many of the articles have a personal flavour and are entertaining to read. It deals, too, with topics that LRC and other staff really want to know about. As a result, those who receive Networking actually read it, and notice what is happening in LEARN. LEARN has been fortunate to have an editor prepared to take on the heavy workload involved in preparation of such a newsletter virtually as a voluntary task. It will be an urgent task now to provide adequate support, as the editorship changes, to assure the future of the newsletter.

The LEARN Birthday Cards which are distributed each year encapsulate LEARN’s achievements in an eye-catching and digestible form. In both cases, the promotional value is obvious, and not least because it is not hollow show, but real accomplishment.

Both through formal communication such as Networking and through informal contact with each other, LEARN members are well informed about developments across the state, and are able to use their information not only within their LRCs but also to increase their effective participation in the business of their Institutes. A number of members have noted that they are often among the first within their Institute to know about particular departmental developments.

Nevertheless, as was noted above, some LEARN members consider that communication about activities within LEARN could be improved: this, however, may be a problem in the communication of some LPG representatives rather than a universal problem.

LEARN has proved its ability to lobby swiftly and successfully. A notable example was the feat of conferring by fax, developing a position, and using it to lobby every Institute Director, all within one working day. This was a successful counter to a threat of budget cuts to LRCs.

At the national level, funding has been obtained for several projects. Particularly worthy of note is Focus on Learning, a framework for the provision of learning resources, library and information services in vocational education and training (a publication in which LEARN personnel played a leading part), which provides a national framework for good practice in LRCs, including performance indicators. Despite this, it is hard to discern that LEARN has had any influence at the national level to increase recognition of the importance of LRCs to flexible delivery. The ANTA Flexible Delivery Taskforce Final Report, for example, does not discuss the role of LRCs. It is clear that much remains to be done in this area.
Work as dialogue

Most members regard the LEARN meetings which take place every term as both valuable and enjoyable, though some find them too long. (Meetings last from 9.00 a.m. until about 4.00 p.m.) One interviewee for this project sensed a certain loss of direction in 1995, but now feels that 'the inspirational quality has been regained'. A few members think that some agenda items are of marginal relevance. Against this, however, should be set the fact that the meetings are designed to cover directional, operational and motivational aspects for staff at a variety of levels from different styles of campus, so that it might well be considered impossible for every agenda item to meet every member's needs. Meetings include reports on current activities of working groups, which tend to be dominated by the 'old guard' of key players, but others are also invited to take the floor to report or discuss. Though the membership is large enough to necessitate meetings taking place in lecture theatres, there is a distinct sense that members share and interchange leading roles, rather than that a panel of 'experts' imparts wisdom to the rest.

One of the purposes of the LPG committee and working group system is to ensure that there are plenty of forums to which members can contribute. They clearly work democratically, and input from all is valued. When working groups are being formed, expressions of interest in membership are called for, and people can step forward if they wish. Sometimes, a 'tap on the shoulder' is given if a particular person's expertise is seen to be especially necessary. As with other LEARN activities, it is members in more senior roles who form the majority on working groups.

A real difficulty exists here to which there is no easy answer. LRC Managers are conscious of the need to encourage their staff to participate in LEARN activities, and some make a point of doing so. On the other hand, it may be logically necessary for an LRC Manager to combine LEARN activities with other meetings that may take place in Adelaide, and difficult to afford the cost of separate trips to Adelaide by the LRC Manager and another member of staff for different purposes. This is one of the reasons why it is difficult to encourage more participation by staff in more junior roles.

It is clear that LEARN members provide role models for each other; but all members need to be able to observe these roles in action, in face to face contact as well as through technological communication. An impressive aspect of this role modelling is the mature manner of dealing with conflict which is a cultural norm within LEARN. Naturally, differences of opinion occur from time to time in which tempers are tested. It is usual for the irritation to be quickly put aside and the topic of discussion returned to. This seems to happen as a matter of habit, in a way which indicates that LEARN members respect each other and are committed to making the Network work well.
It may be true, too that LEARN could focus more on how it is seen from outside, particularly by Institute Directors and the Department. While these people certainly see LEARN as offering a valuable service, in the present time of economic constraint they will be scrutinising every activity carefully to assess not only value but value for money.

One possible means to this end is a LEARN page on the World Wide Web, which is being developed by the LEARN Information and Communication Technologies Advisory Committee (LICTAC). The page will be referenced from the TAFE SA page, and will include information on LEARN's committees and working groups, publications and services, with links to other useful library and other sites.

**Human time and timing**

The working groups collectively form a powerful means of scanning the VET environment and preparing for the future, both of LRCs and of their customers. It will be important for the longer-term health of LEARN to ensure that people are coming up through the ranks to learn how to take on leadership roles in the future. There is an awareness of this problem particularly among the more long-standing members of the group, and some attempt is being made to groom some younger members. Nevertheless, it is clear that, in spite of good general participation, a relatively small number of members continue to exert leadership within LEARN.

**Virtual enterprising and dynamic teaming**

The working parties are seen as useful and generally successful. Members appreciate the fact that their progress is reviewed, and they are either wound up when their task is done or redirected with a different focus. Though the difficulty has been noted above of enabling everyone to participate in working groups, there is a fair degree of sharing around the tasks. Most members get a chance to participate in some activity: if they do not join working groups, they may be involved in LEARN meetings.

