

2008 Sharing ACE skills: Southern Metropolitan ACE Learning Community Survey

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## Background

As part of Southern Metropolitan Region of ACFE's involvement in the ACFE VicGovernment E-learning grant 2008 a survey was conducted to identify the professional development needs and preferences of tutors, managers and volunteers related to teaching and learning, in particular, e-learning and new technologies. Other areas of teaching and learning were surveyed as well. The survey will inform the development of a professional development program to run in 2009.

## Methodology

### Sampling frame and methodology

The survey could be completed online, as an electronic form, or as a print form to be returned to Pam Gates, Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre. Survey period: August 1, 2008 to September 30, 2008. Only a few printed responses were received then entered into the online survey. 70 responses were received in total.

The population for the survey included all teachers and tutors, managers and some administrative staff in community providers as well as some private RTOs. As there is no central list of teachers and trainers, participants were recruited via email with telephone follow up (thank you Pam Gates) through providers and the Southern Metropolitan ACE learning Community network. So providers and participants were self-selecting but not necessarily already involved in e-learning. 43 individual providers were identified when respondents were asked where they worked. Respondents were from both large and small providers.

By my reckoning 21 providers could be considered large. Eight respondents indicated that they worked for more than one provider.

## Summary

- The overwhelming number of 70 respondents classified themselves as tutors : 85.7%. Significantly , 87.3% of this group classified themselves as part-time sessional or casual workers.
- Respondents represented major areas of ACE with language & literacy and IT tutors predominating although other non-accredited areas were also significant.
- Strong interest was shown across all the options listed but you could say that there was a significant interest in professional development related to: Current and emerging technologies; Learning design: resource identification and adaptation; Delivery strategies related to learner characteristic; and Assessment strategies related to learner characteristics.
- Concerns. Best exemplified by this comment: *I would be encouraged if the PD is highly relevant and if there is opportunities for sharing of new ideas. I would be prevented to attend by lack of funding, time or distant location.*
- Current usage. All the technologies listed in the questionnaire drew some response with the most used ones being email for learner client support, presentation software (by learner) , multimedia language, literacy & numeracy resources – CD, video , digital photography.
- There was widespread interest in all technologies but with more interest in virtual classrooms, audio podcasts, interactive quizzes, digital storytelling, interactive games, presentation software.
- Respondents who work for large ACE providers are more likely to prefer the training in-house with respondents from smaller providers preferring the region forum option. There was significant interest in the on-line option. This suggests a multiplicity of professional development options would reach the widest audience.
- There appears to be a strong preference for workshops delivered within normal working hours. Tutors require considerable advance notice because of timetabling and availability.
- There is interest in relevant professional development activities. Significantly 57 (of the 70 surveyed) people provided their name and contact email as a follow up to the question ‘Can we contact you about professional development opportunities in the region?’

## Profile of respondents

The overwhelming number of 70 respondents classified themselves as tutors : 85.7%. Significantly 87.3% of this group classified themselves as part-time sessional or casual workers. See figure 1.

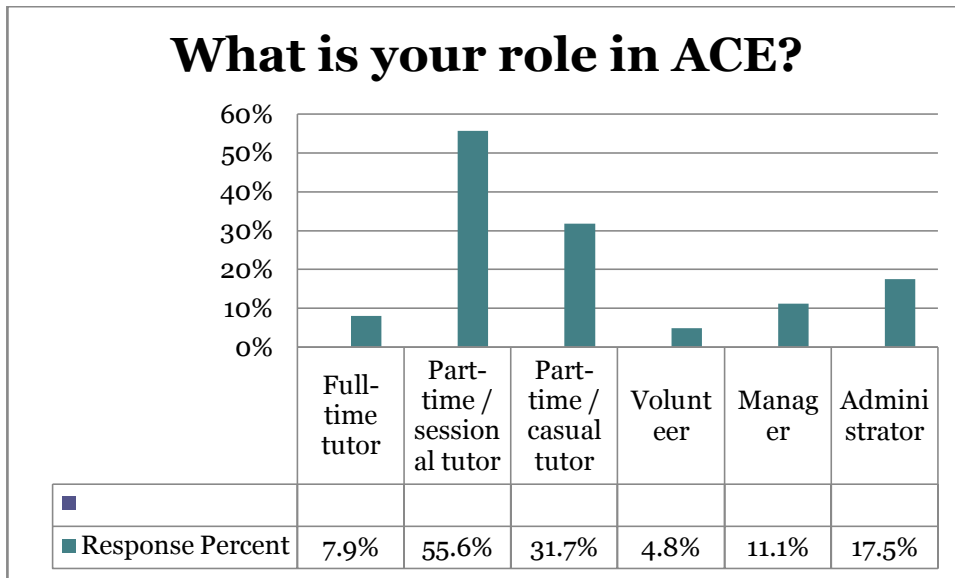


Figure 1: What is your role in ACE?

