

Managed by the Flexible Learning Advisory Group on behalf of all States and Territories in conjunction with ANTA

2002 RTO Case Study Project 'Flexible learning in practice'

Challenger TAFE



Flexible Delivery to the Western Australian
Aquaculture Industry

or

Are Fish **Flexible**?

RTO Case Study Foreword

The following case study is one of 18 case studies that document the use and application of Australian Flexible Learning (AFL) Framework products and services by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). The case studies are an initiative of the AFL Framework for the National Vocational Education and Training System 2000 – 2004 as a means of offering ‘real-life’ examples of how RTOs are implementing elearning strategies with the assistance of AFL Framework products and services. Each participating RTO has documented their experiences over a six month period (June 2002 to November 2002) and have been selected from each State and Territory representing the TAFE, Private Provider, Enterprise and VET in Schools sectors.

Each case study will provide you with an insight into how RTOs are implementing flexible learning and is critical reading if:

- You are interested in finding out about the possibilities of flexible learning
- You are currently implementing flexible learning within your organisation
- You are looking to extend your flexible learning delivery capabilities

Each case study covers areas such as;

- How to implement AFL Framework products and services
- Change management practices
- Customisation of flexible learning products and services
- Professional development
- Access and equity considerations
- Flexible learning strategic planning
- Blended learning techniques
- Marketing and much more.

Each case study highlights the various ways in which AFL Framework products and services can be applied to the learning environment to enhance client delivery and service.

For further information pertaining to AFL Framework products and services or to access other case studies visit discover.flexiblelearning.net.au or phone 07 3234 1852.

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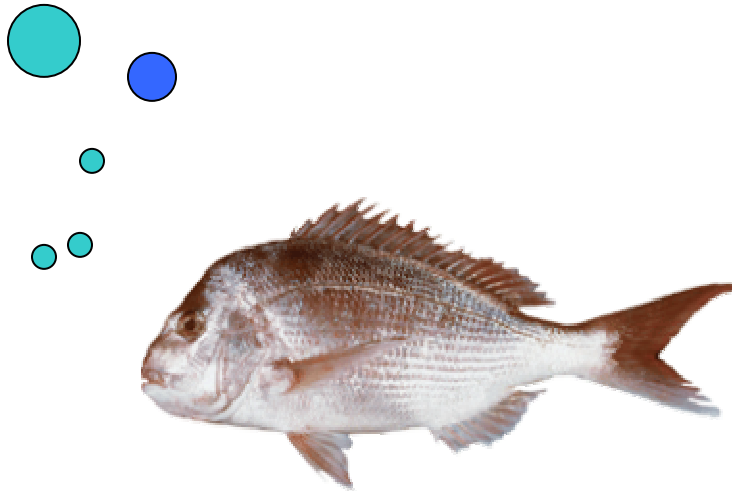
Who should read this Case Study?

This case study is not just about farming fish!

You **should** read this study if:

- 🌐 You are interested in Aquaculture
- 🌐 You are interested in Aquaculture training
- 🌐 You are interested in online training
- 🌐 You are interested in blended delivery of training
- 🌐 You are interested in looking at delivering personal development opportunities
- 🌐 You just like fish!

This case study would be good for understanding the issues and processes that are associated with implementing online training in an organisation, and for understanding the various ways in which flexible delivery products can be applied to the learning environment to enhance the student centred learning experience.



Executive Summary

Challenger TAFE has nine specialist training centres to provide quality training for our industry and community clients. The Centres are closely aligned to the needs of industry. One of the key strategic directions of Challenger TAFE is the developing and applying innovative and flexible teaching and learning strategies. The purpose of this case study is to implement and document the use of products developed by the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (AFL Framework). Three products were chosen from the AFL Framework to implement at Challenger TAFE and the WA Maritime Training Centre (one of the Centres of Specialisation). These were; (1) Series III Aquaculture Toolboxes (2) Learnscope Project “Implementing Online Delivery of the Horticulture and Aquaculture Training Packages” and (3) Flexible Delivery Planning Framework.

The objectives Challenger TAFE hoped to achieve out of this case study were:

- To implement online aquaculture training from the WA Maritime Training Centre.
- To use the Series III Aquaculture Toolboxes as the tool with which online training will be delivered.
- To train the appropriate staff in the skills necessary to deliver online training through the use of LearnScope.
- To strategically plan for the implementation of online learning at the WA Maritime Training Centre.

The WA Maritime Training Centre ([Maritime](#)^{*}) has implemented the use of the Series III Seafood Industry (Aquaculture) Toolbox in a WebCT online learning environment. The implementation of the Toolboxes at Maritime, with remote off-campus learners, involved establishing a range of procedures to support this mode of delivery. These procedures included an enrolment process, an induction strategy, student support guidelines and assessment strategies. Students come to Perth once a semester so that they can be assessed on their competencies. The Toolbox online learning environment was supported by additional reading material created by the lecturer. The introduction of the Aquaculture Toolboxes to Maritime has made aquaculture training accessible to clients right across the state.

Participation by aquaculture lecturing staff in the LearnScope project allowed for Professional Development in building skills to allow staff to deliver training in an online environment. Training was conducted in face-to-face and online modes. The online mode allowed the lecturer to build skills as a participating online learner, which had the dual function of learning the skills required and also experiencing some of the problems and frustrations an online learner might experience. Involvement in this LearnScope project has seen the evolution of teaching methodologies from face-to-face and online, to blended teaching techniques. There has been a positive flow-on effect in other parts of the College as new staff are seeing these technologies and skills being used and are becoming involved in similar Professional Development opportunities.

* Text designated with blue font indicates there is further explanation of the terminology in the glossary at the end of the document.



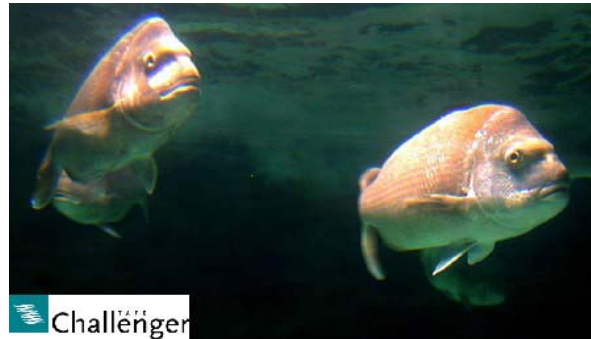
Using the Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework has allowed the WA Maritime Training Centre to improve on the delivery of online training. The working through of a series of sequential steps, Maritime has identified specific market sectors that needed to have direct marketing of online training and also the need to improve the induction process for students commencing an online course. It also has allowed for a more strategic application of flexible training solutions for Aquaculture in the future.