The working parties naturally have the limitations of their members. Some dedicated members become over-committed and then have difficulty in getting through the workload. This sometimes results in work falling behind; sometimes, however, other members will step in and either give a gentle push or take on some of the work.

The working parties are seen as genuine teams; the variety of people within the Network gives the opportunity to follow through different interests.
In the early days of the Network there was some resentment of Adelaide Institute's strong role. Some staff felt that consultation with other Institutes was insufficient, for example on matters such as budget planning. This was exacerbated by imperfect communication. Now, however, other Institutes have gained strength, and members generally perceive that the relationship is more equal, even though the statewide services OLIMCH and the ABN Unit remain at Adelaide. At least some of the credit for this must go to staff of these two units, who manage to tread the line between loyalty to the Institute and service to the whole Network very successfully.

Many aspects of the 'virtual enterprising' of LEARN have already been discussed above. It is important, however, to reinforce the positive role played by technology in communication. It is doubtful whether LEARN could function as it does without access to audio and video conferencing, e-mail and the LEARN list. It is another piece of good fortune for LEARN that South Australia was early in adopting these technologies, and that they were adopted throughout the TAFE system so that LEARN did not have to put up arguments to obtain them.

Interrelationship

Leadership is a critical part of the interrelationship of the five concepts of knowledge networking, and LEARN has had strong leadership. It should be apparent from discussion so far that a number of people have played, and continued to play, an influential part in developing and supporting LEARN. Everyone interviewed for this project (inside and outside LEARN) has commented on the strength of the Network Convenor and other Network members of long standing in keeping the focus of LEARN on its educational function. Numerous library staff have been encouraged to undertake NELMIC (a self-paced package, now called Teaching and Learning) or other educational training, and through this the commitment and focus of the membership have been strengthened. All those who take leadership roles do so in a way which encourages equity and inclusiveness, in an atmosphere of commitment rather than control.

Similarly, the experience and knowledge of other leading figures in the Network have contributed to the ability of LEARN to 'manage up' to the Department Central Office. Good working relationships have been maintained especially between the Network Convenor and Central Office personnel, so that lines of communication are kept open; the role of Networking in this regard has already been mentioned. Fortunately, LSRSC continues to be supportive under its new chair, the Director of Adelaide Institute. Brian Stanford, the former chair of LSREC, is now the Chief Executive of the Department, but naturally carries with him a sound understanding of LEARN and its aims.
On the negative side, LEARN needs to avoid the risk that the views of the leadership figures within the Network prevail by default. The formal aspects of the Network's structure offer an avenue for this; these need to be given their due importance.

Though LEARN has achieved much, some tasks fall short of achievement because it takes too long to do them or because they are too difficult. No guidelines exist for how to solve problems when they arise, particularly the management of people whose over-commitment leads to the occasional hiatus in performance. LEARN is by no means alone in this; it is one of the most commonly encountered management problems. It may be, however, that the personal and organisational maturity of many LEARN members might be successfully brought to bear on this problem, resulting in solutions that others could learn from.

There are a number of agenda items of prominence that have yet to be resolved, and that are increasingly pressing for LRCs. Among them are the following.

- A policy is needed to guide decisions about the access to TAFE LRCs of students enrolled with private providers. Smaller private providers are unable to offer comprehensive library collections; a community service philosophy would lead TAFE to give generous access to its facilities; on the other hand, the competition which government wishes to encourage between TAFE and private providers means that the costs of such access must be established, and a decision made concerning the costs for such access.

- A consistent policy on community access to TAFE LRCs is needed. The expanding implementation of flexible delivery in all educational sectors inevitably means that students seek resources in libraries close to where they live or work. A tension exists between the burden this places on LRCs, and the commitment to community service.

- Continued work is needed to assess the implications of current directions in on-line learning for the nature and delivery of information literacy programs, as well as on-line access to learning resources and management services.

- Proper conformity to copyright law is a continuing difficulty for all those who use educational resource materials. The problem is exacerbated by the uncertainty which exists about the application of copyright law to on-line materials.

- Internet access and training continue to present problems of cost and security to Institutes which need to be resolved.
LEARN case study: information literacy

In keeping with the educational focus of the Network, information literacy (earlier known as Learning Services) has been a topic of importance from the earliest days. LEARN has put a good deal of effort into placing information literacy on the TAFE agenda, by means of work with curriculum and program groups, and later through involvement with national projects which resulted in publications. In this sphere, LEARN has supported the national and state agendas relating to the introduction of competency-based training, flexible delivery and lifelong learning. While TAFE lecturing staff have not yet universally accepted the importance of information literacy, good progress has been made.

It is evident that the existence of the LEARN Network was central to the progress that has been made. A brief description of some of the critical events illustrates this.

Before the advent of LEARN, some TAFE colleges ran user education activities, focusing on how to use libraries. They often received low priority, and so were generally ad hoc activities rather than integrated as a program.

One of LEARN’s early actions, soon after its establishment in 1989, was to obtain funding from the Learning Resources Branch for the Learning Services Project. This consisted of visits to a number of interstate TAFE and university campuses and in particular to Hawkesbury Campus of the University of Western Sydney in New South Wales, to examine their activities in the sphere of learning services. These visits confirmed the direction which was already being taken by Adelaide College, which was to integrate information literacy skills with course delivery, to identify information literacy models suitable for particular teaching areas, and to make information literacy materials available on disk for easy adaptation.