## Teaching areas

Respondents represented major areas of ACE with language & literacy and IT tutors predominating although other non-accredited areas were also significant – see general. The classifications are the report writer’s summary of 62 individual responses. Note that 22.2% indicated that they taught across several areas e.g. ESL (Access), computers beginner to intermediate, adult literacy. See figure 2.

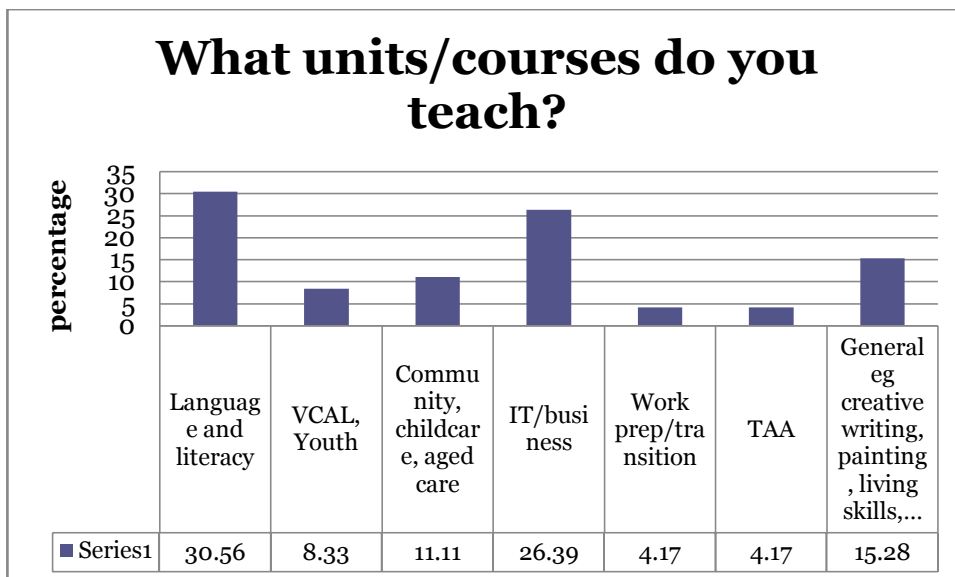


Figure 2: What units/courses do you teach?

## Wishlist

Strong interest was shown across all the options listed but you could say that there was a significant interest in professional development related to: Current and emerging technologies; Learning design: resource identification and adaptation; Delivery strategies related to learner characteristic; and Assessment strategies related to learner characteristics. Fourteen respondents added other suggestions e.g. new CGEA, working with people with a disability, governance training, TAFEVC. See figure 3.

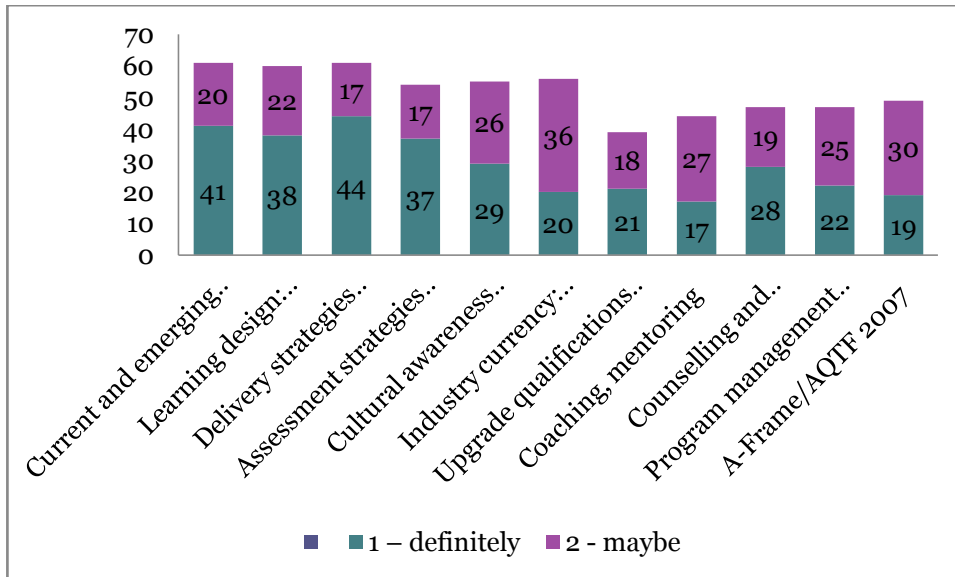


Figure 3: *Wishlist*

Question 2 asked people to convert this wish into action: ‘I would like to participate in a workshop/s on one or more of these themes.’ The results were in line with the wishes/interest expressed in question one with the “no” response ranging between 9.7% low for “current and emerging technologies” to 35.8% high for “upgrade qualifications eg TAA”. Seven respondents added other suggestions eg new CGEA, TAFVC, recognition of informal learning. See figure 4.

