

Australian *Flexible Learning* **Framework**
supporting e-learning opportunities

National Flexible Learning Toolboxes

Indigenous Australian Delivery Trials

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Table of Contents

Executive summary	3
Recommendations	4
Content & design.....	4
Delivery & support.....	4
Access	5
Technical support.....	5
Further research.....	6
The project	7
Methodology.....	8
Methods.....	8
Difficulties associated with the delivery trials	8
Case studies	10
Delivery sites	11
<i>Gordon Institute of TAFE: Barwon Prison.....</i>	<i>11</i>
Geographical location	11
Background information	11
Programs offered.....	12
Aim for participating in trials.....	12
Delivery trial	12
<i>Thursday Island State High School.....</i>	<i>15</i>
Geographical location	15
Background information	15
Programs offered.....	16
Aim for participation in trials.....	17
Delivery trial	17
<i>Koori Unit, East Gippsland TAFE.....</i>	<i>19</i>
Geographical location	19
Background information	19
Programs offered.....	19
Aim for participating in trials.....	19
Delivery trial	19
<i>Gunung Willam Balluk Learning Centre: Kangan Batman TAFE</i>	<i>21</i>
Geographical location	21
Background information	21
Programs offered.....	21
Aim for participating in trials.....	23
Delivery trial	23
Analysis of Data	24
Similarities	24
Differences	25

<i>Gordon Institute of TAFE: Barwon Prison</i>	26
Students	27
Trainer	28
Management	30
Mentor	31
<i>Thursday Island State High School</i>	32
Students	32
Trainer	33
Management	34
Mentor	37
<i>East Gippsland TAFE Koori Unit</i>	38
Students	38
Trainer	39
Management	41
Mentor	42
<i>Kangan Batman TAFE</i>	43
Students	43
Trainer	45
Management	46
Mentor	47
Appendices	48
<i>Questionnaires</i>	48
Teachers	48
Students	49
Mentors	50
Management	50
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	51

Executive summary

The Indigenous Australian delivery trials of Flexible Learning Toolboxes (Toolboxes) were conducted in a range of geographical locations, diverse educational settings and with students of different ages, cultural backgrounds and language groups. The four locations, Barwon Prison in Geelong Victoria, Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, Kangan Batman TAFE in urban Melbourne and East Gippsland TAFE in regional Victoria were selected to gain insight into e-learning with Toolboxes in widely different Indigenous training contexts.

Indigenous Australians at the four trial sites shared common educational experiences and views on the Toolboxes across these diverse contexts. Differences found between trial sites focussed on technology access. This report, makes recommendations on educational or pedagogical considerations that should be taken into account when creating e-learning content for Indigenous Australians. It will also consider technological access to e-learning to give insight where access issues may have had an impact on the learning experience.

The findings of this report endorse e-learning which has been tailored for the needs of Indigenous Australians. Students, trainers and managers were very positive about using e-learning which depicted Indigenous people. They did not respond as well to Toolboxes that were not customised for Indigenous use.

While Indigenous Toolboxes are a valuable starting point for effective e-learning for Indigenous Australians, we need to further refine our understanding of creating or customising Toolboxes to develop effective e-learning content for them. It is not enough to include Indigenous faces and images in Toolboxes. Indigenous learning styles should be accommodated in the way we build e-learning content including .how we use text on screens , the type and amount of multimedia interactivity and the approach to learning and its scaffolding.

This report records the experiences and views of key stakeholders at the trial sites including students, trainers, managers and mentors. The data collected is organised into five themes; student interest, cultural inclusiveness, trainer's professional development, Toolbox content and technical support. Recommendations are recorded against each of the themes and are further refined to consider language, literacy and numeracy needs, information communication and technology skills, Toolbox design and Toolbox delivery.

Overall, the evaluation trials found that Indigenous students enjoyed using Toolboxes in their learning. Prior teaching of computer skills, customisation of Toolboxes to suit Indigenous learners and ongoing technical support for the registered training organisations (RTOs), will further future uptake of Toolboxes in Indigenous communities and contribute to successful VET outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

Recommendations

Content & design	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Toolboxes should be developed or customised for Indigenous students and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ be culturally inclusive ○ include more voice overs and involve less reading ○ have graphics to explain text ○ include more graphics ○ recognise that some students have English as a second or a third language ○ suggest assessment activities of competencies that are hands on and practical ○ have language and phrasing that is suited to young people starting from the concrete relevant to their life experiences and then going to the abstract ○ have activities graded to cater for students with different literacy skills levels.
Delivery & support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. There needs to be a clear explanation of all activities to students. 3. Students should be able to access training in basic computer skills as a lead into using Toolboxes. 4. Staff need professional development prior to using Toolboxes in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ basic information technology courses ○ knowledge of the Toolbox.

Access	<p>5. Toolboxes should cater for a diversity of Indigenous students including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ adults who have left the education system ○ people who live in remote communities and unable to access mainstream education settings ○ people who are incarcerated taking into account the fact that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ for security reasons are unable to access the internet ▪ may be incarcerated for short period of time and be unable to complete competencies ▪ are likely to come from different Indigenous communities ▪ have limited access to education programs within the prison. <p>6. A national Indigenous Toolbox Champion should be employed as a mentor to support the uptake of Toolboxes in the Indigenous communities. The Indigenous Champion should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a point of access for Indigenous communities ○ culturally sensitive to the needs of Indigenous communities ○ a support person for the initial establishment period for sites delivering Toolboxes ○ a mentor to Toolbox developers and Toolbox Champions on working with Indigenous communities and their needs.
Technical support	<p>7. Toolboxes should be available with all links all-inclusive on a CD ROM so they are accessible to remote Indigenous communities and prisons that do not have access o the internet.</p> <p>8. All Indigenous RTO's and Indigenous Education Centres should be made aware of Toolboxes especially those that have been customised for Indigenous learners.</p> <p>9. Sites should receive internet support services where they have access.</p> <p>10. There should be follow- up and technical advice for delivery sites that participated in the trials and want to continue to use the Toolboxes.</p>

Further research	<p>11. Further examine effective e-learning design for Indigenous students. For example with the following statement as a starting point:</p> <p>‘Indigenous students prefer to have activities taught in their entirety with students given the opportunity to repeat them as a whole because they learn by repetition of the whole while non-Indigenous education breaks the whole into segments and teaches it that way’.</p>
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The project

The project consisted of evaluating the delivery of the Toolboxes to Indigenous trainers and learners, and of investigating:

- the challenges experienced in implementing and teaching with the Toolboxes
- the professional development needs of the teachers
- the experiences of the students.

The aim of the delivery trials for Indigenous trainers and learners was to support the uptake of Toolboxes.

Delivery site RTO's selected the Toolboxes they wanted to trial and both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Toolboxes were used in the trials.

The following support was provided to the RTO's participating in the delivery trials:

- a Toolbox
- assistance with the selection and implementation of the Toolbox (including copying the CD-ROM or loading onto a computer system as required)
- ongoing support for trainers, by the mentor, for the duration of the trial for one level of competency.

It is anticipated that the evaluation of the delivery trials will inform the implementation, delivery, professional development and promotional strategies required to support future uptake of Toolboxes in Indigenous communities.

Methodology

The methodology used to conduct and evaluate the delivery of the National Flexible Learning Toolbox trials was qualitative, using anecdotal evidence obtained from the four delivery sites; urban, regional, Torres Strait Islander and prison. The delivery trials were undertaken at the four delivery sites over a six week period.

Questionnaires were devised for the four key stakeholders; students, management, trainers and mentors and interviews were held with them. The data gained from the questionnaires and interviews was analysed.