As a result of this project, in 1989 and 1990, two series of workshops were conducted on ‘information skills’ or ‘learning services’. Their purpose was to help LRC staff to understand the teaching role of the LRC, and LRC staff from many colleges participated in them.

In 1992 South Australian TAFE managed the development of six staff development modules on open learning; LEARN staff joined the working groups for each of these projects, and continued to participate when a series of national modules were also developed.

An important project was Guidelines for the Management of Distributed Learning Resources12, which considered issues related to distributing collections of learning resources, and explored management strategies which would ensure ready access to learning resources for staff and students.
As a joint activity of Adelaide Institute and Tea Tree Gully Campus, the video *Using the LEARN Microfiche Catalogue* was developed in 1993. The video format was chosen with the intention of catering for different learning styles, thus reinforcing the educational focus of LEARN.

A landmark event was the first national information literacy conference, 'Information Literacy: The Australian Agenda', which took place in 1993. The conference was funded and run by the University of South Australia and held at Adelaide Institute of TAFE, and LEARN personnel were members of the planning committee. Participants in the conference came from universities, schools, TAFE and other library sectors, and it became clear at the conference that TAFE was at the forefront of information literacy developments nationally. A second conference was held in 1995. These two conferences gave impetus to LEARN to further its activities in the area of information literacy.

In 1992 LSREC funded a report on *Learning Key Competencies*14. The report was written by two LEARN members at Tea Tree Gully Campus, and released in 1993. At this time key competencies were a focus of activity in the vocational education and training sector, and this project was timed to influence TAFE’s early involvement in the South Australian national key competencies project. A further project, funded in 1995 by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training, was jointly run by the South Australian Department for Employment, Training and Further Education and Flinders University. The aim of the project was to produce practical material about teaching and learning the key competencies, for the use of staff in the field. The resulting publication was called *Collecting, Analysing and Organising Information*15. This had two strands, one of which considered the need to embed the key competencies into curriculum documents and courses, while the other inserted key competency material explicitly into the Tourism information literacy materials of Adelaide Institute to be published in *Keys to Information Literacy*. Both the process and the result of this exercise demonstrated to TAFE SA the extent to which LRC staff could contribute to the support of key competencies.

The publication *Supporting Open Learning Students in Accessing Community Resources*16, prepared by LEARN staff, dealt with issues faced by students studying flexibly away from campuses. This demonstrated LEARN’s awareness of the broad context of vocational education and training, and its ability to pick up one of the key issues of the time, open learning.
The booklet *Language and Structures of the National Training Reform Agenda* was published in 1993, written by OLIMCH staff and funded by LSREC. It was intended to demystify a dauntingly large number of new terms and structures that came into being in the early 1990s. The development process included debate about how the booklet should be presented so as to lead to the desired outcomes of better understanding. This was targeted at staff rather than students; it could be described as a contribution to the information literacy of TAFE staff.

Another service to staff undertaken by OLIMCH in the same year was the development of *Resources and Services to Support Flexible Delivery in SA DETAFE*. This publication listed services and agencies in TAFE, both in South Australia and nationally, which were available to support open learning. It also included advice on how to make a start on implementing open learning.

Also in 1995, *Keys to Information Literacy* was developed with LSREC funds and integrated with LEARN's staff development program. The Information Literacy Working Group has been able to take the running on LEARN's activities in this sphere, and its activities are strong enough to provide a base from which to seek funds for projects.

The Network provides a strong basis for staff development on information literacy. A series of information literacy workshops has been held in 1996. At the final workshop for the year, participants brought examples of materials relating to information literacy which they had developed, including marketing plans, brochures and a game for students. The culture of trust established in the Network has enabled people to value comment on their work; it is clear that people's different endeavours have been supported, and have produced an expansion of views on what can be done. A strong commitment exists to continuing exchanges of this type. Staff from every Institute have been involved in the workshops, even those staff not formally involved in the delivery of information literacy programs. Presentations to the workshops were mainly by Librarians, but the Information Literacy working group is keen to extend involvement by Library Technicians and clerical staff.

In all these activities, directly or indirectly related to information literacy, the shared goals of the LEARN Network, and its ability to target key people to participate in projects, were critical factors in producing high quality outcomes which contributed not only to Network goals but to those of TAFE SA.
Discussion of other networks

A number of other Networks exist in the vocational education and training system nationally. The term 'Network', indeed, is used to cover many different models. In order to acknowledge this diversity, two short examples are given here of Networks that operate in quite different ways from LEARN, in very different contexts. They are not discussed in depth, and are not intended to form a comparison with LEARN.

TAFE NSW Library Network

The mission statement of the New South Wales TAFE Library Network states that it 'embodies the concept of statewide cooperation, communication and resource sharing'. The Network encompasses 105 college libraries within the eleven TAFE Institutes, plus the Open Training and Education Network (OTEN), which is a member and which also provides key centralised support services.

The Network shares a bibliographic database, an integrated library system including circulation, acquisitions, OPAC, special reserve, email and other attributes in a Dynix library management system which automates the process.