Participation in the RTO Case Study has allowed for a critical analysis of our flexible delivery processes. We have implemented online training of aquaculture in 2002 using skills learnt in the LearnScope Project and the Toolboxes as the learning resources. The Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework has allowed us to analyse the methods and procedures used to implement this mode of training. The WA Maritime Training Centre has revolutionised its way of training, with learning being carried out with greater flexibility. The most significant flow-on effect at the WA Maritime Training Centre is that other training sections keen to become involved in these new and innovative learning technologies and now considering future applying for future LearnScope projects.

Hopefully other RTO's considering implementing online delivery of training and education may now understand some of the issues that need to be addressed during the implementation process. There have been a number of positive outcomes in implementing these AFL Framework products for Challenger TAFE and the WA Maritime Training Centre, and we look forward to using other products. The three products that we have used at Maritime have helped us well and truly get started on the road to delivering online aquaculture training and a more responsive flexible training future.



Challenger TAFE



Challenger TAFE has nine specialist training centres to provide quality training for our industry and community clients. These Centres are conducted in state of the art training facilities and developed in co-operation and co-location with relevant industries. As well as providing improved training services to industry, the Centres of Specialisation also provide access to initial training and lifelong learning opportunities through a variety of community based delivery strategies.

The Centres of Specialisation are as follows:

- WA Applied Engineering & Shipbuilding Training Centre
- WA Centre for Leadership & Community Development
- WA Horticulture & Environmental Science Skills Centre
- WA Maritime Training Centre
- WA Wool Technology Training Centre
- Community & Health Services Training Centre
- Fremantle Hospitality & Tourism Training Centre
- Information Technology & Business Skills Centre
- Visage Training Centre for Hair, Fashion & Beauty

Included in the Challenger TAFE strategic planning framework for 2002-2007 is the aim to provide vocational education and training products and services in an accessible student centred teaching and learning environment. To achieve this aim the College has identified the following priorities:

- Developing and applying innovative and flexible teaching and learning strategies.
- Continuously improving the quality of programs and staff.
- Expanding the repertoire of flexible delivery arrangements including recognition of prior learning, workplace training and online delivery processes and resources.



The Fish of Choice

The purpose of this case study is to implement and document the use of products developed by the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (AFL Framework). Three products were chosen from the AFL Framework to implement at Challenger TAFE and the WA Maritime Training Centre (here after referred to as Maritime).

1. Series III Aquaculture Toolboxes.
2. Learnscope Project “Implementing Online Delivery of the Horticulture and Aquaculture Training Packages”.
3. Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework.

Objectives

- To implement online aquaculture training from the WA Maritime Training Centre.
- To use the Series III Aquaculture Toolboxes as the tool with which online training will be delivered.
- To train the appropriate staff in the skills necessary to deliver online training through participating in a LearnScope project.
- To strategically plan for the implementation of online learning at the WA Maritime Training Centre.



Fish in a Box *(Series III Aquaculture Toolboxes)*

Before Toolboxes at the WA Maritime Training Centre (Product 1)

Aquaculture is the farming of both freshwater and marine fish species. “Fish farming” can include the farming of fish, crustaceans, algae, molluscs and aquatic plants and organisms. Over 25% of the world’s fisheries products are now being supplied from Aquaculture. The Aquaculture industry is diverse and requires skills in hatchery and on growing as well as marketing and support services.

The WA Maritime Training Centre at Fremantle has been conducting training in the Aquaculture sector since 1980.

Aquaculture training has traditionally been based at TAFE campuses while the industry is mainly dispersed throughout rural regions. The aquaculture industry within Australia operates throughout diverse geographical locations that are often remote from campuses that deliver training in Aquaculture. Courses offered by Maritime include the Certificate III in Seafood Industry (Aquaculture), which prepares students for employment as technical assistants and to lay the foundations for the Diploma of Seafood Industry (Aquaculture). These are full-time courses that require the students to attend classes from 9 – 18 months at a time. This mode of delivery has proven extremely popular over the last decade, with Maritime being one of the top three deliverers of Aquaculture training in Australia. The decision to venture into online training has been a decision made to capture a larger market. Online training will allow Maritime to tap a market previously unable to access Aquaculture training.

Challenger TAFE has been committed to producing products for flexible learning for the past decade. In particular, Challenger TAFE and staff from the WA Maritime Training Centre have been heavily involved in the Series III and IV Toolboxes. Staff from the WA Maritime Training Centre were involved in both projects in the form of Project Management and Content Experts.



What is a Toolbox?

A toolbox is a collection of online training materials comprising learning activities, resources and user guides to support program delivery for endorsed Training Package qualifications. Toolbox development is part of the Australian Flexible Learning Framework, an agreement between ANTA and the Australian States and Territories.

For further information, visit <http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/toolbox>



How we implemented the Toolboxes

The decision to deliver Aquaculture training via the Internet was made in January 2002. Initially, only one subject was offered to 'test' interest in the product in the market place and also to slowly introduce the lecturer(s) to online training (you have to walk before you can run!)

A basic water quality module was decided upon as the first unit and students were enrolled initially through an online enrolment system.

Students can view 24 hours a day, which subjects are available via e-Training and then go on to enrol online

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e-Training

Maritime (Aquaculture)

Semester 2 courses start on 22 July and enrolments will be taken from 3 July 2002 onwards.

| Subject Index Number | Course Number | Unit | Tuition Fee | Tuition Fee (Concessional) | Resources Fee |
|----------------------|---------------|--|-------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| S1668* | S164 | Manipulate Stock Culture Environment | \$23.60 | \$12.40 | \$35.50 |
| S1672* | S164 | Monitor Stock and Environmental Conditions | \$23.60 | \$12.40 | \$40.50 |
| S1676* | S164 | Feed Stock | \$29.50 | \$15.50 | \$65.00 |

[Steps to Enrol](#)

Note:

- For more information visit the course information pages on the [WestOne](#) website
- Units marked with an * require on campus attendance or access to a supervised workplace situation to complete practical components. On campus attendance will

Steps of enrolment are clearly outlined

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TAFE Information

Steps to Enrol

From 3 to 4 July 2002 you may complete an enrolment and pay online. [Click here](#) to return the college enrol on-line page.