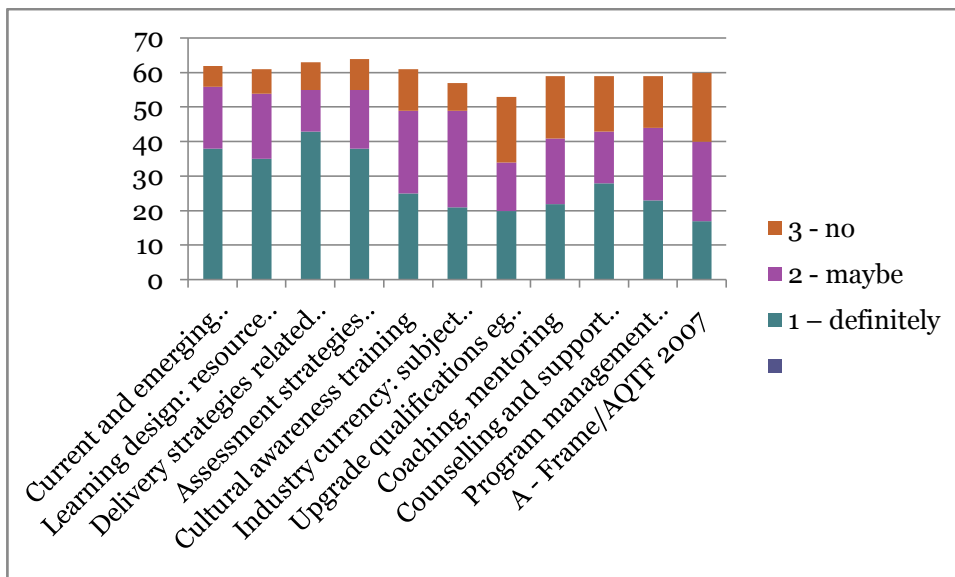


Figure 4: *Workshops*

## Concerns

“If you have any concerns about professional development you might like to add a comment here. For example, what factors might encourage or prevent you from participating in professional development skills sessions?” 28 respondents completed this question via a text box. Their responses are exemplified by these comments:

‘I would be encouraged if the PD is highly relevant and if there is opportunities for sharing of new ideas. I would be prevented to attend by lack of funding, time or distant location.’

‘Training is planned well ahead so it can be booked in and classes covered (at least a term)’

## Current use of learning technologies

“Have you used any of these technologies as a teaching and learning or support strategy with your learners?” Respondents were presented with a long list of current technologies – see questionnaire. All the technologies drew some response ranging from a low 5.4% for Second Life to a high 67.7% for email for learner/client support. Other frequent choices were:

- Email for learner client support 67.7%
- Presentation software (by learner) – eg PowerPoint 56.9%
- Multimedia language, literacy & numeracy resources – CD 51.6%
- Video 53.0%
- Digital photography 43.8%

### Would like to use?

Respondents were asked if they would like to use any of these technologies. Their response shows widespread interest in all technologies but with more interest in virtual classrooms, audio podcasts, interactive quizzes, digital storytelling, interactive games, presentation software. See figure 5.