The data collected has been organised into five themes; student interest, cultural inclusiveness, trainer's professional development, Toolbox context and technical support. Recommendations are made on the basis of these themes and further refined by categorising the recommendations into Language, Literacy & Numeracy skills, ICT skills, Toolbox design and Toolbox delivery.

Methods

1. An introductory teleconference was held with trainers and management at the four sites to discuss the project and process for conducting the evaluation trials and to ensure that the participants knew upfront:
 - what was required of them
 - the steps to get started
 - what was expected of them during the delivery trials
 - what they were expected to do at the end of the delivery trials
 - the amount of time they were expected to commit to during the delivery trials.
12. A site visit was made to three delivery sites by a mentor to set up the equipment and load the Toolbox onto the computers.
13. The mentor for the Torres Strait Island site used phone contact to support them.
14. The researcher conducted a site visit to each site and semi-structured interviews were conducted with trainers, students and management.
15. An interview was held with the mentors to discuss issues encountered during the site visits.
16. A final teleconference was held with all participants to discuss the outcome of the delivery trials.

Difficulties associated with the delivery trials

The main difficulty associated with the delivery trials was one of timing because:

- The trials were conducted at a difficult time of the year when schools and TAFEs were winding down for the summer vacation and processing end of

semester results. Students were preoccupied with completing their work rather than trialling new learning tools.

- The decision was made to conduct trials in different geographical settings (urban, regional, remote, Torres Strait Islands), however, it was difficult to get a remote site on the mainland to participate in the trials at this time of the year, even though several attempts were made. However, Thursday Island is a remote site as well as a Torres Strait Island site. The opportunity to conduct a trial in a prison setting presented, so this was selected as the fourth site.

Once the sites were selected there was not a lot of time to trial the Toolboxes and therefore any technical problems encountered had to be solved quickly to ensure that students had enough time to use the Toolboxes effectively.

For the same reason the trainers did not have enough time to familiarise themselves with the Toolbox content prior to using them and had to do this at the same time as the students.

Case studies

RTO	Location	Toolbox	Management	Number of Students	Literacy Levels of Students	Date of Toolbox Delivery	Competency Delivered
Gordon Institute of TAFE	Barwon Prison, Geelong	'Deadly Jam Music Festival'	Barwon Prison Education Program	7	Year 9–11 literacy levels.	Tuesdays, November–December.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Deadly Jam Music Festival' and 'Basic Skills in the Cybercentre' [Literacy and Numeracy].
Thursday Island State High School	Thursday Island-Torres Strait Island Centre	'Maritime Operations'	Thursday Island State High School	10	Year 10 and 11 literacy level with English as the 2 nd –4 th language.	November–December.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in mooring and anchor handling operations.
East Gippsland Institute of TAFE: Koori Unit	Bairnsdale, Regional Centre	'Horticulture for Indigenous Learners (Certificate II)'	Koori Unit Advisory Committee	5	Year 9–10 literacy level.	November–December.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication in the workplace. Plan a daily routine. Work effectively in industry.
Kangan Batman TAFE: Gunung Willam Balluk	Broadmeadows (Melbourne), Urban Centre	Equity Toolboxes: 'Where's the Party at?' and 'Deadly Jam Music Festival'	Gunung Willam Balluk Committee	8	15–19 year olds with diverse literacy levels from Year 9–11.	Monday–Wednesday, November–December.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol and drugs. Sexuality. Nutrition.

Delivery sites

Gordon Institute of TAFE: Barwon Prison

Geographical location

Barwon Prison is situated near Geelong in Victoria. It was included in the Toolbox delivery trials because it offered the opportunity to look at the unique issues of an education program in a maximum security prison. It was important to trial the Toolbox in this environment because there are a lot of Indigenous prisoners, as supported by the following statistics¹:

- there are 5,048 Indigenous prisoners in Australia; this number constitutes 21% of the prison population in Australia as of 30 June 2004
- of these 5,048 Indigenous prisoners, 39% of them are expected to serve a sentence of less than 12 months
- the median age for an Indigenous prisoner is 29.8 years
- over 1/20 Indigenous males aged between 25 and 29 years of age were imprisoned as of 30 June 2004
- 77% of the Indigenous prison population has been previously imprisoned.

Background information

The education program at Barwon Prison is run by the Gordon Institute of TAFE. 17 members of staff are involved in the education program including the Senior Manager, Site Manager and the Executive Assistant/Computing.

There are also teachers in the following disciplines:

- Computing / Fitness
- Computing
- English
- Koori Studies
- English / Psychology / Philosophy
- Electrical and Electronics / Maths / Forklift
- Engineering
- Occupational health and safety (OH&S) / Engineering
- Horticulture / First Aid
- Hospitality / Asset Maintenance / Computing
- Learning Pathways / English

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics Report '4517.0: Prisoners in Australia'
<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookupMF/8D5807D8074A7A5BCA256A6800811054>

- Drawing and Painting
- Hospitality
- Business.

There are two educational locations; the Education Centre and the library. The Education Centre is open to all prisoners for any area of interest on Monday from 2.30pm to 4.00pm and Thursday from 2.30pm to 4.00pm. It also runs an extensive library that is available to prisoners on weekday afternoons from 2.30pm to 4.00pm. Some computers are also available at this time. At the Gordon Institute of TAFE: Barwon prison site there were a number of different institutions and individuals involved in the trials including Kangan Batman TAFE, Gordon Institute of TAFE, corrections staff, and the students.

Programs offered

- Koori Studies
- Hospitality
- English (reading and writing)
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Maths
- Introduction to Psychology
- Computing
- Business
- Asset Maintenance (Commercial Cleaning)
- First Aid
- Philosophy
- Certificate III in Fitness
- Engineering, Welding Electrical and Electronics
- OH&S
- Forklift Training and National Licensing
- Horticulture (gardening)
- Drawing and Painting.

Aim for participating in trials

Gordon Institute of TAFE: Barwon Prison offered to participate in the delivery trials because they have found that computers are a medium that appeals to Indigenous students. They wanted to participate in the trials to find out if using Toolboxes would appeal to their students and whether this method of learning would benefit the Indigenous students in the prison system in the future.

Delivery trial

The trainers at the Barwon Prison site attempted to trial the 'Basic Skills in the Cybercentre' Toolbox, however they found that the literacy level required to use the

Toolbox was higher than what their students had, so the trainer decided to trial the 'Deadly Jam Music Festival' Toolbox instead.

For security reasons the prisoners and staff at Barwon Prison are unable to access the Internet, so they had to rely on the CD-ROM and could not access the links to the Internet in the Toolbox. At the first session the trainer and students were unable to access the Toolbox because they did not have the software to open it. It took two days for the trainer to get permission to take the necessary software (Flash) into the prison so students were unable to access the Toolbox until their next session. For this reason it is important in prison education that any learning tool is a stand alone resource, able to be used without the Internet and if prisons want their students to use Toolboxes in the future they will need to be customised so the students can access any links without having to access the Internet.



