



E-learning Creative Community Partnerships

Alexandrina Community E-Learning Project, Milang, South Australia



Aim: Led by the Milang Old School House Community Centre, the project aimed to upgrade skills and enhance the job prospects of parents and unemployed people of mature age by providing greater access to learning through the use of technology.

Partnerships: Among the organisations working on the project were TAFE SA, community councils and traders associations.

Learning model: The project fostered learning in the community by developing a website which linked to e-learning sites and programs. CD-ROMs were given to learners that automatically connected them to the website. Mini-workshops were held in the use of technology and online communities were set up focusing on desktop publishing and digital photography. Learners were supported by volunteer mentors.

Outcomes: This supported method of study benefited the learners both socially and economically. The learners gained new skills which enabled them to enter or re-enter the workforce in fields where there is a local shortage of workers. It also encouraged new employment opportunities in the region through small business start-ups.

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E-learning Creative Community Partnerships

Australians in regional, rural and remote communities face some unique challenges in accessing education and training opportunities. Isolation, distance and a lack of support networks all play a part in limiting education and training opportunities for people within these communities.

But through the use of technology, education and training is being made more and more accessible to everyone, regardless of age, location, lifestyle or background. E-learning, which involves the use of electronic media such as web, CD-ROM or computer-based learning resources, can and is making a difference.

The national training system's e-learning strategy, the 2005-2006 Australian Flexible Learning Framework (Framework), is helping communities across Australia increase their education and training options, giving them the same opportunities readily available in more urban areas.

The Framework's E-learning Creative Community Partnerships Project is working to foster and embed e-learning within some of Australia's most disadvantaged communities, in turn helping their economic and regional development and sustainability. Another key focus is to strengthen partnerships at a local, State/Territory and national level in order to inform and engage other community learning initiatives.

During 2005, eight projects were funded and supported by the Framework's E-learning Creative Community Partnerships Project. These have reached out to disengaged youth, mature age workers and long term welfare recipients in regional, rural and remote areas. These involved more than 800 learners, all taking part in an education program which included a considerable e-learning component. Given the nature of the target groups this was a significant achievement.

Their learning models and outcomes are now being shared with other communities across Australia. Here the Framework shares the aims, learning models and outcomes of these projects:



Barkly Creative Communities, Tennant Creek, Northern Territory



Aim: This project for remote Indigenous learners aimed to deliver new e-learning experiences that would strengthen and enhance performing and visual arts training in the Barkly region.

Partnerships: Led by the Northern Territory Cultural Recreation and Tourism Training Advisory Council (CHARTTES), partners included Julalikari Arts, Nyinkka Nyunya Art and Culture Centre and Barkly Regional Arts.

Learning model: Taster workshops were held in e-learning tools such as the Internet, digital story telling and chat rooms. The project increased access to computers and used webcam facilities to provide virtual tours to art galleries and performances for isolated learners, broadening their horizons.

Outcomes: The arts community is the driving force behind the demand for training as they see how e-learning can enhance their lives and arts practice. A website established prior to this project now promotes arts related activities occurring in the region enabling artists to promote their own work to a global audience.

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Bundaberg Community Learning Project, Bundaberg, Queensland



Aim: The project aimed to upskill young mothers, pregnant women and disadvantaged parents to improve their chances of employment. It also aimed to provide the Bundaberg community with an overview of the learning resources and opportunities available in the area.

Partnerships: The Bundaberg Learning Community played an essential role in the project, which was led by not-for-profit training organisation IMPACT Make Your Mark. Other partners were: Bundaberg Neighbourhood Centre, Wide Bay TAFE, the University of Central Queensland, the Salvation Army and Bundaberg City Council.

Learning model: Project organisers used Flexible Learning Toolboxes (an interactive e-learning product available on CD-ROM) and technology to reconnect young learners back into a learning environment. Digital cameras were used to create digital stories of learning experiences.