The devolution of many of NSW TAFE's central services over the last few years has had a considerable impact on the Network. Before devolution all network support and management was done by the TAFE Commission's head office in the form of policy, planning, human resources, staff development, facilities planning, curriculum liaison, research, computer systems and technical services. There was also a Head of TAFE Library Services at senior management level. Most of these functions have now been devolved to Institutes. Ordering, purchasing and cataloguing are still done centrally on request from the local library, now as a service of the Library Collection Services (LCS) Unit at OTEN. There is no longer a Head of TAFE Library Services. OTEN has to date conducted liaison with library managers on statewide policy and other matters, and worked through the Director of OTEN to the Council of Institute Directors. This is now subject to change and the Network is attempting to find different means of influencing policy.

The Library Collection Services (LCS) Unit at OTEN continues to offer as much support as it can; this task has become more difficult since OTEN suffered some down-sizing during the devolution phase, but the Unit appears to be responsive to needs. The service is viewed as effective and customer-focused, particularly by country libraries. The staff of the Unit are warmly regarded, and though some improvement in turnaround time for requests would be appreciated, it is understood that problems stem from staff resources and systems problems rather than any inefficiency in workflows etc.
The TAFE Library union catalogue, available on-line and on CD-ROM since 1988, is generally seen as a very positive move, because students can easily find out what is held at any library in the system. The NSW TAFE Library catalogue on CD-ROM is highly valued as it is easy to use. It is also helpful to libraries which want to build a collection with a particular emphasis, since they can obtain ideas from other sources. A minor disadvantage is that students sometimes expect any item on the catalogue to be immediately available to them wherever they are, and so are sometimes disappointed.

A statewide free Inter-library loans system operates among all TAFE libraries. Inter-library loans are available for staff, but not universally for students. Institutes have their own policies on this matter. Country areas have a tradition of providing inter-library loans at least to a limited degree, while in metropolitan areas there tends to be a view that students can be expected to travel to the locations where resources are available. Pressure on available resources is a further reason for these restrictions. Additionally, a number of statewide reciprocal borrowing agreements with a number of universities are in place. The ALIA ILL vouchers are used for inter-library loans to borrowers from outside TAFE.

The interactions of the Network for systems and LCS support are predominantly between the hub at OTEN and the member Libraries on the perimeter. Though Libraries value their contact with each other, it tends to happen in a fairly selective manner between congenial colleagues rather than across the Network as a whole, though on occasion intensive interaction to share expertise take place. A degree of 'city versus country' tension exists in the area of allocation of resources, though this has reduced in recent years. Otherwise, the importance of networking among all Institutes is recognised, and the Institute Library Managers Group (ILM), made up of Institute representatives, is attempting to set up mechanisms to replace the central activities that were lost with devolution, such as the annual conference, which was seen as a very important forum for exchanging information and developing good relationships between libraries; specialised staff development for library staff etc. Networking is strong between colleges within Institutes, which work hard to support each other, though some are still struggling with the implications of autonomy and independence.

The ILM Committee has working groups on subjects needing attention, such as information technology, joint use libraries, and inter-library loans. Three or four of these may be running at any time; they may have a continuing life or be ad hoc groups, and these are seen as operating effectively.
The principal focus for cooperative networking is the three-monthly meeting of Library Managers, which is attended by all Institute Librarians or their nominees. This group is the driving force for cooperation within the Network. It institutes the policies and codes of the Network, such as reciprocal borrowing arrangements. Where statewide policies do not exist, it is a forum for assessing and developing agreement, for example on overdue policies. Sometimes, though not invariably, there is agreement to sacrifice local interests to the greater good of the Network as a whole.

This group is aware that it is limited in its ability to influence statewide directions, especially since not all Institutes have a position of Institute Librarian. It is at present seeking a new status as a standing committee of the Council of Institute Directors, but, this has not so far been successful.

The group is an important force for cohesiveness between Institutes. Staff at those Institutes which do not have a Library Manager tend to be disadvantaged if they cannot provide a representative with sufficient influence within the Institute to put into effect directions adopted by the Group. Such staff also have no input into policies and are isolated from professional development and the network environment.

Sharing is strong in the professional ethic, partly because of the limited budgets available, and partly through the recognition that, with the current explosion of information, no library alone can meet all the needs of its clients. At present New South Wales Institutes could be described as semi-autonomous. The Library Network has a concern that greater autonomy for Institutes could pose a threat to its survival, since it has no obvious champions within the system, and no-one with library expertise in a Senior Executive Service (SES) statewide position.

Libraries value the Network, and derive much benefit both from the services provided by OTEN and from the mentoring, support and guidance available from colleagues. The sharing of library resources is important, especially to smaller libraries which could not otherwise support large enough collections for all the courses they offer. The advocacy role which such a group can perform is considered important, though in need of strengthening. The main difficulties the Network faces stem from poor resourcing for both the human resources and library materials, and from the absence of champions at the SES level.

Queensland Open Learning Network

The Queensland Open Learning Network is a network of over forty open learning centres. It has been established to facilitate the provision of courses to help meet the education and training needs of tertiary institutions, business, industry and government organisations.
The open learning centres are equipped with communication technology facilities for audiographics, video and satellite reception as well as Internet access.

The Network is managed from the Brisbane head office. Each centre is staffed by a coordinator, who may be full time or part time. The coordinators are appointed by the Brisbane head office, but drawn from the local community. It is considered important that the coordinator has a good understanding of local community needs, so as to make informed decisions about how the centres are run. Standardised procedures are in place for program administration and such matters as enrolment, assessment and student records. Centres can be used twenty-four hours a day for private study and computer use, but delivery times of programs are determined by the providing institutions.