Barwon Prison



The Education Centre at Barwon Prison



Educational facilities at the Barwon Prison

Thursday Island State High School

Geographical location

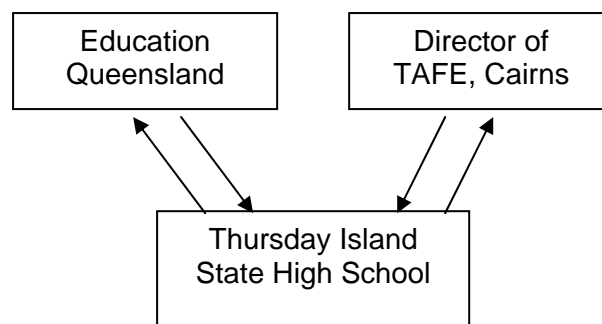
Thursday Island is 39 kilometres from Cape York, 800 kilometres from Cairns and covers three square kilometres. It is the Torres Strait's administrative and commercial centre in an area with 25,000 people dotted across 20 islands. There are five regional languages; Torres Strait, Creole, Kala Kawa Ya, Meriam Mer, Kiwi and Papua New Guinea pidgin. There are two main high schools in Torres Strait; Thursday Island and Bamaga. Thursday Island State High School caters for students from a number of remote islands and is the central school for each of these islands. The students are seafaring and come to school by boat from as far as 90 nautical miles and are very independent mariners. The feeder schools are the 14 outer island schools and Thursday Island School. There are 17 outer islands (inhabited) and 40 or 50 islands (mostly uninhabited). The school also actively competes with private schools in Cairns, Townsville and Brisbane for students.

Background information

Thursday Island is an isolated and remote community and has unique factors relating to this isolation. The school has to be self-sufficient and utilise the expertise of their existing staff because it is not easy to bring people in from outside the island as it is one day's travel to and from the island and to get expertise in at short notice is difficult.

The school had its own resources and those of the TAFE College in Cairns at its disposal. The school has 54 staff of which 32 are teaching staff and eight of these are qualified Torres Strait Islander teachers. Thursday Island State High School won the Australian School of the Year in 2004 and is the only Queensland school to amalgamate with a TAFE College. They did this to further expand the educational opportunities for students in the Torres Strait Islands. The schools' RTO status has shifted to the RTO status of the TAFE College and it is in the process of upgrading all the staff qualifications onto the TAFE Human Resource system. The School Council has a Framework Agreement with the Torres Strait Island Regional Education Council (the Advisory Committee to Education Queensland) and is under both the TAFE system and Education Queensland.

School structure:



The school developed a literacy teaching framework, targeting Year 8 and 9 students. It covers all subjects focusing on English as a second or foreign language and values the students' own cultures and languages while developing their skills in Standard Australian English. The school works hard to ensure that the axis of English literacy is culturally appropriate. The delivery of education is done in a way that values and respects the

culture and knowledge of the student. The framework that was developed in consultation with the local communities, businesses and government departments, has seen students grow in skills and confidence. Thursday Island State High School trialled the Toolbox with students who were all in the same grade level, therefore they all had similar literacy skills and were able to work at a similar pace.

Programs offered

The Torres Strait Island community requested a fairly mainstream program and the school offers a gamut of subjects that go toward a tertiary entrance including a wide range of vocational education and training (VET) subjects and Authority registered subjects.

There are three levels of subjects, however, only the Authority subjects go towards an Overall Position score (OP score) for tertiary entrance. Education Queensland is currently looking at VET subjects going towards an OP score. 20 to 30% of the students at the Thursday Island State High School actively participate in Authority subjects that lead to OP status. 100% get offered places and 80% take them up. The amalgamation with the TAFE enables the school to utilise their TAFE RTO status and offer a range of VET subjects to students in the High School setting and, if they are running a certificate in VET and student spaces are available, offers them to the wider community. Because the TAFE is linked to the High School, it enables a seamless transition for students into TAFE study.



Thursday Island State High School

Aim for participation in trials

The Thursday Island State High School Administration was keen to participate in the Toolbox trials because they are a remote community, have amalgamated with the TAFE College, and want to offer programs to adults on the outer islands who are unable to access the school on Thursday Island. They see Toolboxes as a good online learning tool that they may be able to utilise in providing education to adult learners.

Delivery trial

Thursday Island utilised their existing staff to ensure that students were successful in accessing the Toolbox. The staff members were very qualified in terms of their computer skills and therefore had no trouble setting up the Toolbox. The Toolbox was loaded onto the Northern Territory (NT) server, making access relatively easy for each student.

The school is fortunate in that it currently has a number of computer literate staff. However, should this situation change, it will have difficulty accessing online learning.



A catamaran used by the Thursday Island State High School in teaching Maritime studies to their students



A mural at Thursday Island State High School

Koori Unit, East Gippsland TAFE

Geographical location

The Koori Unit at the East Gippsland TAFE is situated at Bairnsdale, a regional community site.

Background information

The Koori Unit at East Gippsland TAFE had a mixed group of students, young and old. The older students felt threatened by the new medium because of a lack of computer skills and a low literacy level. The young students had a basic knowledge of computers and were comfortable using them. There were eight students aged between 25 and 30 plus who began the delivery trials but only four remained in the program. The computers used were Apple MACS because the Unit has 10 Apple MAC Computers that are used by the Art and Design students. This proved to be an obstacle because the sound in the Toolboxes was distorted and students were unable to print assessment tasks.

Programs offered

Other courses run by the Koori Unit include *Certificate II in Art and Design*.

Aim for participating in trials

The Management of the Koori Unit wanted to ascertain whether the Horticulture students would benefit from online learning. They also wanted to find other teaching tools that would assist them in teaching Indigenous students.

Delivery trial

The teacher hadn't been involved in online learning before but liked the format because it covered all areas in the competency required by the students. The Koori Unit Advisory Committee, consisting of community members, the Wurreker Broker and TAFE Management, approved the *Certificate II in Horticulture* course.

They utilised the Toolbox even though the sound was distorted, using the parts of it that they could without too much trouble. They will use the Toolbox next year and are expecting to get IBM computers so any technical problems will be resolved.



Koori Unit, East Gippsland TAFE

Gunung Willam Balluk Learning Centre: Kangan Batman TAFE

Geographical location

The Gunung Willam Balluk Learning Centre is situated in the Kangan Batman TAFE in Broadmeadows, Melbourne. There are an estimated 14,000 Indigenous people living in Melbourne. The Gunung Willam Balluk Learning Centre is one of the TAFE Colleges that attracts Indigenous students from all over Melbourne.

Background information

Kangan Batman TAFE is an urban site and because of its good geographical position and because the Toolbox Champion is based at the Kangan Batman TAFE, they had the latest computer equipment and easy access to expertise in Toolbox use.

Programs offered

Certificate 1 in Computers for Beginners:

- Windows for Beginners
- Introductory Word
- Desktop Publishing
- Exploring the Internet
- Spreadsheets.



Gunung Willam Balluk Learning Centre



Students at Gunung Willam Balluk Centre

Aim for participating in trials

Kangan Batman wanted to utilise online learning because they have been involved with developing Indigenous Toolboxes and online learning and wanted to find out whether the younger Indigenous students would benefit from online learning.

Delivery trial

Kangan Batman was the best placed of all the sites. The Indigenous students had a new building with a new computer room. The computer room had 10 new computers with the latest software programs available. At this site it was easy for students to use the Toolboxes.

Analysis of Data

This section highlights the feedback from each of the key stakeholders, students, trainers, mentors and management. The data below was gathered from a combination of the feedback received from the questionnaires that were collected as well as interviews with key stakeholders. The feedback, from each of these stakeholders, highlights five areas which posed a challenge when implementing and teaching with the Toolboxes and strategies to support the uptake of Toolboxes. These five areas include student interest, cultural inclusiveness, professional development of trainers, Toolbox content and technical support.

There were two mentors used for the four delivery sites. One mentor was used to provide support to the Thursday Island State High School site and one mentor was used to provide support to the other three sites; Gordon Institute of TAFE: Barwon Prison, Kangan Batman TAFE: Gunung Willam Balluk Learning Centre and East Gippsland TAFE: Koori Unit.