After 4 July 2002 follow the steps below.

Step 1: Print the enrolment form.

[Click here](#) to download the MS Word enrolment form.
[Click here](#) to download the Acrobat enrolment form.
[Get FREE Adobe Acrobat Reader.](#)

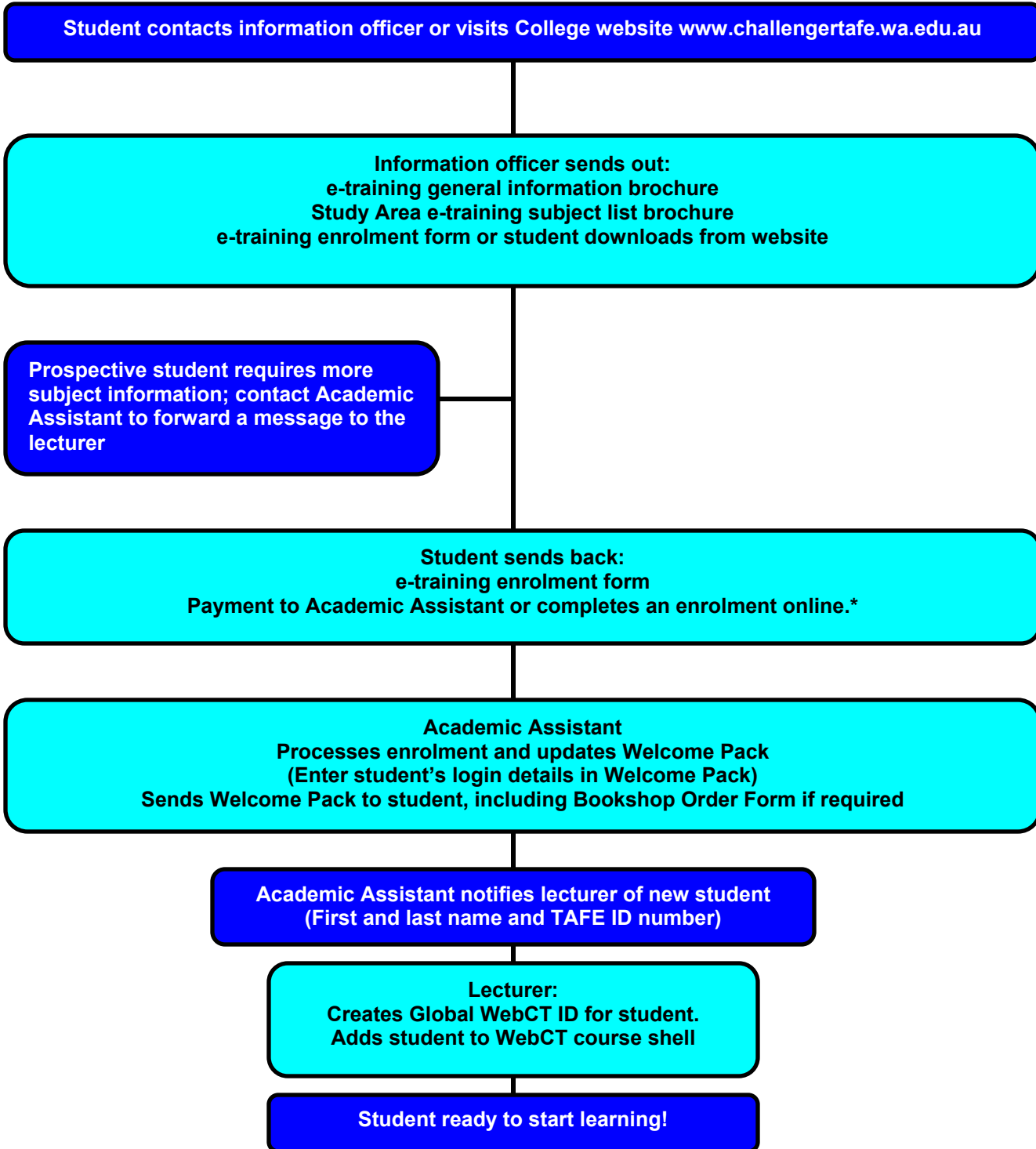
Step 2: Enter your details on the enrolment form and calculate the fees payable.

To complete a subject enrolment students will need to forward with their completed enrolment form payment for the:

- Tuition Fee or Concessional Tuition Fee (proof of concession status must be attached to your enrolment form)
- Resource Fee: \$20.50 Enrolment Charge (current for six months, regardless of



The enrolment process is designed so that the students can go through the entire procedure from the comfort of their home, anytime of the day or night, without needing to speak to a staff member. During 2002 Challenger TAFE, in collaboration with **WestOne*** Services, has developed and trialled the deployment of an online enrolment system that enables students to enrol and pay online. The college intends deploying this system for all enrolments from the commencement of 2003, A normal enrolment process may appear something like the following:

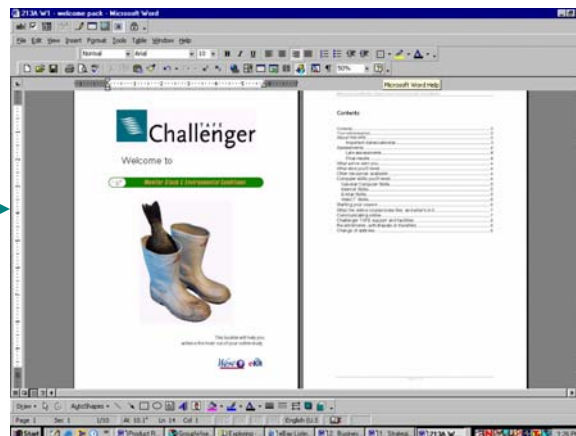


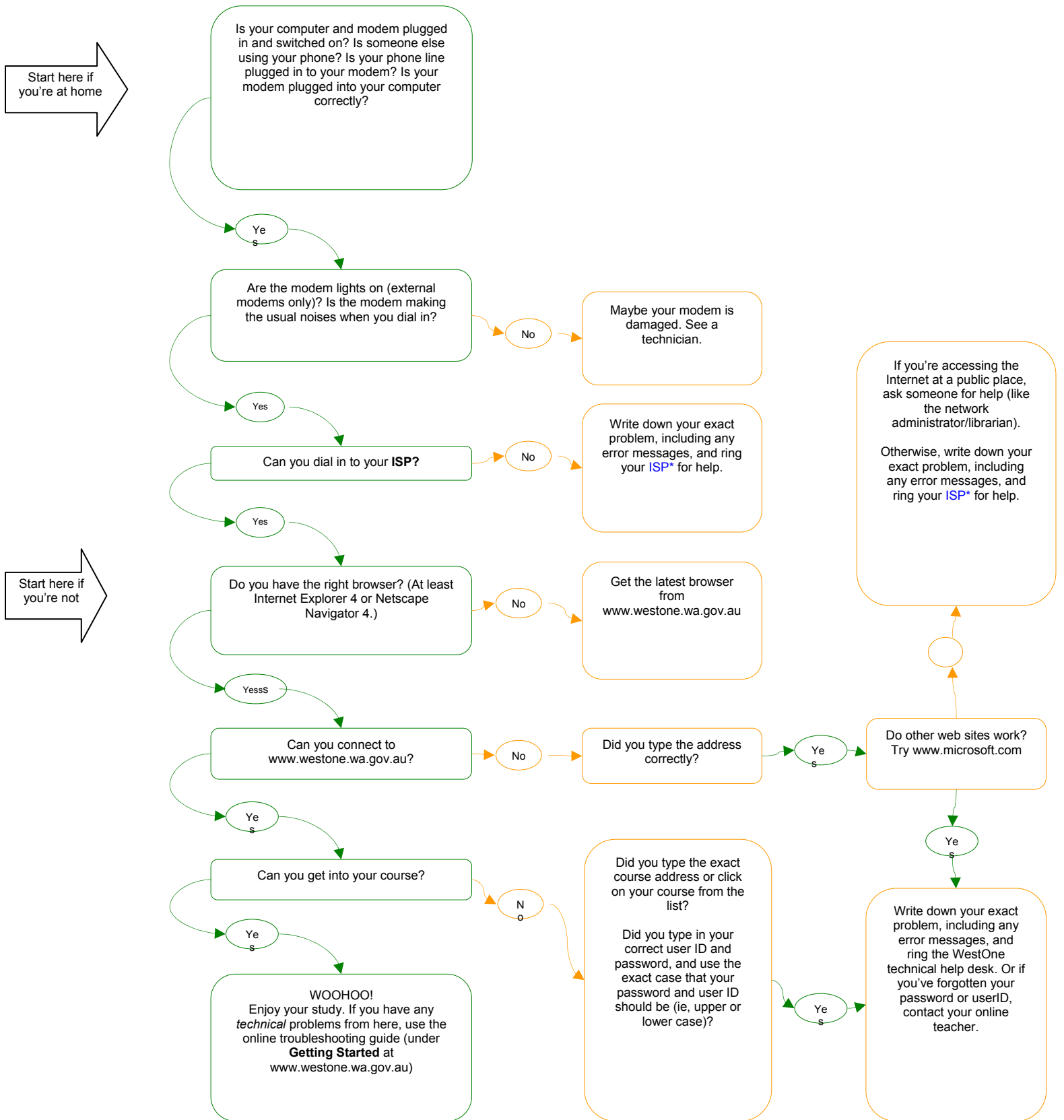
This is just one pathway of enrolment. For those enrolling students who are comfortable in the online environment, this is an extremely convenient method of enrolment. Of course there are those potential students out there who are not so comfortable with this enrolment method. It is also possible to be coached over the phone through the online enrolment process, or a phone enrolment can take place. The system accommodates all enrolment procedure preferences. Once the appropriate documentation has been received from the student, the Academic Assistant enrolls the student electronically onto the college student data system and allocates a student number. The Academic Assistant emails the appropriate lecturer the student number and at the same time sends out a “Welcome Pack” to the new student. The lecturer adds the new student to the WebCT Global Database and then adds the student to their WebCT shell so that the student can access the course.

An important part of supporting students in an online learning environment is an effective induction process. Challenger’s induction process includes:

- Posting to new students a “Welcome Pack” booklet containing information such as course description, lecturer contact details, assessment information, login and password, book order form for any additional resources that may be required and technical trouble shooting guide. This “Welcome Pack” is based on a template developed by [WestOne*](#) Services.
- A welcoming email from within the WebCT/Toolbox environment, welcoming them to the course.
- A follow up phone call to students a fortnight from when they receive their “Welcome Packs.”

Screen freeze of
the front of a
“Welcome Pack”





Due to the practical competencies that need to be assessed, students are required to attend on campus workshops or negotiate with a workplace assessor to be assessed in a workplace. When our students are sent out their Welcome Packs, they are notified of the time and date of their on-campus practical competency workshops. This information is also provided within the Toolbox environment. There is an icon on the first page of the Toolbox that has some basic helpful instructions for the students and also re-details information about workshop locations, times, dates and so on. There is also information in here regarding assessment structure. This alternate source can be useful for documenting important information in case the students lose their “Welcome Packs”.



This icon is where students access information regarding assessment and workshops

The Toolbox online learning environment was supported by additional reading material created by the lecturer. The material took some concepts to greater depth, as many of the online students are highly motivated and interested in the subject material. The lecturer also tried to create a ‘virtual lesson’ by having a real time class in a chat room, but to date this has met with limited success due to the variety of working hours of the students involved.

After the first Unit of Competence finished, an online survey was emailed to the students to try and ascertain their satisfaction with this mode of delivery, learning and the Toolboxes in general.

Feedback from online students studying aquaculture with Toolboxes has included comments such as:

- “Easy to use”
- “Excellent resources”
- “Great learning technique”
- “Wicked”
- “They are really fun to use”
- “So convenient!! I can work when I get time!”



I regularly get emails from one student in the wee hours of the morning (like 3 and 4 am)!