Outcomes: Since the project, IMPACT Make Your Mark has made a commitment to use e-learning in its training strategies and is taking a more flexible approach to its training programs. Community access to and use of computers has also increased.

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Embedding Effective Local Learning Support for E-learners in Rural Communities, Tasmania



Aim: The project aimed to use technology to develop support strategies and enhance the future learning capacity and job opportunities in rural Tasmanian communities, particularly for single parents and unemployed people under the age of 45.

Partnerships: The project was led by Tasmanian Department of Education in partnership with TAFE Tasmania and community centres.

Learning model: The project used an action research approach to investigate, implement and document support strategies. Volunteers were placed in local Online Access Centres to enable learners to complete an online qualification in their local community. Study circles were set up at the Online Access Centres, providing facilities, support and mentoring for groups and individuals.

Outcomes: As a result of the project, a model has been developed to support learning in remote and disadvantaged communities which can be adapted and used in any community.

The skills and knowledge gained from the project will continue to influence and improve the quality of support for adult learners. TAFE Tasmania has now developed a strong partnership with the Online Access Centres.

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Engaging Rural Communities in E-learning, Bathurst, New South Wales



Aim: The project aimed to increase participation in e-learning for business and community groups, including learners with a disability, the long term unemployed and Indigenous learners.

Partnerships: The project was a collaboration of five Adult and Community Education (ACE) colleges, led by the Central West Community College.

Learning model: Businesses were shown how technology could keep them up-to-date with Occupational Health and Safety and privacy legislation. E-business advocates promoted e-learning options available in their own and other organisations. Community groups were introduced to online programs, such as basic information technology and writing skills. Adult learners were encouraged to sign up to a course through e-vouchers, which gave them a certain amount of free online training in a course of their choice. Regular meetings between the ACE colleges ensured strategies were shared.

Outcomes: The five ACE colleges are producing their own brochures and websites proactively supporting e-learning initiatives in regional communities. E-learning has become an established focus for all ACE colleges involved in the project, who will continue to support and share e-learning initiatives.

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Leongatha Education Precinct (LEP), South Gippsland, Victoria



Aim: The project aimed to develop learning resources to offer vocational and technical education programs to disengaged high school students, 15-19 year olds at risk of homelessness, unemployed adults and learners with special needs.

Partnerships: It was led by Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE, in partnership with schools, Adult and Community Education centres and higher educational institutes.

Learning model: The project developed new e-learning networks which offered training programs to learners using innovative technology, such as voice boards, multi-media resources and chat, as motivation. The project looked into different ways of delivering vocational and technical education within and across all the partner organisations through the application of e-learning practices and use of technology.

Outcomes: All partners are now committed to continue online teaching and learning practices and are exploring further e-learning strategies. A communication and online strategy has been developed and is being implemented by LEP.

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Men's North East E-Learning Precinct, Wodonga, Victoria



Aim: The project aimed to encourage the participation of unemployed and disengaged men aged over 45 in rural farming communities in training. The learners were from drought affected areas which had a significant impact on their social wellbeing and health, with many isolated from their community.

Partnerships: The project was led by Wodonga Institute of TAFE, in conjunction with Yackandandah Landcare Group, Beechwood Neighbourhood House and Yackandandah and Corryong Continuing Education Centres.

Learning model: The target group of learners don't traditionally participate in formal education so the project took technology to where the men were, such as the Country Fire Authority, football clubs and Landcare groups. Three learning options were developed: 1) Global Positioning System (GPS) short course; 2) Interactive Website for the Landcare group; 3) the creation of digital stories.

Outcomes: 1) Community providers used and adapted the GPS short course in a range of settings. 2) Sections of a horticultural training program were used to develop information for Landcare groups on plant identification. 3) Digital stories were created explaining the roles and responsibilities of office bearers in

community organisations. There were numerous examples of participants applying the skills they have learned through the project, such as the purchasing of GPS devices, MP3 players and photo editing software.