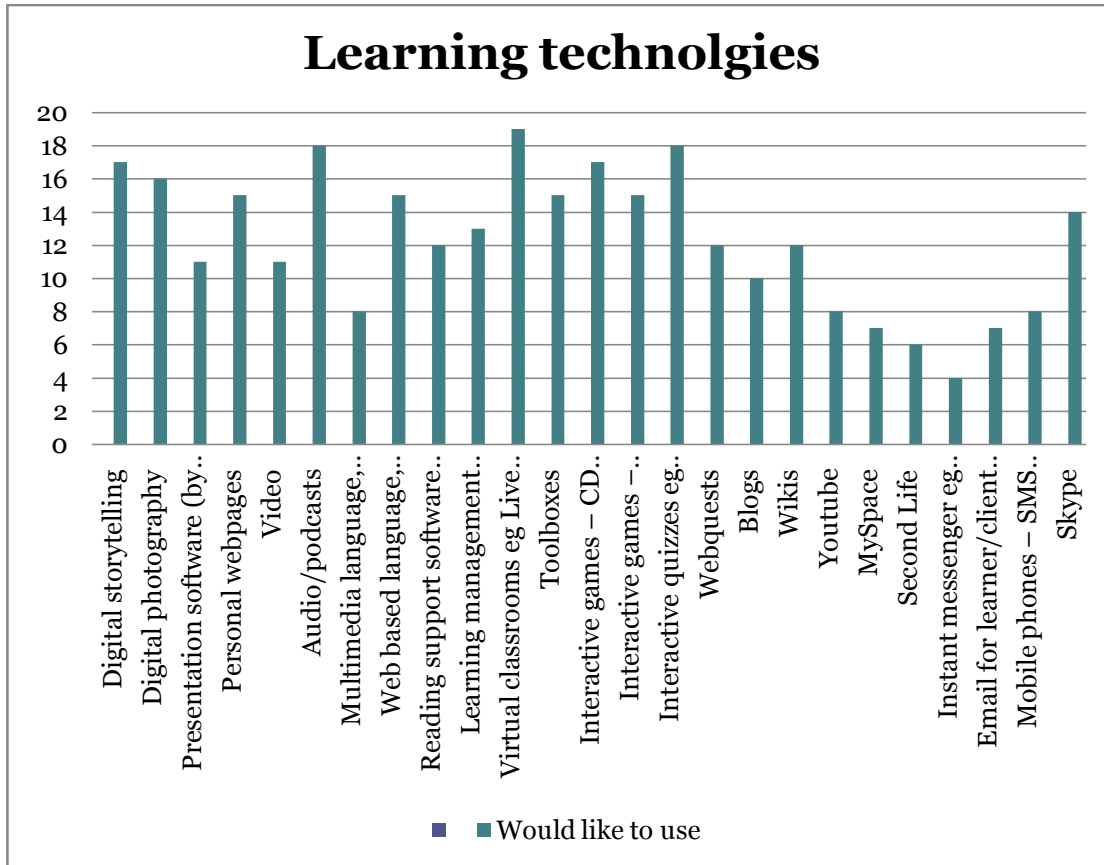


Figure 5: Learning technologies – would like to use?

The next question “I would like to participate in a workshop on one or more of these technologies” asked for some commitment and the widespread interest described earlier meant a reasonably even distribution but with slight preferences for the areas described earlier i.e. virtual classrooms, audio podcasts, interactive quizzes, digital storytelling, interactive games, presentation software. See figure 6.