[Not that I answer them at this time of course! It is a convenient time for the student to communicate with me].



After Toolbox Implementation at the WA Maritime Training Centre

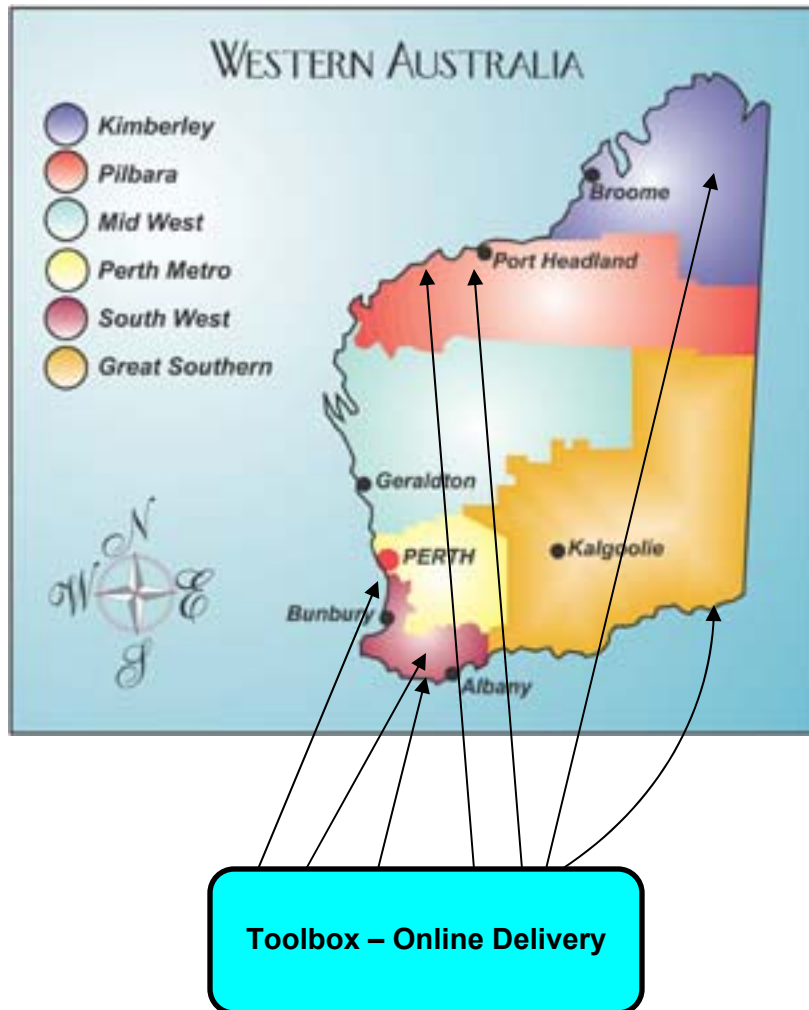


The introduction of the Aquaculture Toolboxes to Maritime has made Aquaculture Training accessible to clients across the state. Clients do not have to move to Perth or other regional training centres for a year to complete training. The students come to Perth once a semester, depending on the enrolled units to complete their competencies.



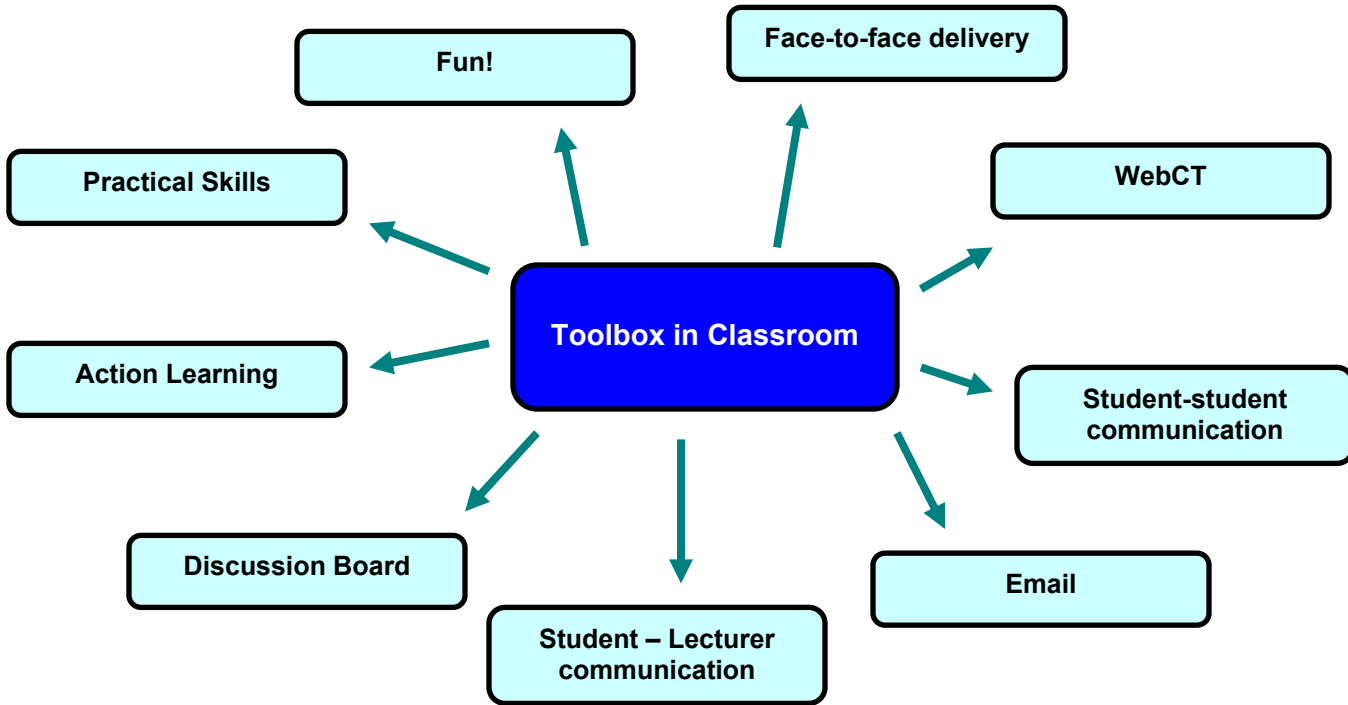
The flexible nature of the Toolboxes and the online mode of delivery has provided the opportunity to tap into a wider client base for Aquaculture training WA Maritime Training Centre by allowing us to target a national market.