Communication is recognised as an important part of the Network. A weekly teleconference takes place between the Brisbane office and all the centres. This is used for administrative and planning matters, as well as training in the use of technology. The head office has identified the building of trust, and listening to the needs of centre coordinators, as an important part of the survival of the Network.

Informal communication between the centre coordinators is also important. This happens in an unstructured way, generally between coordinators in the same geographical area.

Communities have welcomed the establishment of the Network because it has enabled community members to undertake training or further study without leaving the community. Without it, many people would miss out on training because they could not afford the time necessary to travel to a training provider, or because distances would simply be too great. Others would have to leave their communities altogether to seek training in cities. The Network is therefore a factor in helping small communities to survive.
Performance indicators

The performance indicators below are intended to offer to library and LRC networks some guidance for operating effectively as a network. They are not intended to cover the operational aspects of LRC services, since these have been comprehensively dealt with in Focus on Learning.

It is intended that these performance indicators may be easily adapted to suit the needs of other types of network.

1. The network has a shared view about the values which are basic to the shared roles and functions of its members. In an LRC network, these are likely to include:
   - sharing of resources and experience
   - participation and inclusivity.

   The common values may either be included in written material about the network's goals, or included in discussion at general meetings from time to time.

2. Goals of the network are identified at an early stage by consultation with all members, and should be readily available in written form to members and to non-members with an interest in matters relating to the network.

3. The network adopts a planning process which includes strategies for the achievement of objectives, and an evaluation phase to assess how successful the strategies were. Planning strategies should, where possible include flexibility to allow for unexpected contingencies.

4. The network includes in its activities discussion of relevant developments in the outside environment, and consideration of how these may impact on the future of the network.

5. The human and financial resources needed to operate the network are assessed as part of the planning phase of the network, and reassessed at suitable intervals thereafter.

6. A decision has been made whether the network can operate within the funding bases of its members, or whether outside funding should be sought. If the latter, sources should be identified and ongoing budget planning arrangements made.

7. If funding approval is only available for a short period, the network has prepared contingency plans to cover its basic needs as a survival mechanism.
8. The network has put in place procedures to gather data about costs and outcomes of the network itself and about relevant aspects of its members' organisations, with a view to continuous improvement of effectiveness and for purposes of accountability to outside authorities.

9. Structures of the network have been designed in such a way that they can change easily to suit the needs of changing times.

10. The activities of the network are of benefit not only to its own development but also to the working lives of members.

11. The activities of the network include discussion of operational aspects of the core business of its members, including a focus on the reasons for processes and structures. The purpose of this is to encourage full engagement of members in their own work tasks.

12. The network monitors the participation and personal development of newer members with a view to ensuring that adequate succession planning takes place for leadership roles.

13. Network meetings and other contact are structured in a way that invites participation from members at all levels of seniority in their organisations, and from new as well as older members.

14. Commitment and support of members for the network's activities are ensured by a well-understood consultation process at suitable times. The views of all members should be valued even when they cannot be acted upon.

15. The network conducts both formal and informal staff development activities to improve the skill levels of its members.

16. The network uses teams to undertake tasks as needed. These teams should:
   - be as small as is commensurate with their tasks, but large enough to ensure that the workload of members is achievable
   - develop their own operating methods within the norms of the network
   - focus on specific tasks, but understand them in the context of the broader environment
   - include overt discussion of team processes and outcomes.

17. The network has developed processes for enlisting task team members, including ways of incorporating relevant people from outside organisations where this is of advantage.
18. Network task groups are reviewed or review themselves at intervals, and on completion of tasks are either be wound up or refocused.

19. The network places a high value on the exchange of information between members at all levels, and by the most direct methods possible. Information technology is used when it is of value. Information exchange includes matters to do with the business of the network as a whole, and sharing of experiences by members (to the extent that their own organisations are not compromised).

20. The network promotes access to methods of contact that are of most benefit to its members, including a suitable mixture of face to face and technological contact.

21. The network ensures that it communicates its activities and achievements to its own members and to the wider world. Communication and promotional material are positive and recognise achievements, but are also as honest and realistic as possible.

22. The network takes advantage of relevant information picked up about the outside environment, and especially clients' needs, by those who interact outside the network or outside their own organisations.

23. The network includes in its procedures a method for ensuring that decisive leadership is available for occasions when consultation processes are unsuitable or are not achieving clear-cut results. A balance is needed between authoritative fast response, and respect for the democratic rights of members.

24. The network has identified ways of acknowledging and dealing with conflict and problems, whether by formal procedures or by an awareness of role modelling.

25. The network ensures that it communicates and exchanges information with other networks with which it has interests in common.

26. The network takes steps to be aware of how it is regarded by outsiders so as to have a realistic picture of its strengths and weaknesses, and takes this picture into account in planning its activities.

