

## Learning & Teaching News: 21 August 2008

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### 1. Curriculum Taskforce

The Vice-Chancellor has sponsored the Curriculum Taskforce to develop explicit principles and guidelines for the review and renewal of our teaching and learning programs. The Taskforce will tackle issues such as what the distinctive, demonstrable outcomes of a La Trobe degree should be, and how we can best measure the quality of our curriculum design, its relevance, effectiveness and sustainability.

The Taskforce will be looking at curriculum from a very broad perspective. Implications for staff workload, physical facilities, financial viability, student support and a range of other matters that intersect with curriculum will be considered and debated by the Taskforce.

Members of the Taskforce were selected for their interest and expertise in curricula and teaching matters. They represent the spread of disciplines across all campuses, as well as both experienced senior staff and younger academics.

The Taskforce was launched with a full day workshop on 15 August 2008 and will meet fortnightly for the rest of the year. The work of the Taskforce will culminate in a Curriculum Colloquia on the Bundoora campus on 4-5 December 2008 when a series of well-tested proposals will be presented for discussion with the wider university community.

A webpage has been created for the taskforce at <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/teaching/curriculum-taskforce.html>. You can download the terms of reference and list of the taskforce and consultative groups' members. A blog will soon be added to provide regular updates on the progress of the taskforce, and the opportunity for staff to comment.

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## 2. La Trobe successful with ALTC Priority Projects bid

La Trobe successfully bid for a \$220,000 grant from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council. 'Spaces for Knowledge Generation' is a partnership between La Trobe University as lead institution, Charles Sturt University, Apple Inc and Kneeler Design Architects.

**Project Team:** Assoc Prof Kay Souter (Assoc Dean Academic, FHSS), Matthew Riddle (FLM), Stephen Jones (FHSS), Prof Mike Keppell (Charles Sturt), Rob Bienvenue (Kneeler Design) and Chris Feil (Apple)

**Project:** The context of the learning experience necessarily changes over time, with technological, economic and social developments influencing the types of learning spaces learners and teachers require to achieve their learning outcomes. This \$220,000 project will inform, guide and support sustainable development of learning and teaching spaces and practices, maximising flexibility so as to be used by as many disciplines as feasible. The project is based on the philosophy that constructivist approaches to learning, as well as to research and study, should make use of technologies and approaches that students favour, and that learning spaces should therefore be organised to accommodate learner-generated aspects of learning. 'Spaces for Knowledge Generation' will provide a model for designing student learning environments that is future-focused and sustainable for the medium term.

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## 3. Another milestone achieved

Recently, the Alternate Format Service (AFS) converted its 5000th reading into alternative formats. The chapter, from a text on Macroeconomics, is just a small fraction of the 75,000 pages that have been converted by AFS since it began in 2003.

AFS converts learning materials into alternative, or accessible, formats for students with a print disability. For a person to have a print disability they may have a vision impairment, be blind, have dyslexia, quadriplegia or have an acquired brain injury - anything that prevents the individual from reading or accessing printed material in its physical form.

AFS is a collaboration between OTSU (Online Teaching Support Unit) and EDC (Equity and Diversity Centre). The service assists students and teaching staff by sourcing and converting the learning materials. Currently, the essential materials of 43 units are being converted into alternative formats such as DAISY (digital talking book,) HTML, Braille, plain text and MP3.

For further information, please contact Anthony Earl, Accessibility Resource Officer, on ext. 5160 or via email: [afs@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:afs@latrobe.edu.au).

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#### 4. Other Higher Ed news

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) have released their bi-annual update. <http://www.acer.edu.au/highed>

HERDSA have started a blog! How to. is a series that looks at the contemporary challenges in academic practice that face university teachers. You can contribute to the HERDSA blog at <http://herdsanews.wordpress.com>

The Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) has released the following new reports:

Benchmarking clinical learning in speech pathology to support assessment, discipline standards, teaching innovation and student learning  
[http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants\\_project\\_PP626\\_speechpathology\\_2008.pdf](http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants_project_PP626_speechpathology_2008.pdf)

Quantitative diversity: disciplinary and cross-disciplinary mathematics and statistics support in Australian universities  
[http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants\\_project\\_learningssupport\\_maths\\_report\\_aug08.pdf](http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants_project_learningssupport_maths_report_aug08.pdf)

Learning support in mathematics and statistics in Australian universities: a guide for the university sector 2008  
[http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants\\_project\\_learningssupport\\_maths\\_guide\\_aug08.pdf](http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants_project_learningssupport_maths_guide_aug08.pdf)

The impact of web-based lecture technologies on current and future practices in learning and teaching  
[http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants\\_project\\_webbasedlecture\\_report\\_aug08.pdf](http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants_project_webbasedlecture_report_aug08.pdf)

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#### 5. Upcoming National and International Conferences

A list of upcoming National and International conferences is maintained on the Teaching and Learning website [www.latrobe.edu.au/teaching/news-conferences.html](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/teaching/news-conferences.html)

Association of Tertiary Learning Advisors of Aotearoa/New Zealand (ATLAANZ).  
19-21 November 2008: Wellington  
<http://www.atlaanz.org/index.php?page=conferences&table=conference>

2nd Enhancing Student Success Conference  
12 December 2008: Central Coast, NSW  
<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/conference/enhancing-student-success/>

2008 Action Learning, Action Research Association (ALARA) National Conference  
11-12 September 2008: Canberra Institute of Technology  
<http://www.alara.net.au/public/home>