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Working Together to Skill the Peel Region, Peel, Western Australia



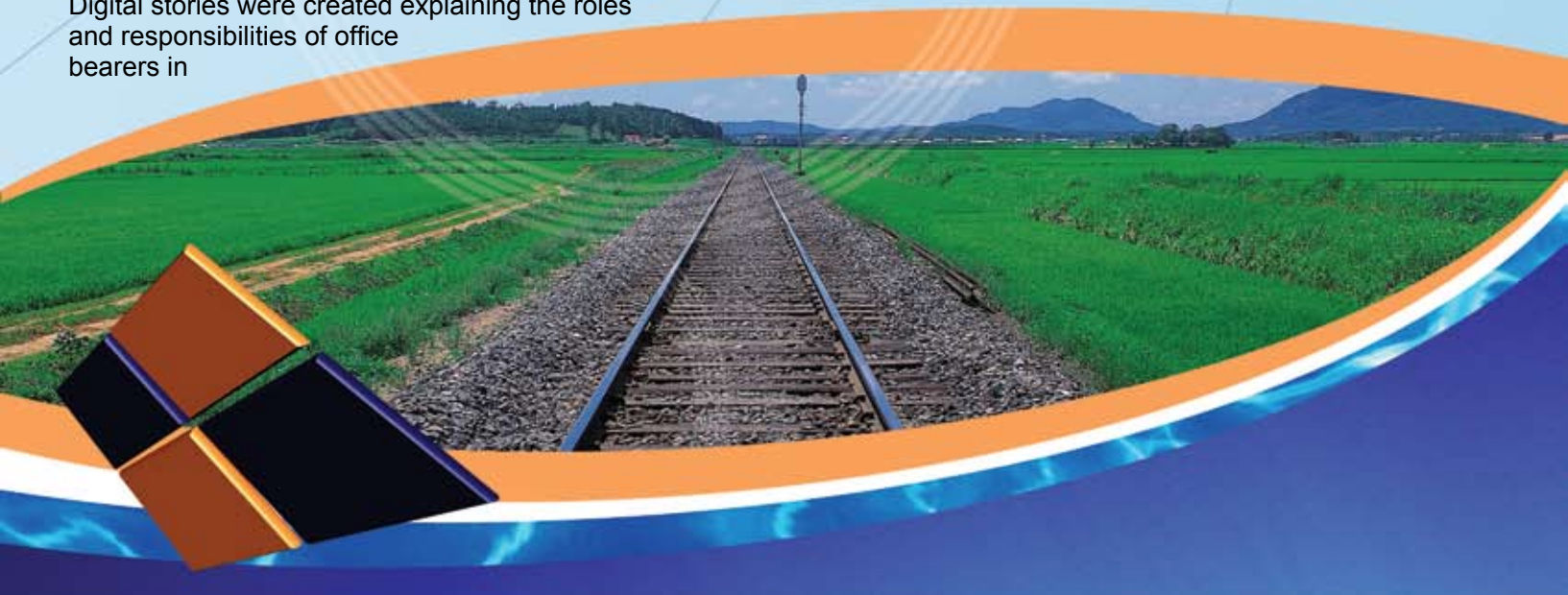
Aim: This project aimed to address the skills shortages of disadvantaged and rural learners by increasing the ability of teachers and trainers to use technology, which in turn would be used with students. Peel is Australia's fastest growing region, with the construction and engineering industries seeking skilled workers.

Partnerships: Led by the Peel Campus of Challenger TAFE, in close conjunction with the Peel Development Commission and other telecentres.

Learning model: The project coordinators taught nine teachers and trainers how to use various e-learning tools, such as podcasting, wikis, digital storytelling and web conferencing.

Outcomes: Teachers and trainers are now using e-learning tools with community learners, enhancing their learning experience and enabling them to acquire new skills and increase their prospects of employment at their own pace. In particular, e-learning tools are being used to teach business, childcare, horticulture, hospitality, basic literacy skills and animal care.

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