27. Potential champions or champion groups have been identified who will act as formal or informal advocates for the network in the course of their work.
Recommendations

1. That LEARN review its mission statement in 1997 and periodically thereafter in comparison with the objectives of the Department and of TAFE SA, to ensure that its activities are strategically targeted

2. That LEARN periodically conduct satisfaction surveys among its members to ensure it continues to meet their needs, and particularly to ensure that the large Institutes avoid any danger of swamping the smaller Institutes in LEARN activities

3. That in 1997 LEARN develop, or assist in the development of, the Department's policies on the following:
   - access to TAFE LRCs of students enrolled with private providers
   - community access to TAFE LRCs
   - Internet access for students
   - standards for adherence to copyright regulations in various media, including on-line materials

4. That LEARN include, in its collection of statistics and other data, information to assist in the assessment of value for money to TAFE SA of LEARN services

5. That procedures and standards be devised for the circulation of information within Institutes by LPG members and for the dissemination of reports of subcommittees and working groups

6. That a procedure be devised to encourage LEARN members other than LRC Managers, Librarians and Lecturers to place items for discussion on the agenda for LEARN meetings

7. That LEARN strengthen the mechanisms for encouraging newer members to progressively take on leadership activities within the Network

8. That the promotion of LEARN services be extended to the student population by means of mention in student handbooks and other avenues

9. That current mixed attitudes toward inter-library loans be considered by LPG with a view to achieving a culture shift, where necessary, during 1997.

10. That the Information Literacy Working Group undertake further work to help LRC staff to develop positive relationships with lecturers in their Institutes with a view to accelerating the implementation of information literacy programs
11. That the Information Literacy Working Group establish targets for the implementation of information literacy programs across the network in the period 1997-98.

12. That the Information Literacy Working Group consider the implications for information literacy programs of current directions of TAFE SA relating to on-line learning.

13. That a process be put in place for continued maintenance of the LEARN World Wide Web page to ensure its continuing currency.

14. That a suitable proportion of time release be negotiated for the Editor of Networking to ensure the continued survival and quality of the Newsletter.
Strategies for evaluating LEARN’s performance

This section represents the initial thinking of several members of the LEARN Best Practice Implementation Group. It identifies the major themes for network development, and then groups the Performance Indicators (PI) and Recommendations (R) from this report under those major categories.

It then takes the process one step further by using the major theme, 'Values of the Network', and identifies strategies and quantitative measures that will provide the network with the information needed to improve its performance in the areas of participation and inclusivity, communication and representation.

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<th>Major Categories</th>
<th>Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<td>R2, R3, R12</td>
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<td>Planning/Goal Setting</td>
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Below are some examples showing how the LEARN network might identify a range of performance indicators for one item in the above table that would provide it with the information needed to develop a strategy to improve performance.

**Values of the network**

The network should establish a shared view about the values which are basic to its role and essential to its effective and ongoing operation.

In an LRC network these are likely to include:

**Participation & inclusivity**

**Strategy for the LEARN network**

*LEARN will identify measures that assess the degree to which it is successful in encouraging/supporting participation & inclusivity among members of the network, and then use this information to improve participation & inclusivity. Measures of performance:*

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• numbers of staff attending LEARN meetings
• categories of staff attending LEARN meetings
• numbers of staff involved in committees and working parties
• categories of staff involved in committees and working parties
• turnover in LPG membership
• categories of staff elected to LPG
• participation in staff development activities eg. Information literacy
• contributors to NETWORKING

Communication
Strategy for the LEARN network
LEARN will identify measures to assess the degree to which it is successful in assuring ongoing effective communication both internally and external to the network.

Measures of performance:
• content and readership of NETWORKING
• effective dissemination of LPG information
• effective gathering of views and opinions by LPG representatives
• effective operation of LEARN working groups and the sharing of their outcomes

Representation
Strategy for the LEARN network
LEARN will identify measures to assess the degree to which it is successful in assuring appropriate representation, both internally and externally to the network.

Measures of performance:
• committee composition, both Institute and job classifications
• LPG composition
• effective dissemination of LPG information
• effective gathering of views and opinions by LPG representatives in other forums, TAFE SA, national, librarianship, education
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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of persons interviewed

Grateful thanks are due to the following people who generously participated in consultations in person, by telephone, by video conference or by e-mail.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institute/Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marion Bannister</td>
<td>Institute Library Manager</td>
<td>Riverina Institute of TAFE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bromley Bickley</td>
<td>Manager, LRC</td>
<td>Port Pirie Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Chaoussis</td>
<td>Lecturer, Business Studies</td>
<td>Tea Tree Gully Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina Dunemann</td>
<td>Manager, LRC</td>
<td>Spencer Institute of TAFE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anne Gooley</td>
<td>Manager, Queensland Open Learning Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marilyn Hart</td>
<td>Manager, Library and Learning Resources</td>
<td>Sydney Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesley James</td>
<td>Manager, LRC</td>
<td>Murray Bridge Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Lynch, Catherine Rymill, Lee Coullison, Kylie Walker and Ben Bamford</td>
<td>LRC</td>
<td>South East Institute of TAFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Miller</td>
<td>Executive Officer</td>
<td>South Australian Fishing and Seafood Industry Training Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pia Pichler</td>
<td>Acting Institute Librarian</td>
<td>Adelaide Institute of TAFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Barnett</td>
<td>Lecturer, Learning Resources Unit</td>
<td>Tea Tree Gully Campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Di Booker</td>
<td>Manager, OLMCH</td>
<td>Adelaide Institute of TAFE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Doolittle</td>
<td>LRC Manager</td>
<td>Regency Institute of TAFE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandra Harman-Smith</td>
<td>LRC</td>
<td>Port Lincoln Campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandra Heath</td>
<td>Educational Manager</td>
<td>Gawler Campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keir Kirkby</td>
<td>Manager, Library Policy</td>
<td>Open Training and Education Network, NSW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shane McCarty</td>
<td>LRC Manager</td>
<td>Whyalla Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare Murphy</td>
<td>Lecturer, Learning Resources Unit</td>
<td>Tea Tree Gully Campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Stanford</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>South Australian Department for Employment, Training and Further Education</td>
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Best Practice Networking in South Australia
Appendix 2: Subcommittees and working groups of LEARN, 1996

(This section is reproduced from a LEARN leaflet dated May 1996)

The LEARN Network deliberately involves many different staff in its subcommittees and working parties.