Lecturers have begun using Toolboxes even more flexibly than first anticipated. Initially it was thought that this product would only be used to deliver training to students who were unable to attend class on a regular basis due to geographic or work-related constraints. However, using the Toolbox has enabled lecturers to implement a more student centred delivery style with on-campus students. The Toolbox “problem based” teaching and learning model provides a model for classroom delivery that actively engages students in the learning process. Lecturers have found that by using this blended mode of delivery, it has resulted in the students becoming more self directed learners and developing a high level of information literacy skills.





As you can see from the above figure, the use of Toolboxes at Maritime has taken the lecturing to many levels, many of which overlap. The term being used currently to describe a mixed mode of delivery is 'blended*' or 'hybrid' learning. It involves a variety of delivery methods in the classroom, usually incorporating online learning as a facet of this delivery. It is thought that a blended technique can reinforce the learning through organising group interactions with the use of technology and face-to-face sessions. For example:

- Introductory theory lecture.
- Interactive class discussion about material on the discussion board.
- Work through related material in Toolbox.
- Follow-up practical work.



Feedback from students on this **blended delivery*** mode includes:

“This is SO cool”

“I really like doing this stuff”

“I am turning into a computer junkie” ← **This from a computer phobic student!!**

From the point of view of the lecturer, the access to the Toolboxes has been invaluable. A survey of lecturer’s currently using the Toolboxes in either a blended or completely off-site mode of delivery resulted in the following feedback:

- Significantly less preparation time.
- Significantly lower marking time of assessment required when time is spent initially developing online self-marking quizzes and assessments.
- In a class environment, students are much more actively engaged in the learning process.
- In a class environment, there is more time available to help students at a one-to-one level.
- The online teaching is actually fun and it enables flexibility in delivery by the lecturer in the workplace, from home, or when required to travel for work.
- Toolboxes are great to use as a source of information for generating resources.



**Feedback from a new Lecturer - we have all been there!
Having resources available when starting as a Lecturer makes life a whole lot easier! 😊**

A third mode of application for the Aquaculture Toolboxes is also in use at Maritime. In some subjects, on-campus students are asked to complete work through the Toolboxes before they attend class. In effect, a remote delivery of content is being used, while the students are still attending classes. The classes are then used to build on the foundations laid out in the Toolbox. For example, one Unit of Competency taught in the Seafood Training Package is SFICORE102A Work Effectively in the Seafood Industry. At Maritime, essentially this is delivered as the work experience subject. The students are required to work through material within the Toolbox at home. Classroom sessions are then spent building on the elements using the Toolbox theory as underpinning knowledge.



Training the Fish Trainers

(LearnScope)

“Implementing Online Delivery in the Horticulture and Aquaculture Training Packages”

Before LearnScope at the WA Maritime Training Centre (Product 2)

With the development of the Toolbox materials, the College identified the need to develop lecturers’ skills for delivering the Horticulture and Aquaculture Toolboxes online. To focus on Aquaculture, the WA Maritime Training Centre traditionally delivers Aquaculture training in the traditional face-to-face mode (chalk and talk). These courses are run as Certificate III and Diploma (V) on a full time basis. Part-time weekend courses are also offered at the Certificate III level and the occasional nighttime Diploma subject is offered. While other campuses of Challenger TAFE (e.g. Rockingham with IT training) have developed considerable experience at delivering online, it is only relatively recently that Maritime has considered this to be an option.

What is LearnScope?

LearnScope is work-based learning projects for VET Staff that target teachers and trainers to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to apply new learning technologies to flexible learning and delivery. They encourage participation of middle managers, student support staff and those staff supporting teachers/trainers.

The Project

In 2001 we undertook a LearnScope project that aimed to provide professional development for lecturers who were involved in the Series III Toolboxes in Aquaculture and Horticulture. LearnScope will fund between \$4 000 - \$25 000 for projects involving Professional Development, which must be matched by the participating organisation. Challenger TAFE committed funds in part for teaching relief, showing a commitment to the professional development of their staff. This teaching relief was critical in allowing lecturers time to attend the face-to-face portions of the workshops and also create time in which they could complete their online commitments. This funding for teaching relief was critical for the success of the project.

An initial skills assessment was conducted on lecturing staff before the commencement of the project. The skills assessed included:

- Introductory WebCT 3.0 skills
- Assessment of the use of WebCT student management tools
- Assessment of the use of chat/discussion tools in WebCT



To ensure the maximum learning experience a variety of training methods were used:

1. A face-to-face session was delivered. Lecturers were gathered in a computer lab and introduced to the aims of the project and were familiarised with the WebCT environment for delivering training online.
2. The second mode of delivery was completely online using the e-course “eTrain: Online Training for Training Online.” This course contains 3 modules, but the module covered during the LearnScope project was “Managing Your Online Students” developed by WestOne Services. These courses can be accessed through WestOne at <http://www.westone.wa.gov.au>. All instructions and feedback were provided to lecturers via WebCT through discussion boards and emails. The “Managing Your Online Students” module was a fantastic learning curve. It walked you through a ‘course’ that you were taught to manage and run, with learning materials and students. At the same time, you could see and experience the difficulties an online student might encounter.
3. The third mode of delivery included additional individual support for lecturers who had difficulty with the online learning environment. This support was provided in the form of a ‘Technology Mentor’ or someone who was comfortable using WebCT and the Internet environment.
4. The next stage of the learning experience again involved students being face-to-face with the facilitators in the computer lab. Here, lecturers’ learnt to create a WebCT learning resource. Further information was emailed to lecturers as required and online support given. Lecturers’ were then required to participate in a moderated online discussion to discuss their views on the online learning experience, which further developed their skills in using email and Discussion boards.

After LearnScope Implementation at the WA Maritime Training Centre

The Lecturers

The skills analysis (of over 20 lecturers) before and after the project ran, highlighted some problems with basic computer skills on the behalf of the lecturers. While most lecturers had significant increases in their online delivery skills some struggled just to overcome their poor PC/Internet skills. Next time a similar professional development session is being run for staff, a more comprehensive audit of underlying skills should be conducted. Being comfortable in the online environment is as equally important for the lecturer as it is for the students. Some staff may require Professional Development in basic computer and Internet skills before attempting to use the WebCT environment. This will help to develop the delivery skills required by lecturers.