Three trainers were used at the prison site, one at the Torres Strait Islands site, one trainer at the regional site and two trainers at the urban site. All trainers said they saw themselves as facilitators, that they would use Toolboxes as one of many learning tools to support their teaching. They also said that students could use them as stand alone tools.

There were similarities and differences with the delivery of Flexible Learning Toolboxes (Toolboxes) to Indigenous trainers and learners in the different geographical locations.

Similarities

Students at each of the delivery sites were all Indigenous and made similar comments about using the Toolboxes. The majority of students enjoyed using the Toolboxes as learning tools because they found them innovative and interesting, however, they felt that the Toolboxes should be more interactive, that the trainers should be facilitators and support them to use the Toolboxes, and many of them also felt that the Toolboxes would be more effective if they reduced the amount of reading.

All the trainers agreed that:

- they needed professional development in computer use and in using the Toolboxes
- they are facilitators for students when the students are using the Toolboxes
- the Toolboxes are only one educational resource they would use in teaching the students.

The mentors found that each site needed support to load the Toolboxes onto the computers, and technical assistance on an ongoing basis while using the Toolboxes.

The management at each of the sites was keen to use Toolboxes to support their students and they were prepared to be involved in using Toolboxes in the future. However, they felt that the Toolboxes that are used by Indigenous students should be customised to ensure that they are culturally inclusive and relevant to Indigenous learners.

Overall, the evaluation trials found that Indigenous students enjoyed using Toolboxes as learning tools and that given the prior teaching of computer skills, customisation of

Toolboxes to suit Indigenous learners and ongoing technical support for the registered training organisations (RTOs), there will be a future uptake of Toolboxes in Indigenous communities. While the Toolbox was an effective learning tool in the prison setting, future utilisation has to take into account the fact that some students are incarcerated for short periods of time and may be unable to complete competencies so activities should be stand-alone. Toolboxes also have to be customised to accommodate the students who do not have access to links via the Internet and there should be sufficient time allocated to students to ensure that they are able to utilise the Toolboxes effectively. The diverse literacy levels of students should be taken into account when customising Toolboxes for learners in prisons.

Differences

The main differences between the delivery sites were due to the different geographical locations and available infrastructure at each site.

Gordon Institute of TAFE: Barwon Prison was a unique site because it is a maximum security facility. It was difficult for the students to access all components of the Toolbox because, for security reasons, they were unable to access the links via the Internet. The students had limited time to use the Toolbox during the week and when they did access it they had to revise what they had learnt previously. The literacy levels and age of the students were diverse, and they were from different Indigenous communities around Australia.

While Thursday Island State High School have good computer facilities because it is the administrative centre for the Torres Strait Islands, other Torres Strait Islands do not have the same facilities. Due to the fact that Thursday Island is a remote community, it is important that the Thursday Island State High School is self-sufficient and has expertise available on the Island. The students were similar in age and literacy levels and were all Indigenous Islanders with similar life experiences.

Computer facilities at the Kangan Batman TAFE: Gunung Willam Balluk Centre were more accessible because it is an urban site. All the students were young (with the exception of one), had a diverse range of literacy levels and were from Indigenous communities in Melbourne.

In the East Gippsland TAFE: Koori Unit, both the trainer and students (with the exception of one), had the necessary information technology skills to use the Toolbox. However, Apple MAC computers were used and there was a problem with compatibility which resulted in sound distortions and the inability of students to access the full program. The Koori Unit was a mixed group of young and mature aged students.

Gordon Institute of TAFE: Barwon Prison

The Toolbox used was an Indigenous Toolbox—‘**Deadly Jam Music Festival**’.

Despite the problems associated with setting up the Toolboxes for use in a maximum security prison, the Gordon Institute of TAFE management felt that Toolboxes can be an effective learning tool for use in prison education programs and that they would add to pathways for students because in the prison system students view any new resource as good.

The Toolboxes are useful for distance education including prison education because the limitations of a maximum security prison means that prisoners can access a wider variety of subjects if they are available through computers. Toolboxes are effective learning tools because they give the prisoners access to current and different methods of learning. The trainers felt that if students have the digital literacy to use them effectively, Toolboxes could be useful for students enrolled in online Victorian Certificate of Education and tertiary studies because they are an innovative resource.

They found that the Indigenous students were keen to use the Indigenous Toolbox—‘Deadly Jam Music Festival’ because it was culturally inclusive of Indigenous learners. The prisoners commented that they would like to use other Indigenous Toolboxes or Toolboxes that have been customised for Indigenous students. They would also like to use a Cultural Toolbox that has been developed for Indigenous prisoners, but because they are from different language groups, the Toolbox could be developed for one nation of Indigenous people (such as Kooris) but with a template where students from other language groups can add their own cultural identity and different cultural areas.

With some adaptation to suit prison education programs (eg, with the ‘Deadly Jam Music Festival’ Toolbox it would have been beneficial for students to write their own music by accessing links such as the basic chords) Toolboxes would be very useful teaching tools in prisons.

Words in the ‘Deadly Jam Music Festival’ Toolbox are content related and assume a knowledge by the trainer about music. The trainer did not have this knowledge and felt that there is a need to multi-skill trainers so they have the necessary expertise to assist students in content issues. It is also necessary to have equipment, such as guitars, to support the Toolbox content and it would be useful if Indigenous musicians could work with the prisoners as an additional resource. However, in the prison system this would require planning and there are cost limitations.

Students

Barwon Prison caters for a student population that is limited by the following factors:

- it is a changing population because of the nature of incarceration
- the opportunity for students to finish their courses is dependent on the length of their sentences
- education in prisons is not compulsory
- because the learners are incarcerated, education is a privilege and prisoners have to earn the right to participate in education programs
- it is not easy to ensure that the prisoners have access to online learning programs.

Student interest

- The students used the 'Deadly Jam Music Festival' Toolbox and enjoyed using it because it was an Indigenous Toolbox.
- They found the Toolbox easy to use because it allowed them to work at their own pace.
- The students were frustrated at being unable to access the Internet and not being able to see all of the Toolbox content and therefore gain an overall understanding of the whole program.
- The assessment tasks were too technical and students felt they should be more practical.
- Because information technology is a different learning medium and for some of the students it was the first time they had used it, they found it innovative, were interested in using it, wanted to get into it, and to listen to all the music because of the Indigenous musicians.
- In a normal classroom situation if students don't understand the work and if they don't ask for help, they are left behind but Toolboxes allow students to work at their own pace and takes away the risk of embarrassment at not understanding.
- Learning about the Toolbox was a slower learning process in the prison situation because classes are held only once a week and students had limited time to access the Toolbox and to find their way around it, so by the next class they had forgotten what they did and had to revise everything again.
- There should be easier access to Toolboxes for those students who have never used computers before because they find using computers difficult.
- Students need to be taught basic computer skills before using Toolboxes as learning tools.

Cultural inclusiveness

- Students were motivated to use the Toolbox because they were Indigenous and identified with the Indigenous faces in the Toolbox.
- Students were excited about the 'Deadly Jam Music Festival' Toolbox because it was a music Toolbox with Indigenous specific content and because a couple of the students were musicians themselves. They were particularly excited that Indigenous musicians featured in the Toolbox.

Trainer's professional development

- One trainer stated that he needed professional development to understand how to use Toolboxes before he used it as a teaching tool because he did not have information technology training and he felt it is important for trainers to have the necessary technical expertise to help the students who need it.