The activities of the LEARN Planning Group are only a part of the activity of the network.

The 1996 LEARN network committees/working groups are listed below. At this time membership is not fixed or final. More people are needed on many groups, and a more representative membership for some groups is also necessary.

Some groups are permanent, e.g. information literacy, while others function for just a short time to address a particular need, e.g. the FASMIS Project.

In some cases e.g. the Information and Communication Technologies group, there will need to be changed structures to accommodate a wider membership and broader responsibilities.

A Permanent Working Groups

A1 Budget
Along with LPG, determines the operating budget for the network, LPG and NETWORKING.

Membership: Richard Owen, Robyn Patterson. Meets as needed.

A2 Staff Development
In the past has coordinated the staff development program of the network. Of late individual working groups have acted to provide some staff development and this is likely to happen in 1996. There is still the need for a coordinated and comprehensive program.

Membership: Di Booker (convenor), Kathy Sharrad, Chrsytal Vaiana, Deirdre Schahinger, Catherine Rymill, Annette Dornin. Meets: as needed.

A3 Information and Communication Technologies
Trying to keep abreast of IT developments, responding to departmental issues/directions etc.
Membership: Nancye Stanelis (convenor), Di Booker, Chris Beauchamp, Stephen Barnett, Annette Domin/Helen Hennessy, Jenny Natt, Pia Pilcher, Margaret Cottington, Deirdre Schahinger, Yvonne Ladd, Helen Chan, Shane McGarty. Meets: as needed. Membership needs to include technophobes and visionaries from the network.

**Joint Automation Working Party**

Working with DECS on new tender process for library automation system

Membership: Jenny Natt, Peter Doolette, Di Booker (convenor), Pia Pilcher, Marianne Paul

**METAmarc Users Group**

Monitors METAmarc activity and developments across LEARN

Membership: Helen Chan (convenor), one representative from each Institute

**A4 LEARN Program Plan**

Responds to LSREC strategic planning process

Membership: Richard Owen (convenor), LPG reps.

**A5 Information Literacy**

Will be arranging a staff development program based on the Keys to Information Literacy package. Also developing a policy on information literacy for LEARN.

Membership Helen Chan, Nancye Stanelis, Di Booker, Pia Pilcher, Stephen Barnett, Peter Doolette, Clare Murphy (convenor)

**A6 Best Practice Implementation Group**

Will be using the State of Learning Resource Centres in TAFE SA as the basis for a staff development program. Continuing to develop appropriate performance indicators for LRCs based on Focus on Learning to be integrated with the Stats-Pak.

Membership: Pia Pilcher, Di Booker, Peter Doolette (convenor), Chris Travers, Annette Domin, Richard Owen, Clare Murphy, Yvonne Ladd.
B LEARN services steering committees

B1 ABN Steering Committee
Forum for discussion and debate about the development of the TAFE ABN Unit's services to the LEARN network.

Membership: Margaret Cottington ABN manager, Pia Pilcher, Chris Travers (network rep), Richard Owen, Glynis Conlon (network rep).

Meets 6-weekly, Thursday mornings

B2 OLIMCH Steering committee
Advises OLIMCH about directions/developments

Membership: Di Booker, OLIMCH manager, Richard Owen, Clare Murphy, (Joanna Gehling, Sue Hill).

Meets 6-weekly,

C LEARN Advisory services

C1 Publications
Involved in the production of NETWORKING. Could also be involved in the updating of other network information.

Membership: (convenor vacant), Pia Pilcher, Liz Scholefield, Joan Key.

Meets when necessary

D Special Issue Groups

D1 Private Providers
Examines LRC issues related to Private Providers

Membership: Liz Scholefield, Pam Menadue, Di Booker (convenor), Chris Beauchamp, Richard Owen

D2 Staffing
Updating LRC manual developed in 1994

Membership: Jenny Natt (convenor), Nancye Stanelis, Kathy Sharrad, Chris Beauchamp, Di Booker, Margaret Hunt, Ivana Kotasek, Bridget Moody
D3 Supporting Open Learning students
Looks at ways and means of improving LRC services to support students studying flexibly.

Membership: Pam Menadue (convenor), Tania Paull, Chris Travers, Di Booker, Stephen Barnett, Ivana Kotasek.

D4 FASMIS Project
Providing advice to the FASMIS Project on LRC related issues

Membership: Richard Owen (convenor), Pia Pilcher, Robyn Barrett, Peter Doolittle, Pam Menadue/Tina Dunneman, Helen Hennessy/Annette McLuckie, Anne Smart, Gordon Evans

D5 LEARN Product Group for the Review of Supply
Providing advice to the Review of Supply on LRC related issues


D6 Copyright Issues Group
Meets, as required, with Robin Munro when questions arise over copyright, e.g. of late video copyright/contractual arrangements have been a problem.

Membership: Chris Beauchamp (convenor), Von Ladd,

D7 Inter Library Loan/Document Delivery Group
Exchanges knowledge and information on interlibrary loans and document delivery technologies, and will investigate ways in which ILL procedures across LEARN can be improved.