When analysing the uptake of using WebCT to deliver training one year on, it was found that only a small percentage of lecturers commenced using online delivery at the commencement of 2002. This was due to a variety of reasons, including some lecturers still feeling that they needed more support with developing their technical skills and some lacking faith in the



College's technical infrastructure. Twelve months down the track, a new wave of lecturing staff are realising the benefits of these skills. They are currently being trained in the area of delivering training online and are using these skills in a blended mode of delivery and will move into online training in the future. While these lecturers did not actively participate in the LearnScope Project, there has still been a positive flow-on effect, even if it has been 12 months on. The inference to be drawn from this experience is that things do take time! The skills learnt are new and innovative, and the adjustment to change may not be immediate. Professional development of technological teaching strategies may need to occur in small stages within the institution. A strategic investment in staff by the organisation will realise success if dealt with in this manner.

The Learnscope project has increased the awareness of the following points for lecturing staff at Challenger TAFE:

- Flexible delivery products that can be used to enhance the training experience.
- Modes of delivery for training other than the traditional chalk-and-talk.
- Greater awareness of the online learning community.
- Greater awareness of the online teaching community.
- The potential to increase resource and knowledge sharing.
- Creation of new skills through Professional Development.
- It allows Maritime to go to the students as well as the students coming to us. This makes us more competitive in the marketplace.
- Technology can be embraced and enhance both the teaching and learning experience.

The LearnScope project has enhanced the ability of the WA Maritime Training Centres' capacity to deliver Aquaculture training with more flexibility. The project enhanced the skills, knowledge and understanding of the four lecturers involved in the project. Consequently, Maritime began the implementation of online training in Aquaculture in February 2002.

Aquaculture staff involved in this LearnScope project achieved new skills, and all found the project worth the time and effort taken to complete. Staff enjoyed the opportunity to learn new skills to apply these up-to-date technologies for teaching and learning. They are optimising and reapplying these skills in new and innovative ways. The funding made available from Learnscope has opened up an entirely new direction in teaching and learning methodologies at Maritime, which is having a flow- on effect to other staff members (see The Management).

The Management

In all LearnScope projects that have been conducted at Challenger TAFE, there has been an aim to include Academic Directors and strategic leaders from within the College to ensure that outcomes are aligned with the strategic direction of the College. LearnScope has been very successful in raising the awareness of strategic leaders with regard to online learning and the issues that relate to learning technology in the learning environment. This particular LearnScope project ensured that the Academic Directors and the College Managing Director



participated in the “Online Learning and Facilitation” and “Implementing Online Delivery” seminars. These seminars were held on the first and last days of the project. In particular it has been important that these senior management staff members attended the Implementing Online Delivery at the end, as this is where the successes and problems of the project are presented to the group. This creates a continual learning process for senior management, raises the profile of the importance of this professional development and keeps them informed.

As a consequence of upper level management attending these seminars, they have a greater understanding of the difficulties and issues associated with delivering online training.

The [Director*](#) of Maritime sent the [Principal Lecturer*](#) to attend this LearnScope course. This lecturer is now the [Program Manager*](#) of the campus and is also using the skills learnt to deliver the Certificate IV - Workplace Trainer and Assessor online. The original intent of the Principal Lecturer attending this course was to keep up-to-date with new developments within the College. It gave her an appreciation of the potential shortfalls of the management system with regard to hour allocations for online training within the College framework; and an understanding of the frustrations of a lecturer with low technological capabilities but also created a repository of ideas for further online training in the future. This senior staff member is now using the skills learnt to deliver the Certificate IV – Workplace Trainer and Assessor online.

Due to the success of the online implementation of online Aquaculture training in 2002, Maritime management applied for and won another LearnScope Project for Maritime. The staff involved are from the Marine Operations section and will be trained in part by Aquaculture lecturers from the initial LearnScope project undertaken at the WA Maritime Training Centre. This project is to give Professional Development to lecturers across three campuses: WA Maritime Training Centre; Geraldton TAFE and Broome (Kimberley Regional College of TAFE). The Challenger TAFE has just purchased a new piece of equipment that simulates navigation and boating challenges, from small craft to ocean liners and cargo ships. Staff will learn skills to collaborate and communicate in an online environment to develop new resources for sharing. Staff not previously involved in LearnScope projects will be involved from Maritime.



A Fishy Business

(Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework)

Before the Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework at the WA Maritime Training Centre (Product 3)

After the development of the appropriate resources and having the appropriate training, the online delivery of aquaculture training began via the Internet in 2002.

Currently, the training needs of the Aquaculture industry in country Western Australia are being approached on an *ad hoc* basis with regards to offering flexible learning options to clients.

For the lecturer running the flexible delivery program, the approach to subject selection has been random and without direction. There was no critical assessment of market size, location or specifications. Additionally there was no structure in place to assess the outcomes of the training delivered by this mode (i.e. client satisfaction with the product or the retainment of the enrolled clients within the program).

What is the Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework?

The Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework is designed to facilitate the effective development and delivery of sustainable flexible delivery solutions. The Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework will assist your organisation in planning for implementation of any change-management associated with the implementation of flexible learning.

Implementation of flexible learning involves a significant change environment. Existing organisational processes may not adequately support the achievement of outcomes associated with a new change environment. Therefore, a new business approach is needed to review existing practices. The Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework encourages a logical approach to this and provides a key to questions that need to be answered when planning for flexible learning delivery outcomes.

After Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework Implementation at the WA Maritime Training Centre

The Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework has enabled Maritime to more accurately identify the target market for flexible delivery of Aquaculture training.

Traditionally, marketing of this mode of training was done twice yearly as an insert into the West Australian Newspaper when all TAFE courses were advertised. The uptake of flexible training has not been met with the uptake that was initially expected. By working through the Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework, a more specific client base has been identified and plans are now being put in place to market more directly to this market demographic. For instance, through following the structure of this product, we identified the primary market for



flexible delivery of Aquaculture training in Western Australia as that of the rural agricultural sector.

