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INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN FOR ADULT LEARNERS
IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

by

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A Field Study Report submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education
in the Canberra College of Advanced Education

JANUARY 1982

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Field Study was undertaken as a component of the Master of Education degree in the School of Education at Canberra College of Advanced Education. It was supervised by Dr L.R. Kendall.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Kendall for his abundant patience, his critical evaluations and his rigour.

To my colleagues in the TAFE Colleges of the ACT and at CCAE I owe thanks for the opportunities afforded me to 'bounce' ideas, to reconsider and test strategies, to implement what must have seemed, at times, to be 'hairbrained' ideas and concepts.

Finally, to Camille, Tova and Nathan, thank you just for being.

C.H. DUCKER
January, 1982

ABSTRACT

Growing concern for an improvement in the formal learning situations experienced by adults is reflected in much of the literature currently available. Evidence from studies of adult learning suggests that (i) adults are generally well able to accept a significant degree of responsibility for the management of their own learning, and (ii) that an adult's learning is enhanced if the learning situations are matched to the preferences and strengths of the learner.

In this study a design for adult instruction, which takes these factors into account, is developed. The Educational Cognitive Styles of 47 adult learners are mapped using a self-report inventory. The profiles thus obtained are used in the development of instructional techniques for the learners who are enrolled in a first-year, TAFE, para-professional course. Comparison of this experimental group with a control group indicates that the attrition rate is reduced, learners have more positive feelings toward their course of study, and performance on a content achievement test is, arguably, improved.

This is the report of a project undertaken as the field study component of the Master of Education degree at Canberra College of Advanced Education. The Field Study is taken at the completion of the coursework component and is intended to take a period of some 12 to 18 months of part-time study. It is intended that the Field Study be practical in nature and provide implications for educational practice.

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