

**Session 7**  
**Adult Audiences – How to Entertain and Inform, at the Same Time!**  
**Daryl Evans, Parliament of Victoria**

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**Figure 1: An artist's impression of Parliament House**

*You are looking at a photo of Victoria's Parliament House – or are you?  
Is something missing in Spring Street today (and not just the Mace)?*

*How observant are (adult) students?*

*Would they see a difference?*

*Does it matter?*

*The basic reference for this presentation is:*

<http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/education/learning-a-teaching-resources/adult-education>

**SUMMARY**

- **Compliance**
  - Satisfy the requirements of your curriculum context as well as your own institution
  - But make certain that 'compliance' is retained even when feedback from users leads to recommended changes
- **Diversity**
  - Use visuals to help accessibility by adult audiences
  - But ensure that your programs lead to student engagement with 'issues' (as well as 'information') through those visuals
  - Develop multiple-level programs for use within the one student group
- **Flexibility**
  - Look for informal teaching opportunities for adult learning (and, sometimes, with adults and their children)
  - Carefully craft your working relationships with kindred organisations for mutual benefit



## INTRODUCTION

First: I would like to acknowledge those staff members in parliamentary education in Victoria who have promoted programs for adult literacy and ESL students. They have argued that adult education about parliamentary government DOES matter! However, where did this idea come from?

- Like you, I have sat in church halls to ‘meet the candidates’. Often, people ask questions that clearly do not apply to the forthcoming election nor to these candidates.
  - ***Is this mistake about ‘levels of government’ embarrassing in an age of measuring educational standards? Is it cause for concern when, for example, some election results are so close?***
- No doubt you have often heard adults (including teachers) say that they have never visited their Parliament House... and yet they know that they should go.
  - ***Should we encourage them to go – and, if so, how?***
- Do we re-allocate resources for more programs for adult voters (including recent immigrants)? Resources such as:
  - More programs for adult education classrooms
  - Online programs for parents and children during homework time
  - Encouragement to the tourism industry to increase their promotion of Parliament House tours
- Please note: this is a brief overview and so I have not included discussion about obvious issues e.g. *How to design programs accessible to adults who lack skills in reading, or who lack experience in use of technology*. Instead, I provide a few examples of what we tried to do, or might attempt in 2014 – 15.

### Implementing ideas from our recent planning meeting:

#### Strategy One: to refresh the use of existing resources (example 1)


- **An example from *Materials for Adult ESL Students***
  - **Aim:** refresh an original exercise by integrating additional activities:
    - “Students find their local MPs by using website + the popular posters”
    - “Students re-write even more texts in style appropriate to audience”
  - **But**
    - Does the program remain compliant with official curriculum?
    - Does tension emerge between ‘teaching about language’ and ‘teaching about parliament’?

**CERTIFICATE III**

## Task 7 Intermediate Writing and Speaking


**Supports:**

ESL Framework 2009 Certificate III in ESL (Access)	VPAU504 Read and write a range of straightforward informational, instructional and other texts
	L1 Write a formal letter / email
CSWE III 2008	P1 Prepare to write a discussion
	P2 Write a discussion

 Letters 1 and 2 could be examined as a class using an OHT to save paper. Letter 4 can be creatively approached by cutting out the content and physically placing it in the boxes provided.

**Groups or individuals produce a letter/email on their issue to their MP.**

Look at **Letter 1** below. **Discuss** with your partner whether you think it's a good letter. Why/ why not?

 **Letter One**

From : Joanne Choo  
To : Sharmian Singh, local member

Hi sharman

*I just want to say it's not fair, there should be a bike lane near my place so I can ride to the city where I work. I've been working at a big sports store there for three years now and lots of people like riding. Riding rocks - it's healthy and it's cheap. And I've just got a new 21 gear bike, too. Anyway, you guys, should build a bike path, along the railway from, Bigtown station, that goes right into the city, it can join up at Swanston street. If you don't I'm not going to vote for you again. Other areas have got good bike paths, why not us? My mates at the community centre reckon you should come down and talk to us about it anyway. What do you reckon? Can you give me a ring so we can make a time to chat?*

Love, Jo

**58** Parliament of Victoria Adult ESL Program

Figure 2: A page from the PoV *Adult ESL Teaching Materials for Adult Learners* workbook

### Implementing ideas from our recent planning meeting: Strategy One: to refresh the use of existing resources (example 2)

- **An example from the *Adult Literacy and Numeracy* program**
  - **Aim:** refresh the program by improving the use of large-scale displays:
    - Diversify the standard use of explanatory display (figure 3, page 7)
    - Use images, words and activities to encourage group debate at the display
      - For example, through use of provocative captions etc for political cartoons (figure 4, page 8)
      - For example, through use of images that require students to help each other to 'solve the puzzle' AND to find a link to the political issue that follows (figure 5, page 8)
  - **But**
    - Are these attempts to stimulate debate thwarted by student expectation that they only want 'simple messages' linked to 'immediate, practical usefulness'?
    - Does this approach depend on a level of general knowledge and interest not shared by all students?