Membership: Margaret Cottington (convenor), Glynis Conlon, Caroline Barter, Enid Paech, Jason Jackiw, Kelly Piwanski, Susan Sullivan, Margaret Stephens, Ruth Parbs, Linda Cooper, Chris Travers

Meets when necessary.
E Project Management (1995/96)

E1 Keys to Information Literacy
   Membership: Information Literacy Group and Project Officers: Helen Jackson, Joan Doyle

E2 State of Learning Resource Centres in TAFE SA
   Membership: Best Practice Implementation Group and Project Officers: Susan Brunner, Anne Smart

E3 LEARN Best Practice Project
   Submission currently in the process of being prepared
   Membership: Best Practice Implementation Group and the Information Literacy Group

TAFE Representation and Membership of Departmental Committees

LSREC Richard Owen, (Liz Scholefield); LSREC (Networks subcommittee) Richard Owen, Robyn Patterson, National Working Group for TAFE Library Services Richard Owen; Information/Communication User Group Pia Pilcher; ACLIS Margaret Cottington; DECS Joint-use Library Group Beth Prior
Appendix 3: Goals and strategies of the Information literacy special interest group, 1995

Reproduced from the minutes of the Information Literacy Special Interest Group

This group's 1-5 year goals and associated strategies are:

Goal 1: To assist Learning Services/information literacy efforts across LEARN and DETAFE

Strategies:
1. OLIMCH to collect examples (in a variety of formats) of information literacy packages/materials currently available within the LEARN network with the aim of preventing 'reinvention of the wheel'
2. Group members to share current information from the literature about information literacy and disseminate this information among members of this group for use in appropriate forums
3. Establish minimum standards for equipment and resources required to teach information literacy programs within LEARN LRCs
4. Write a regular column about Learning Services issues for NETWORKING
5. Arrange seminars/workshops for LEARN staff in areas such as developing information literacy materials, using a range of teaching strategies, etc.
6. Facilitate the sharing of resources and expertise in the presentation of Learning Services programs throughout LEARN, e.g., students from one campus without access to Presscom could come into Adelaide Institute LRC for a practical session on how to use Presscom (session could be conducted jointly by Adelaide LRC staff and by staff from the visiting campus)

Goal 2: To develop and promote a policy on information literacy for DETAFE

Strategies:
1. Complete (by the end of Term 1 this year) the LEARN Learning Services brochure begun last year.
2. Promote the completed LEARN Learning Services brochure at the July meeting of LEARN
3. develop a policy on information literacy to ensure all students have the opportunity to acquire basic skills for finding and using information in all formats (including electronic) and to encourage and assist them to become lifelong learners

4. work with EATSS to integrate the key competency 'Collecting, analysing and organising information' into DETAFe curricula and specifically into the generic unit 'Introduction to tertiary studies'

5. promote the information literacy policy to DETAFe staff outside of LRCs - particularly to teaching staff

Goal 3: To facilitate clients learning how to use information technology to locate information

Strategies:
1. liaise with LICTAC (LEARN Information and Communication Technologies Advisory Committee) about how this might be achieved

2. integrate the use of information technology into Learning Services programs, eg. using the Internet, CD-ROMs, online databases, etc.

3. Ensure LRC staff have the necessary skills

Goal 4: To develop appropriate information literacy materials for use within LEARN

Strategies:
1. develop a generic Learning Services package which can be adapted for use in local situations and which includes information about possible teaching strategies to use, using information technology to access information, accessing community information sources, etc.

2. offer staff development sessions (in conjunction with the LEARN Staff Development Working Group) on how to adapt these materials, on useful staff development courses available outside of LEARN, and on the resources/materials currently available for teaching information literacy skills, etc.

3. liaise with Open Net coordinators within each Institute on relevant resources and expertise which can be shared throughout DETAFe (and LEARN in particular).
Goal 5: To liaise with Student Services to ensure that information literacy programs (including the basic orientation program) support the acquisition of lifelong learning skills and attitudes

Strategies:
1. liaise with the ESSSC (Education and Student Services Standing Committee) about how best to achieve this at a State level
2. liaise with local Student Services managers and staff about how best to achieve this at a local level

Goal 6: To integrate/embed the key competency 'Collecting, analysing and organising information' into national curricula as a compulsory part of those curricula.

Strategies:
1. negotiate with the national curriculum committee for the Library Technician's course with the aim of achieving this goal for that course
2. collect information about curricula where this key competency has already been embedded/integrated
## Appendix 4: Acronyms

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABN</td>
<td>Australian Bibliographic Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANTA</td>
<td>Australian National Training Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>DETAFE</td>
<td>Department for Employment, Training and Further Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEARN</td>
<td>Learning Resources Network (not quite an acronym)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LPG</td>
<td>LEARN Planning Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>LRC</td>
<td>Learning Resource Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSREC</td>
<td>Learning Systems and Resources Executive Committee</td>
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<td>LSRSC</td>
<td>Learning Systems and Resources Standing Committee</td>
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<td>OPAC</td>
<td>On-line Public Access Catalogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>OLIMCH</td>
<td>Open Learning Information and Materials Clearing House</td>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational education and training</td>
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Note: the terms library, library resource centre and learning resource centre are all used in this report. They all have similar meanings, and each was the preferred term at various times during the period covered by this report.