Toolbox content

- Assessment should be hands on and it could be for 'Deadly Jam Music Festival' if a guitar was available to be used as an assessment tool.
- An oral test could assess competencies learned.
- Toolboxes should be aimed at lower literacy levels than Certificate III courses because the literacy levels of most Indigenous students in the prison system are lower than this.
- The Toolboxes could be improved for use with Indigenous students by including interactive pictures and more games.

Technical support

- The students liked the song writing but found the sound very annoying because the music clicks sounded like a scratched CD as the speakers were only small and they didn't have a sound card.
- Prior to loading the Toolboxes more information should be given about what software is compatible.
- Technical support should be available while Toolboxes are being used.

Trainer

The Trainer at the Barwon Prison was an older trainer who was not proficient in using computers and he found it difficult to give the students technical assistance.

Student interest

The students were in their late 20's and early 30's, had low literacy skills (having only completed Year 9 level secondary schooling) and found it difficult to engage with computers for long periods of time. One student was capable of writing excellent published poetry and was very articulate in story writing and maths but not in music. The other two students were not as strong academically but had average skills. Feedback from students indicated that:

- They need a basic computer course before using the Toolboxes to ensure they have the knowledge and confidence to use the Toolboxes effectively.
- While three of them were keen to be involved in the trial because they could use the computer well, time was short and they would have benefited more from using the Toolbox if they had more time.
- Activities on the Toolbox have to be interest-based to keep them engaged.
- They attend the education program because they are keen to pursue their education and are therefore interested in learning.

- They liked using the Toolbox because it allowed them to work at their own pace.
- They found the Toolbox boring to use when it required a lot of reading.
- One student did not like to use computers at all and therefore did not like using the Toolbox. He would have preferred to see more activities and less reading. If reading was required, it should have been user friendly so the student could understand it and have clear explanations of what he was expected to do.
- The students felt that they could best use the Toolbox to write essays and fill out tables.

Cultural inclusiveness

- The use of Indigenous graphics made the Toolboxes relevant for Indigenous students.
- Indigenous students identify with Indigenous faces on the Toolbox and are more likely to use them as a learning tool.

Trainer's professional development

- Trainers need to have access to the Toolboxes themselves for a period of time before they deliver them to students so that they can build their own expertise in using them.
- Trainers need a huge range of skills to use the Toolboxes.
- If trainers have professional development they could use the Toolboxes in team-teaching situations to support traditional methods of teaching.
- There is an assumption that trainers will understand the subject matter in a Toolbox, however this will not always be the case and if the teacher is unfamiliar with the subject matter (such as was the case with the 'Deadly Jam Music Festival' Toolbox which was not as easy to use for someone without a music background) it may be necessary to involve someone in the delivery who has experience in the subject matter as well as the trainer.
- Delivery of the information should be user friendly.
- There should be an introduction in the Toolboxes that includes an overview and rationale.
- Training needs to be complementary and include support for trainers while using Toolboxes.
- Toolboxes are an extra educational resource for trainers.
- Where it is necessary, trainers should have professional development on an ongoing basis so they have ownership of what is being delivered to their students.

Toolbox content

- There should be an introductory session on computers before students use the Toolboxes.
- The information in the Toolbox for trainers is not user-friendly and is very difficult to understand.
- The Toolbox is a useful teaching aid because it is a different medium that allows students to work at their own pace and gives them easy access.

- The Toolbox was conducive to adult learning.
- The content has to be applicable to the learners.
- It was useful that the 'Deadly Jam Music Festival' Toolbox was developed for Indigenous learners because it was relevant and of high interest to them.

Technical support

- Computer standards and compatibility should be addressed.
- There was no server on site.
- The prison system has limitations for receiving technical support.

Management

The feedback from the Management was similar to the feedback from the trainer.

Student interest

- There is a wide range of learners in the prison system.
- There is no scope for skills assessment in the Toolbox and the teachers guide doesn't provide enough explanation.
- The 'Basic Skills in the Cybercentre' Toolbox was too difficult for the students and not relevant to them, so the 'Deadly Jam Music Festival' Toolbox was trialled instead because it was an Indigenous Toolbox.

Cultural inclusiveness

- Indigenous graphics, faces and content made the Toolbox relevant for the Indigenous students.

Trainer's professional development

- A basic understanding of computers is a prerequisite skill for trainers.
- Training needs to be complementary and include support for trainers while using Toolboxes.
- Information is needed for the audit of the prison education program.
- Assessment tasks must be included as part of the Toolboxes because there is a constant need for assessment to be completed to justify the education program because, in the prison system, everything is learning based and must have outcomes.
- In the prison system there was a time constraint on the trainer because he could only teach the students one day per week.
- There should be a personal development day for all staff to make the use of new technologies less daunting.

Toolbox content

- There should be a manual on how to use the Toolboxes.

- There should be a glossary that clearly explains the terminology used in the Toolbox.

Technical support

- There is a limit to the technical support that is available in a maximum security prison.
- Computer standards and compatibility should be addressed.
- There was no server on site.
- There were frustrations with using the Toolboxes because of the need to use links via the Internet and the fact that prisoners are not allowed to access the Internet.

Mentor

The mentor went to the Barwon Prison delivery site to load the Toolbox onto the computers and to make sure they could use the Toolbox. However, because of security measures the only software program installed on prison computers is Microsoft Word. It took two days to get the software into the prison to use the Toolbox because it is a maximum security prison and the trainer had to load the software onto the computer when it arrived. However, the mentor kept in touch with the trainer giving him advice when required.

Of the 700 prisoners at Barwon Prison approximately 50 are Indigenous. 15 of the 700 prisoners are using Toolboxes. They have access to computers for two hours per week. The trainer wanted to use 'Basic Skills in the Cybercentre' and 'Deadly Jam Music Festival'. The computers are very old and one computer feeds into the other computers. The men have unstructured open access to the computer room.

The prisoners involved in the delivery trials came from different Indigenous language groups in Australia. They felt it would be good if they had a Toolbox that had Indigenous content that represented their language groups. These prisoners need basic computer skills and their literacy levels are low. The students won't use a Toolbox in a formal situation if it is aligned to a competency, however they will use it as an extra learning tool.

Indigenous mentors should be used for Indigenous learning places because they would have a better understanding of the cultural issues facing Indigenous trainers and learners as well as an understanding of Toolboxes.

Thursday Island State High School

The Toolbox used was a non-Indigenous Toolbox—‘**Maritime Operations’ Toolbox**.

Students

As the only High School in the Torres Strait, Thursday Island State High School attracts students from a 140 nautical mile radius by sea, from 18 different communities. There are 358 students with diverse cultural backgrounds including Papua New Guinea, the western, eastern and central island groups of the Torres Strait and mainland Australia. 95% of students are Indigenous. 70 students stay in the residency college near the school and 30 board with local families. The students used a non-Indigenous Toolbox.

Student interest

- The students had used computers before and found it easy to access the Toolbox.
- They felt that they learnt more using the Toolbox than in the traditional classroom.
- They liked the new medium because it was a different approach to learning.
- They would like to see more activities included in the Toolbox.

Cultural inclusiveness

- The students would like to see the ‘Maritime Operations’ Toolbox customised for Indigenous students and particularly students who are living near the sea.

Trainers professional development

- The students wanted the teacher to be available to help them when needed.

Toolbox content

- Students liked the activities more than anything else.
- They would have liked to have bigger screens to use with the Toolboxes and more interaction in the Toolbox activities.
- They would have liked to teach themselves so that they didn’t need a teacher except to answer any questions about the Toolbox.
- They felt that they could use the Toolbox effectively in their research projects.
- The Toolbox would be useful if it had multiple choice questions.