AUSTRALIA'S THREE LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT			
<b>Level</b>	Commonwealth or Federal	State	Local: Town, Borough, Shire, City
<b>Crown Representative</b>	Governor-General	Governor	–
<b>Law</b>	Commonwealth/ Federal	State	By-laws
<b>Leader</b>	Prime Minister	Premier	Mayor
<b>Revenue</b>	Taxes	Taxes, Federal grants	Rates, State and Federal grants
<b>Health</b>	Funding, Medicare, Drug control	Public hospitals, Nursing services	Meals-on-Wheels, Garbage collection
<b>Education</b>	Funding, Post-secondary	Funding, Primary and secondary education	Childcare
<b>Transport</b>	Highways, Railways, Airports, Air safety	Some railways and buses, Roads	Footpaths, Street signs
<b>Other</b>	Foreign affairs, Immigration, Pensions, Post, Arts	Police, Fire brigade, Environment	Libraries, Pets

Figure 3: A traditional chart to show the three levels of government

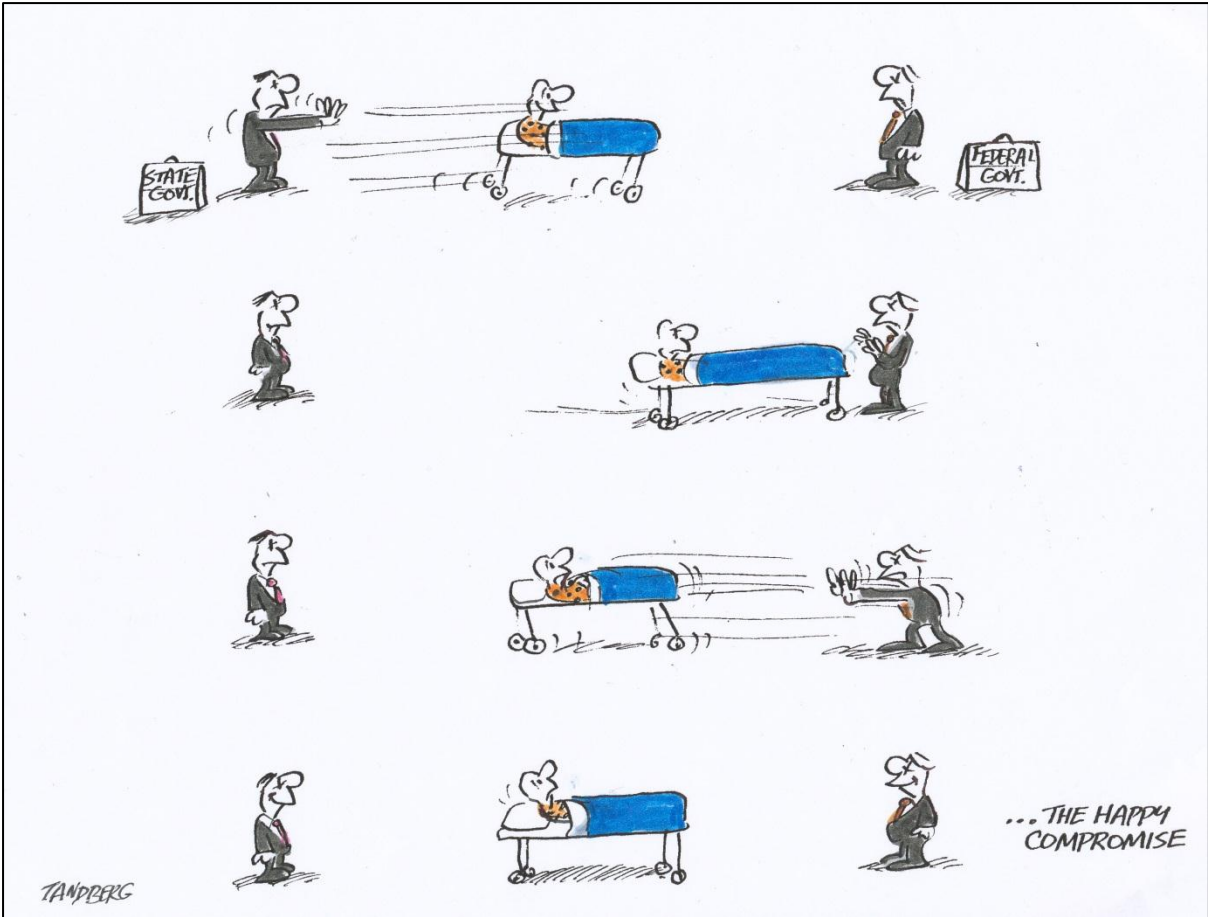


Figure 4: How can a display lead to student appreciation that their lives are affected by this multiplicity?

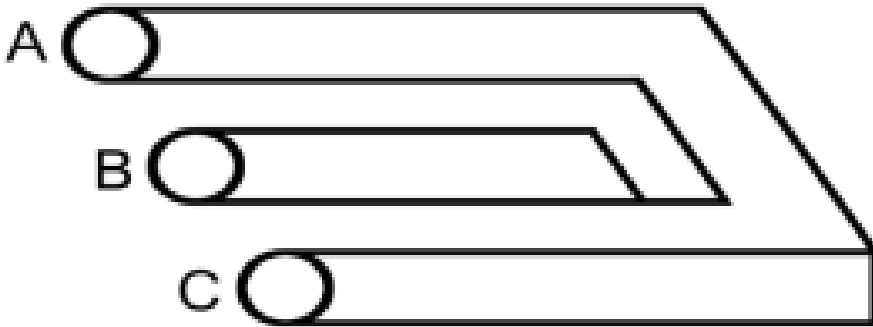


Figure 5: Two prongs or three ... how many levels of government should we have?

**Implementing ideas from our recent planning meeting:  
Strategy Two: to develop 'innovative ideas' – one example**

- Link with other organisations, e.g. the Museum, State Library of Victoria, the Big Issue etc, to develop programs based on excursions to the Melbourne CBD
- These are early days in the development of these ideas
- Develop a maths trail linked to this program
  - There are numeracy programs in various courses offered to adults e.g. in the *Certificates in General Education for Adults*
  - For example: a story about the Parthenon and other places in the city which saw the 'birth of (a degree of) democracy' → columns at the entrance of Parliament House and other buildings on this trail → the mathematics of areas of a circle or an ellipse, the volume of a cylinder if you were to horizontally 'slice' one of those columns → a follow-up story about the base isolators in New Zealand's Parliament House in Wellington → and so on
- Develop a science trail-'n-trial program also linked to the CBD excursions
  - There are limited science programs in adult education courses