This primary market for Aquaculture training has also been identified by the Western Australian ITAB*, WA Fisheries Department, WA Maritime Training Centre (Aquaculture Development Unit) and Aquaculture Council of Western Australia as that of farmers in the Wheatbelt and Great Southern Region of Western Australia. Many of these farmers have saline land and water bodies, and are looking at farm diversification to spread risk and also utilise land that at present cannot be utilised effectively.

There is also a growing demand for the delivery of vocational programs in the secondary school sector and the online learning environment will enable the WA Maritime Centre to develop vocational programs that better meet the needs of the secondary school environment.

Flexible delivery is of potential value to both of these markets. With regard to the rural sector, farming is a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week job. Flexible delivery is an expedient form of training, whereby the farmer can meet the daily demands of business on site and complete the training as time allows. One-day workshops to assess competencies will ensure that the farmer is not away from the farm for prolonged periods.

Currently a limited flexible delivery solution is available to both the Agricultural/Rural sector and VET markets. The WA Maritime Training Centre is currently providing solutions to these sectors.

It is difficult to gauge this particular market's level of satisfaction with these solutions. The uptake of flexible delivery in Western Australia to date has been from clients who are working full-time in the Perth metro area, or working in regional areas of Western Australia (not associated with agriculture or rural communities). This is due to poor marketing strategies not targeting primary audiences. Feedback from current clients, however, is extremely positive with regard to the mode and format of delivery. The clients enjoy the flexibility of the online delivery as well as the content materials. The delivery of content in this way has opened a new market and expanded the client base for the WA Maritime Training Centre.

The Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework has assisted in identifying gaps in the College's ability to support online training. While a student support/induction pack is mailed out at enrolment,

it was decided that the "Welcome Packs" needed to be enhanced to ease some students into the world of online learning. The writing of the "Welcome Packs" is being customised by course, instead of using a generic one. This means that there is one less job to do in preparation for new students by the lecturer. The time spent in developing these is well spent. These documents help students move around the Toolboxes, inform them about assessment, provide contact information for different problems and so on. As stated, the time spent on the initial development of these "Welcome Packs" is pivotal to a seamless introduction to the online course for the learner.



Fish and Tips

(Effective use of AFL products)

- Be prepared to put in time and effort initially. It's worth it in the end!
- The more organised you are before commencing online delivery the better e.g. "Welcome Packs", support materials, workshop content, booklists etc.
- The Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework needs TIME to be able to use it effectively and to its full potential. I would recommend several months (at least four – six). The time allocated for the RTO Case Study could have been spend entirely on using the Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework product.
- The Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework is a fluid product. It will regularly need reviewing to ensure that it is being an effective tool for the organisation. The needs of the organisation and the clients are not static i.e. are always changing and evolving. Emphasis will need to be placed in different areas of flexible delivery for both the organisation and the client and therefore it is important to revisit and re-strategise as necessary.
- Allow time in customising your Toolbox. While they can be customised, it is not always a quick procedure. Toolbox customisation has 3 levels. Work at a level in which you are most comfortable.
- Basic HTML skills are useful when customising Toolboxes at higher levels if you are comfortable with this. Some people enjoy it, so if it pushes your buttons, do it!
- Remember, Toolboxes are only another learning resource to achieve the knowledge required for specific competencies.
- Get involved with LearnScope! Apply for funding and watch what these professional development opportunities do for your organisation and ultimately your learners. It is a learning revolution. For more information, visit: <http://www.learnscope.anta.gov.au>
- If we had to implement online learning from the beginning again, we would start with the Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework first. It came third this time. Fish before the tank, so to speak! Planning out implementation in a more strategic fashion may have meant a greater initial uptake of learners with a more specific marketing campaign.
- You are not alone! If you struggle with these products or have questions, there are a myriad of people out there that can help! Ask your campus Technology person/mentor or similar person who has the skills you can tap into until you learn it yourself. You can always contact the AFL Framework. They will point you towards the right person as well!



REMEMBER!!

You are the most important thing about flexible training!

The unique skills and experience of the lecturer are always needed to complete the learning experience of the online student. We will always be needed because those things that make us great in the classroom also make us great online.

Catching the imagination of your students makes for a great learning environment. Using these products well will achieve this and you can be satisfied with engaging the interest of the next generation of eLearners.



Conclusion

Participation in the RTO Case Study has allowed a critical self-analysis of flexible delivery at Challenger TAFE and the WA Maritime Training Centre.

We implemented online training in Aquaculture in 2002 at the WA Maritime Training Centre and tools used in the Case Study have allowed us to do this. The Learnscope project gave lecturers the skills to deliver online training, the Series III Aquaculture toolbox has provided online resources that are being used to train students and the Flexible Delivery Business Planning Framework has allowed us to analyse the methods and procedures used to implement this mode of training.

This particular AFL Framework product has helped the WA Maritime Training to identify the need for more specific marketing of these training methodologies and products to a more precise market audience. The updating of “Welcome Packs” has been carried out along with customisation of the Aquaculture Toolboxes currently in use.

The WA Maritime Training Centre has revolutionised its way of training, with learning being carried out with a greater approach to flexibility. The greatest flow-on effect at the WA Maritime Training Centre has been Management encouraging staff from other training sectors to become involved in these new and innovative learning technologies with new Learnscope projects being sought.

Hopefully other RTOs considering implementing online delivery of training and education may now understand some of the issues that need to be addressed during the implementation process. There have been a number of positive outcomes in implementing these AFL Framework products for Challenger TAFE and the WA Maritime Training Centre, and we look forward to using other products. The three products that we have used at Maritime have helped us get started on the road to delivering online Aquaculture training and a brighter and more flexible training future.



Glossary of Terms

Program Manager – Responsible for creating rolls, allocating staff and budgets for a designated industry sector within the College.

Director – Head of a College campus.

Principal Lecturer – The senior most of the lecturing staff. The role is to provide academic leadership and liase with industry client groups re training needs.

WestOne – State support agency for TAFE; develops online and paper-based materials, along with producing TAFE TV.

Maritime – WA Maritime Training Centre.

Challenger – Challenger TAFE.

ITAB – Industry Training Advisory Board.

ISP – Internet Service Provider.

Blended Delivery – Delivering training with a combination of online technologies, traditional face-to-face methods and practical skills.