Technical support

- Some students found it difficult to use the Toolbox because they could not log in. However, they said it was better to use the Toolbox than to read a book.



Computer facilities at Thursday Island State High School

Trainer

The trainer at Thursday Island acted as a facilitator for the students using the Toolbox, however, he was unable to use it as the only teaching tool and utilised other teaching methods with the students.

Student interest

The students who were involved in the trial were all between 15 and 16 years old. They were all Torres Strait Islander students with English as a second or third language. Their literacy ranged from very low to medium high.

- The Toolbox represented a lot of reading for ESL (English as a second language) students and while the students enjoyed using the Toolbox they quickly tired of reading.
- The delivery trials were conducted in a short timeframe and at the end of year when student motivation was down because they were looking forward to the summer vacation. Student response may have been different at a different time of the year.
- Students always respond well to computers.
- Some students preferred the traditional classroom.
- The Toolbox was useful because it encouraged students to work at their own pace and to work with peers at the end of each section.
- Toolboxes are an alternative means of delivery for remote students.

- Toolboxes increase participation and motivation for students who like to work at their own pace because it is a self-paced mode of delivery.

Cultural inclusiveness

- The 'Maritime Operations' Toolbox should be customised for Indigenous students, especially those who live in the Torres Strait Islands because they are both a maritime and Indigenous community.

Trainers professional development

- Trainers need to have professional development in using the technology because they have to give students a clear expectation of what is to be done and when.

Toolbox content

- A different approach could be used as an effective introduction tool because Thursday Island students need to have a more hands on approach.

Technical support

- There is a need for high technical expertise in using the Toolbox, especially in a remote community such as Thursday Island.

Management

Student interest

There were four computer labs with 25 computers in each lab. Of these, five or six were available for the Marine students. There is a plan to upgrade to another 80 computers and the school is looking at rolling out computers into the classrooms so all classrooms will have computers in them. Because 60–70% of the students don't have computers at home, the school is investigating the possibility of creating a partnership with the Council so a computer lab can be installed which will provide the students with after-hours access to computers.

- Barriers included the time of year and the delivery trials being undertaken by students in two classes; Year 11—Marine Aquatic Practice and Year 10 students who were preparing to take Marine Aquatic Practice in Year 11.
- In reality the students had already finished school in their minds.
- 90% of the students have English as a second language. The majority of the students speak Torres Strait Islander language and written English is difficult for them to comprehend.

Cultural inclusiveness

- The students were quite excited about using the Toolboxes and the range available but management felt that Toolboxes definitely need to be customised to suit Torres Strait Islander students:
 - by including a lot more graphics
 - by making the activities a lot more interactive.

Trainers professional development

- The role of the trainer was to facilitate the students' learning.
- It was easier to have the whole class doing the same thing at the same time because students could be extended.
- Toolboxes in their present state would not be a complete teaching package but part of a larger package. To be a complete package, trainers would need a Teacher Resource Guide that might include suggested assessment pieces in a CD-ROM format to email to other people. Suggested activities are also needed. Teaching resources and assessment pieces should be linked to outcomes.
- There were no problems with the trainer and the technology because the Toolbox was loaded onto a server and students could go to the site and have an automatic connection to it. The server had a special type of connection that enabled faster access. The server downloaded from the Internet to itself and so students interacted with the server rather than the Internet.
- Toolboxes wouldn't be the only mode of teaching.
- Toolboxes are a good resource in a competency based setting as students need to revisit the work and online learning enables them easy access to revisit the work and go over the information again.
- A group of teachers might allocate one of the modules so it can be assessed for customisation for Indigenous students in Torres Strait.
- In the Mooring section a graphic of a boat actually mooring would have made it better.
- The trainer saw the Toolbox as an electronic copy of Gandhi's textbook.
- More graphics could be included in the Toolbox to hold the student's attention and assist their learning because after 45 minutes using the Toolbox, 20% of the students began to get bored and went into game sites.
- The inclusion of interactive activities, such as games would be even better for Indigenous students. One such game could be navigating a boat through a harbour (or three or four different harbours) with obstacle rules that students have to obey. Multilevel scenarios could be used to teach maritime rules.

Toolbox content

- The students liked the link to Glossary of Terms. However, they needed more time to learn them.
- For teenage students the reading required was too excessive so trainers were unable to use Toolboxes as the only mode of teaching.
- Toolboxes have real implications for adults and students who have left the system and are on the outer islands. Online learning is being investigated as an alternative teaching medium because:
 - there are problems associated with bringing students from the outer lying communities to Thursday Island for school
 - there are problems getting instructors and trainers to live on the outer lying islands.
- The Toolboxes could be utilized in intensive teaching for offsite campus learning.

- The best utilisation methods of using Toolboxes are:
 - as a pre-teaching tool
 - as a valuable tool to extend students allowing them to work at their own pace.
- Students could access computers at the school.
- Quality graphics could make Toolboxes a more interesting teaching tool.
- Toolboxes have the potential to be a positive and strong teaching tool for literacy.
- A computer room is a better teaching tool than a normal classroom for Torres Strait Islander students because Torres Strait Islander students are highly motivated when working with computers.
- Graphics are an important tool to enable students to Code Switch from their traditional languages to English because the students have a diverse range of literacy abilities. Traditionally the outer island students don't have the same exposure to written English as those who attend primary school on Thursday Island and Horn Island where they have a greater exposure to English through environmental literature and the shops. Outer Island students have done most of their schooling speaking their traditional languages and for a small minority of them (Papua New Guinea students) English is their fourth language because they speak Pidgin, Top Western, Creole and then English. Indigenous languages are all spoken languages and the Torres Strait Islander students find it difficult to Code Switch to a written language, such as English.
- The section on 'stability' in the Toolbox includes diagrams from Gandi's book that are very algebraic and too abstract for the students. If the Toolbox is customised so that these diagrams relate to practical examples such as 'where you stack turtles after spearing them' it will make them more relevant to the Torres Strait Islander students.
- The Toolbox could be customised by using video clips being used in activities such as 'docking with interactive propellers' because Torres Strait Islander students learn very well from them. If there were video clips of the boats coming in to dock and going off the Torres Strait Islander students would gain a better understanding of the content.
- The literacy levels of Indigenous students should be considered when developing and customising Toolboxes for Indigenous communities.
- To make Torres Strait Islander students more motivated the Toolbox needed to be more interactive because Torres Strait Islander students are visual learners. They need text and then graphics to explain the text, eg instead of having a picture of a knot and explaining it, the Toolbox should have a graphic of someone tying a knot. Torres Strait Islander students learn their traditional dances by watching the whole dance again and again and then they get up and do it while the western way is to break down the dance into segments and learn it that way. If the right software is available it would be ground breaking for Torres Strait Islanders who are keen to use different mediums for learning.

Technical support

There were no technical difficulties in getting the Toolbox loaded or to use it at Thursday Island State High School. Because the school has a server it cut out any internal problems and because the computers are all less than two years old it ensured that they did not break down. The operating system is Windows XP through NT Server. The system has high levels of security and rehosts itself every night.

- Some outer islands have recently gained access to Broadband, while others haven't because of their finances. At the moment the Thursday Island State High School does not operate on Broadband and access to the Internet is slow and very frustrating if all the computers are operating.
- The school currently has a System Technician who is very qualified. However, it is important that there be ongoing technical support.
- All students are conversant with information technology.
- The students from Thursday Island are different from other client groups who have probably not had as much to do with the sea and boating. These students regularly drive dinghys 90 nautical miles.
- The language and phrasing in the Toolbox would be more suited to younger people if it began from the concrete that is relevant to the life experiences of the students and then went into the abstract.