  - For example: a story about the cholera epidemic in Marvellous Smellbourne during the 1890s and the introduction of underground sewer systems → a priority service for the Governor at the Old Treasury Building and to the adjoining Parliament House → a story about the 'biology' (and politics) of Dr John Snow's campaign to fix the 1852 cholera epidemic in London → classroom 'growing of a culture'

**Implementing ideas from our recent planning meeting:  
Strategy Three: to strengthen our networking, both internal and external**

- Internal networking
  - One example
  - Strengthen the working relationship with the Parliamentary Library and Hansard staff in developing a display-based program for 2014 which celebrates 150 years of Hansard's contribution to accurate and accessible recording of *who said what*. This would be marketed to adult education as well as to school students
  - For example, ask questions about the speed throughout history of communication vis-a-vis reliability
  - Then apply this expectation to the accurate reporting of parliamentary affairs in the public media – and to its relevance sometimes in more personal communication!
- External networking
  - One example
  - Develop a small program suitable for usage by providers of distance education for adults

## Homework

- During a coffee break, write the caption for a small display based on the political cartoon below.
  - What follow-up activity would you instigate at the display?
  - Is there a risk that the cartoon merely reinforces cynicis



Figure 6: Would you use encourage teachers in adult education to use political cartoons like this one?

If so, what advice about its usage might you provide?

## References:

Two examples of recent reading/listening which have influenced the adult education program:

Funnell A et al (2013) *Has democracy reached a tipping point?* Future Tense, ABC Radio National, 18 August 2013

Hughes A.S, Print M, & Sears A (2010) *Curriculum capacity and citizenship education: a comparative analysis of four democracies* in *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 40:3, 293-309, DOI

## Acknowledgements

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