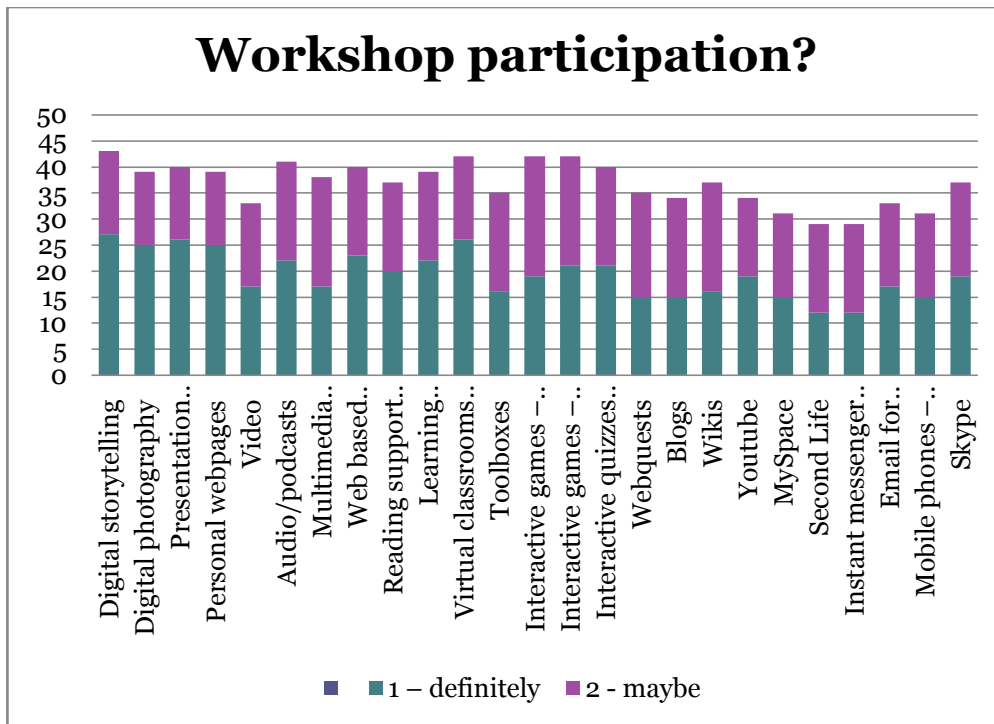


Figure 6: Workshop participation

### Professional development: where and when?

The survey also attempted to gauge professional development preferences as to location (including online) and timing of workshops. However individual responses when examined in more detail appear to indicate that respondents who work for large ACE providers are more likely to prefer the training in-house with respondents from smaller providers preferring the region forum option. There was significant interest in the on-line option. Although it should be noted that when respondents were asked to identify issues or concerns 28.6% had concerns about distance travelled for pd. See figure 7.

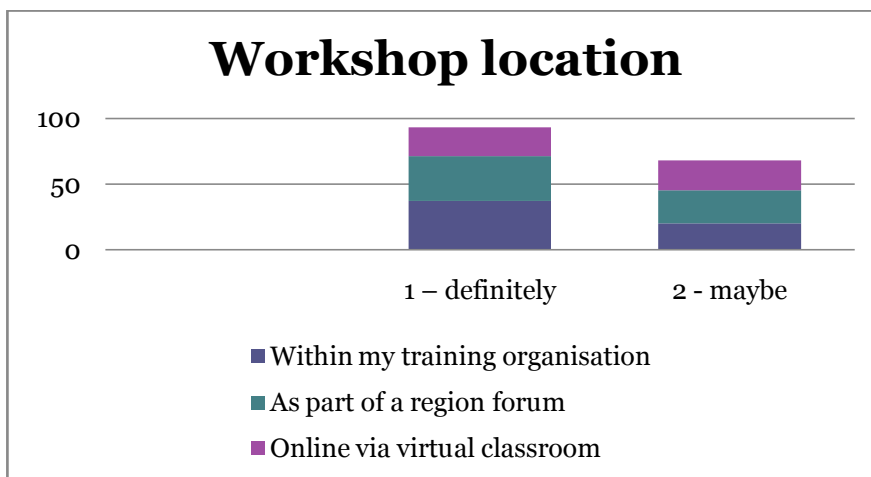


Figure 7: Workshop location

There appears to be a strong preference for workshops delivered within normal working hours – again this may relate to some of the concerns about being funded or given time release to attend professional development activities. Some respondents also indicated a need for advanced notice of professional development activities. See figure 8.

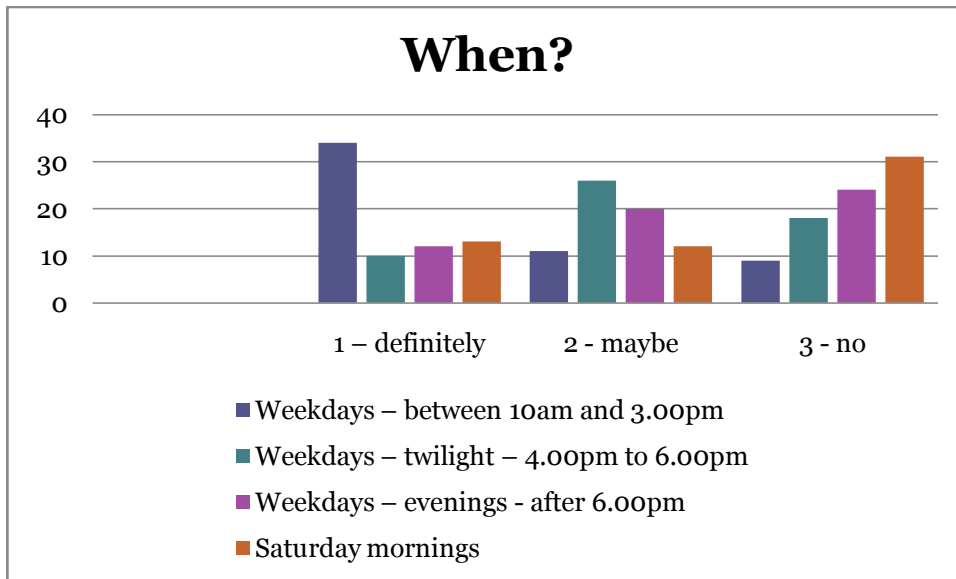


Figure 8: *Time of day preference*

## Appendices

Questionnaire

Spreadsheet summary of data.