Mentor

The mentor was used only in the initial establishment phase for Thursday Island because of its isolation and she had contact with the school via the phone and sent the Toolbox they wanted for them to load onto their school server. The school did not require technical assistance or support from the mentor to make the Toolbox operational because of the qualifications of their computer technicians.

East Gippsland TAFE Koori Unit

The Toolbox used was an Indigenous Toolbox - '**Horticulture for Indigenous Learners (Certificate II)**'.

Students

Student interest

- None of the students owned a computer and only two of them had used computers before.
- Only one student had basic computer skills.
- The students liked the Toolbox because the medium was new and the subjects covered were interesting and relevant to them as Indigenous students.

Cultural inclusiveness

- The Toolbox was an Indigenous Toolbox and the students liked it because they identified with the Indigenous faces.

Trainers professional development

- The trainer saw the need for professional development prior to using Toolboxes as a teaching tool to:
 - use a computer
 - use a Toolbox.

Toolbox content

- The students would have liked more information on some subjects that weren't already included on the 'Horticulture for Indigenous Learners (Certificate II)' Toolbox.
- The students wanted to see more graphics on the Toolbox and to hear more talking.

Technical support

- The students were frustrated that they couldn't use the audio, send emails or print the exercises.



Apple MAC Computers at the Koori Unit, East Gippsland TAFE

Trainer

The trainer at East Gippsland TAFE was an older trainer who was keen to utilise the Toolbox and found it easy to motivate the students to use the Toolbox as a learning tool. The frustrations he encountered were due to problems with compatibility of the Toolbox with the Apple MACS because the assessment tasks couldn't be printed for the students and the sound was slightly warped.

The feedback obtained from the trainer follows.

Student interest

There were eight students aged between 19 and 40 with low literacy levels (the trainer had to read the information for some students and this consumed teaching time). The Toolbox suited two out of the four students really well, one okay and one not at all and was only 60% effective.

- Toolboxes are more inclined to suit students with some computer experience. The younger students who have had some familiarity with computers at secondary school were the ones who did better using it.
- It would be better for the trainer if they knew that students have basic computer skills.
- One student had difficulty because he liked more practical activities. He liked some of the graphics but was not able to utilise the Toolbox by himself because of his low literacy level.

- The students would use the Toolbox if they knew about it and were able to locate it on the Internet.

Cultural inclusiveness

- Students could identify with people in the staff profiles because all the characters were Indigenous.

Trainers professional development

- Trainers need to have professional development in using computers and in using Toolboxes prior to using them with the students.
- Students feel more comfortable if the trainers understand the new technology.

Toolbox content

- The trainer liked the fact that the subjects were explained simply and that the Toolbox provided relevant information for competencies.
- He didn't like the fact that:
 - there was no audio
 - he couldn't print out some necessary paperwork
 - the students couldn't send emails even though they were required to do so as part of gathering evidence.
- Prior to using Toolboxes the students need basic computer skills.
- More subjects should be added to the Toolbox to enable more flexible use (eg landscaping subjects such as 'potting plants').
- The trainer will definitely use the Toolbox again next year from the commencement of the course.
- Toolboxes must have a practical component.
- Toolboxes are a good way for students to gather evidence when their literacy levels are low.
- All elements of the Toolbox should be taught during the year.
- Toolboxes are transferable and more generic.
- Improvements could include:
 - more interactive graphics
 - practical demonstrations
 - voice interactivity
 - use of video clips to make them more attractive to Indigenous students.
- The Toolbox was a good teaching tool for basic horticulture principles.
- In the Machinery shed there could be more activities such as:
 - how to fertilise a garden
 - how to change a sprinkler system
 - how to repair a pipe
 - irrigation (a very important part of horticulture for country areas).

Technical support

- The trainer was familiar with Microsoft programs but because they had Apple MACS in the Koori Unit, they had to be used instead.
- All Toolboxes should be compatible for use with Apple MACS.
- Audio could not be installed and students did not have access to the notice board where they get the forms and gather their evidence. As a result students couldn't:
 - hear the staff speak in the profiles
 - get information from the notice board
 - hear the telephone messages
 - get worksheets online.

Management

Student interest

- There were five students in the beginning. Of these five, one walked out because he didn't want to use the computers because he had never used one before.
- The Koori Unit Team made the decision to participate in the trials after discussions with the horticulture trainer and students.

Cultural inclusiveness

- The Koori Unit will continue to use the 'Horticulture for Indigenous Learners (Certificate II)' Toolbox because it has already been customised for Indigenous students and the students identified with the faces and activities in it.

Trainers professional development

- Trainers must have computer training to ensure that they are able to help students to use the Toolboxes.

Toolbox content

- There were literacy issues because all activities were based on the ability of the student to read. The teacher was enthusiastic about using the Toolbox because he saw it as a way to deliver boring competencies to the students in a more engaging way.
- The feedback from the teacher and students indicated that they felt the Toolbox was a suitable teaching tool for horticulture studies.

Technical support

- The only barrier was that the computers they had in the Koori Unit were all Apple MACS. Toolboxes need to be compatible for use with Apple MAC computers.

Mentor

The mentor visited East Gippsland TAFE and loaded the Toolbox onto the computer. He was also available for advice for the trainer when required. However, the mentor was not able to sort out the difficulties with the compatibility of the Toolbox with the Apple MACS because it is different to the operating systems of Microsoft. It would have worked if the Toolbox had been loaded onto a server. However, the Koori Unit is not linked into the East Gippsland server and this particular Toolbox didn't work as a CD-ROM on the Apple MACS.

Kangan Batman TAFE

The students used two Toolboxes, a non-Indigenous Toolbox— ‘Where’s the Party at?’ and an Indigenous Toolbox— ‘Deadly Jam Music Festival’. The Toolbox content was relevant to the students because the majority of them were young.

Students

Kangan Batman TAFE had a young group of students who did not complete their secondary schooling and therefore had low literacy levels. The TAFE had developed a relationship with Enmeraleek (an Aboriginal organisation) and the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP). Participants study at the Gunung Willam Balluk Centre, the TAFE provides off campus studies for them. Of the 30 Indigenous students currently enrolled, 10 participated in the delivery trials. They used the 10 computers in the computer room.

Student interest

- The students who had previously used a computer found it easy to use the first part of the Toolbox, however, the students who did not have any previous computer experience could not keep up.
- The students liked the information about alcohol and drugs in the ‘Where’s the Party at?’ Toolbox.
- They felt that there was too much information in the ‘Where’s the Party at?’ Toolbox that had to be read.
- For some students the Toolboxes were easy to use and easy to teach themselves to use.
- The Toolboxes were educational for the students.

Cultural inclusiveness

- While the students did not mind the ‘Where’s the Party at?’ Toolbox because it used cartoon characters, they preferred to have Indigenous faces instead of cartoon characters to make it more realistic and culturally relevant.

Trainers professional development

- The students felt that they needed to have a good relationship with the trainer so that they could ask questions when necessary.
- Trainers are necessary to help students with any problems.
- Some students prefer to write from the board and felt that the trainers should be there to help them when and if required.

Toolbox content

- The students found it easy to understand, however there were not enough voiceovers in the Toolbox.
- There should be more voiceovers and more information on other teenage problems.

- Using Toolboxes is a more interactive way of learning.
- In 'Deadly Jam Music Festival', calculating the cost of a trip was difficult to read. It helps students when there are voiceovers.
- There is too much reading in the Toolbox and it would be useful for students who have low literacy levels for someone on the Toolbox to read the questions for them.
- Prior to starting the Toolboxes students should be helped to read and all the students should get together to have a discussion and ask questions.
- Using Toolboxes is a new experience in learning communications.
- There should be voiceovers with visuals to cater for students with literacy difficulties.
- Students should share with each other.
- Some students felt that cartoon pictures helped them to learn better.
- Students who were not comfortable with technology felt that learning with the Toolbox was better than learning in a traditional classroom.
- Some students felt that there was a need for more activities where students were required to write.

Technical support

- Trainers should have a detailed technical knowledge of Toolboxes so they are able to help the students if need be.



Students on the computers at the Gunung Willam Balluk Centre

Trainer

The trainer at Kangan Batman is used to working with students and computers and found it easy to use the Toolbox to motivate the students.

'Where's the Party at?' Toolbox

- the students had trouble with the phobia section
- there were also time constraints
- the students learnt about the after-effects of a party (eg pregnancy) and the effects of alcohol on the brain
- this Toolbox can be used without a teacher if the students have good literacy, computer and numeracy skills.

'Deadly Jam Music Festival' Toolbox

- Some of this Toolbox was good; but for some students it became confusing when there was too much reading with too many links
- for other students it was easy for them to use and learn from
- the content should have more on band management.

Student interest

There were 10 students aged between 16 and 22, and one who was 43.

- The students mainly did drugs and alcohol, sexuality, and nutrition because they found it monotonous to stay with one topic and wanted to move around the Toolbox a bit.
- The students preferred to scribe from the board because they liked to have questionnaire assessments that they could print out and write on.
- Some of the students were able to touch type (keyboard skills). Their hand eye coordination was very skilled, particularly when they linked to games.
- The advantages of Digital Voice Recognition is that it would make it easier for students to fill out questionnaires, while the disadvantage could be that it might make it too easy and may interfere with learning.
- It is easier for the students to learn by typing.
- Some students might prefer reading.
- More time should be spent with the students on information technology.
- This was a good time framework because it meant that the students did not have time to get bored.
- A requirement for using Toolboxes is to have a fair to high level of literacy and numeracy ability and these students had a low to high literacy ability.
- One of the barriers for students learning was attendance.
- Students should be directed to use selected sections of the Toolbox because they get distracted when they are not directed.

Cultural inclusiveness

- The students identified with the animation; however they felt the Toolbox could use Indigenous people.

Trainers professional development

- The role of the trainer was to help with reading, spelling, research or information.
- Trainers need professional development in using the technology.

Toolbox content

- Games should be used on the Toolboxes with challenges for the students to get to different stages. For example, the 'Deadly Jam Music Festival' Toolbox could be customised with tunes set up as a challenge. In 'Where's the Party at?' while looking for the party the student could be asked to find different doors. A game could also be designed called 'Consequences' where the students are able to do whatever they want but have a consequence for their decision. There could be also be a game called 'Vision' with different levels of difficulty.
- Computers foster independent, autonomous learning and are exciting learning tools.
- The graphics should be really good.
- The Toolbox should have a lot more characters.
- It might be a good activity to pick out an individual and see what happens at the end of the night ('Where's the Party at?').
- Toolboxes are a good resource for students learning.
- Online learning is easy for some people but harder for others. However, all trainers should use online learning to teach.
- The Toolboxes are an excellent teaching resource because they allow flexible learning.

Technical support

- Technical Support Voice Activation could be used (there is some talk but there should be more).
- There were 10 new computers each one having Windows XP software, however there were still technology issues.
- Trainers need technical support while using the Toolboxes.

Management

The Koori Programs Unit is committed to the transition to an online learning environment for students over the next three years. Six major projects have commenced in 2004 to introduce and support the transition, as well as the management, of the 2004 Australian Flexible Learning Framework Project with 'New Technologies for Indigenous Learners' as one of their topics.

Student interest

- students were motivated by the Toolboxes and found learning stimulating, challenging and positive
- feedback should be sought from students regarding:
 - Toolbox usability
 - their use as a learning method
 - how they access the information and negotiate their way through the Toolbox
 - whether the application of e-learning improves attendance, participation and learning
- Toolboxes improve motivation
- Toolboxes develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- they improve access to electronic information
- they lead to a greater improvement and responsibility for learning by the students.

Cultural inclusiveness

- Students want to see more Indigenous Toolboxes customised for Indigenous students with Indigenous faces, graphics and content.

Trainers professional development

- Trainers need to be proficient in the use of computers.
- Trainers need to be familiar with the Toolboxes they utilise.

Toolbox content

- Toolboxes should be highly interactive.
- Toolboxes should be visually stimulating.
- Toolboxes should have more voice activation.

Technical support

- It is important that students feel comfortable using the technology and Toolboxes as the Gunung Willam Balluk Learning Centre expects a rapid up take of e-learning over the next three years.

Mentor

The mentor is based at the Kangan Batman TAFE and works frequently with the Gunung Willam Balluk Learning Centre and was able to ensure that the Toolbox was loaded onto the computers and made accessible to the students. The Toolbox was loaded onto an Internet server and therefore there were no problems with infrastructure or with computers.

Appendices

Questionnaires

Teachers

1. What are the main issues for your institution with getting online learning for your students?
2. Is your access to the Internet
 - Excellent
 - Very good
 - Good
 - Poor
 - Non-existent
3. If it is poor, why?
4. Did you trial the Toolboxes in
 - School
 - TAFE College
 - OtherType:
5. What other organisations were involved with the delivery of this trial?
6. How many students were involved in the trials?
7. What were the ages of the students?
8. What were the literacy skills of the students?
9. What were the numeracy skills of the students?
10. What were the issues you found in the trialing of the Toolbox?
11. What external issues affected the trials?
12. Did the Toolboxes engage the students in their work?
13. Did the Toolboxes hinder the students in the work?
14. Would you use Toolboxes again for teaching your students?
15. If so, why?

16. If not, why not?
17. Did you have to change your teaching styles to accommodate the Toolbox?
18. How did the students respond to the medium?
19. Would you use a Toolbox again? Why?
20. What would you do differently?
21. What kind of learning environment is most familiar to your students?
22. How did you motivate the students?
23. What were your hopes for your students in using Toolboxes?

Students

1. Do you have a computer at home?
2. Have you ever used a computer before?
3. Did you find it difficult to use the computer?
4. If so, why?
5. If not, why not?
6. Did you enjoy using the Toolbox as a learning tool?
7. If so, why?
8. If not, why not?
9. What did you like best about the Toolbox?
10. What did you like the least about the Toolbox?
11. Is there anything about the Toolbox that you would change if you could?
12. What is the difference between a Toolbox and the way you are normally taught?
13. What do you think the role of the teacher should be when using the Toolbox as a teaching tool?
14. What kind of relationship do you want with the teacher?
15. What kind of assessment tasks would you like to use in the Toolbox?

Mentors

1. What role did you play in setting up the Toolboxes?
2. What were some of the background/political influences around setting up the Toolboxes?
3. What happened at the start of the trial?
4. What happened during the trial?
5. What happened at the end of the trial?
6. Were there any issues with the equipment?
7. Were there any issues with using the Toolboxes?
8. Did you have to do anything different to cater for the needs of Indigenous students?
9. Are there any recommendations you would make for using Toolboxes with Indigenous students?

Management

1. Why were you interested in getting involved in this trial?
2. What were your hopes for your students?
3. Why were you keen to trial Toolboxes?
4. What are the advantages for online learning for Indigenous students?
5. Would you use Toolboxes again as a teaching tool for your students?

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To purchase a Toolbox contact Australian Training Products Ltd:

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