



EXTENSIONNET

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALASIA PACIFIC
EXTENSION NETWORK (INC)

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THE LAND WEEPS; BUT THE RIVERS FLOW NOT! AND NATURE CRIES IN THE CHAOS

Australian rivers are timeless:

In constant relationship with the land,
The land conditioning the river
And the river shaping the land.
The rains fall and the rivers flow;
Carrying the life-blood of the country:
The land dries as the rains go,
But rivers remain as refuges,
Before they, too, dry as drought extends.

Our rivers were wild in the past:

Free to flow and sustain,
To couple with their floodplains and generate new life;
Spawning billabongs to provide sustenance in
mosaics of time and space,
Partnering river red gums as husband does wife-
Dynamic systems of give-and-take
enabling survival in uncertainty.

Rivers are vital resources for Australians.

Aboriginal Australians bond to landscapes
in reverential relationships.
Sacred sites confirm and consolidate the lore of nations.
Rivers and wetlands yield food for their hungry-
Cumbungi, nardoo, waterfowl, fish, and turtle.
But periodic pulses of plenty only punctuate
a general aridity,
And life survives on bare essentials.

Recent settlers, arrogant in their dominance,
Sought to tame rivers with technology:
Harnessing them for production,
Confining them with levees,
Regulating them with dams and weirs,
Distributing them through pipes and canals,
Using them for sport and as repositories for waste.

*But the rivers know their power,
The wise are aware of their real place,
The spiritually sensitive know their relationship
to people and the environment,
.....and the nation senses its vulnerability.*

And so! What of the future?.. . .

Can the rivers be typically Australian again?
Likeable larrikins, stamping character on the land,
Courageously opportunistic, richly variable,
but dangerously unpredictable!
Or must they now be strangers in their own land?
Collared, tied and suited by technology
To release water in reliably metered amounts,
Working for wealth, while striving to be free!

Or can we have the best of both
And escape the worst of each?
Can we have reliable rivers
that are opportunistically variable?
Can we have rivers of life
that supply wealth to the nation?.. .

CAN WE?

CAN WE?

CAN WE?

David S. Mitchell, Albury, August 1998

*Poem published with permission of the author.
It was written for the author's presentation on The
Environment at the Paul McGowan Water Colloquium,
Albury, 25th September 1998. The Colloquium allowed
an opportunity for non political discussion of the issue of
water in Australia and an acknowledgement of the
contribution Paul McGowan (now 75) has made to
Agriculture. A Proceedings is being produced.*

Notice to APEN members: National Forum & 1998 AGM "Partnerships in Extension – extending the boundaries." 2 & 3 December, University of Adelaide, Roseworthy, SA. (page 2)

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APEN is pleased to acknowledge the support of:



Natural Resources and Environment

- AGRICULTURE
- RESOURCES
- CONSERVATION
- LAND MANAGEMENT



LAND & WATER CONSERVATION



From the Chair



John Bourne

At the end of October a meeting to begin a Borders Chapter of APEN was held at Hamilton in Western Victoria. Lee-anne Mintern from Hamilton and Debbie Cesari from Mt Gambier in South Australia did a great job in organising and running the meeting. The evening was advertised as a night of laughter and learning, and we certainly had lots of both. I had the pleasure of going along and saying a few introductory things and was particularly impressed by the wide variety of people who attended, something that we need to continually strive for in APEN. (Report, page 11).

APEN is receiving more and more recognition from many different quarters. Recently we received a request from the Murray Darling Basin Commission to provide extension input through a representative on a steering committee for a new project on dryland salinity. This is a role that we can play very effectively and I would urge all of us to look for other opportunities of this nature. Tony Dawson, APEN member from the Department of Land and Water Conservation in NSW, will be representing us on this steering committee and will be reporting back to us on a regular basis.

Elwin Turnbull our regular *ExtensionNet* editor is currently working in Nepal for a short time, and yet has still found time to organise articles for this edition by e-mail. Many thanks Elwin !

The articles in this Extension Net represent nothing less than cutting edge research and experience in a number of aspects of extension. It is interesting to note that several of the articles cover work funded by Research and Development Corporations. These Corporations clearly see the need for the development of soundly researched extension methodologies to achieve the impact of their overall programs, and are prepared to pay appropriately for them. ★

APEN National Forum & 1998 AGM “Partnerships in Extension – extending the boundaries.” 2 & 3 December, University of Adelaide, Roseworthy, SA. Contact Rosemary at the APEN Secretariat up till Monday 30th November if you find you are able to come!

1998 AGM AGENDA

- Present: Apologies:
- Reports: President – John Bourne
Treasurer – Bob Edgar
- Elections to the APEN Committee of Management: (Two year term)
President
Secretary
Committee Members (4)

General Business: nil
NOMINATIONS AND/OR NOTICE OF GENERAL BUSINESS MUST BE WITH ROSEMARY AT THE SECRETARIAT BY 27TH NOVEMBER

Farmer Centered Development - Addressing Fundamental Values

Sally Murray NRE Bendigo

'How do you define sustainability?' My experiences demonstrate that one's definition of sustainability is dependent upon what is really important to that person. What is really important to someone can change with circumstance, thus, the definition of sustainability is contextual, or depended upon the context in which it is asked. For example, someone without food, shelter and clothing will have a very different meaning of sustainability to someone who has their survival needs satisfied. Thus, perspective will influence the meaning of sustainability.

What is important to someone is linked to what 'values' they hold. Espoused values are those values that you think are important to you, whereas values in action are those values which determine your behaviour (Senge, 1997). Values in action aren't easily seen, as they are fundamental. When

values in action (fundamental values) and espoused values miss-match, there is internal conflict or dissonance. Someone saying one thing and doing another is a classic example of a miss-match with espoused and fundamental values. Procrastinating over a decision is another.

Changing behaviour is about surfacing and questioning fundamental values. As extension officers, we are often set the task of changing the behaviour of farmers. However, the skills required enabling farmers to surface and question fundamental values are very different to the skills required to provide knowledge.

The skills required for the exploration of values include communication, adult learning, the capacity to suspend assumptions and promote thinking, empathy with many perspectives etc. These are more commonly known as

facilitation skills. If the objective is to change behaviour, then there will also be a need to be skills that enable evaluation of the behavioural change.

Farmers operate in an ever changing and increasingly complex set of circumstances. Thus, it is imperative that technology be made available in such a manner that it not only enhances their ability to cope with the dynamic environment in which they operate, but it provides for the development of the person, so that person is better able to develop their own agriculture (Korten & Claus, 1984).

When farmers are made the focal point of processes, they regain the control of their own destiny, incorporating technology and the natural resource with satisfaction of needs and values. The use of values and subjectivity as well as analytical thinking is critical to balanced decision making (Refer Figure 1) and is more likely to result in

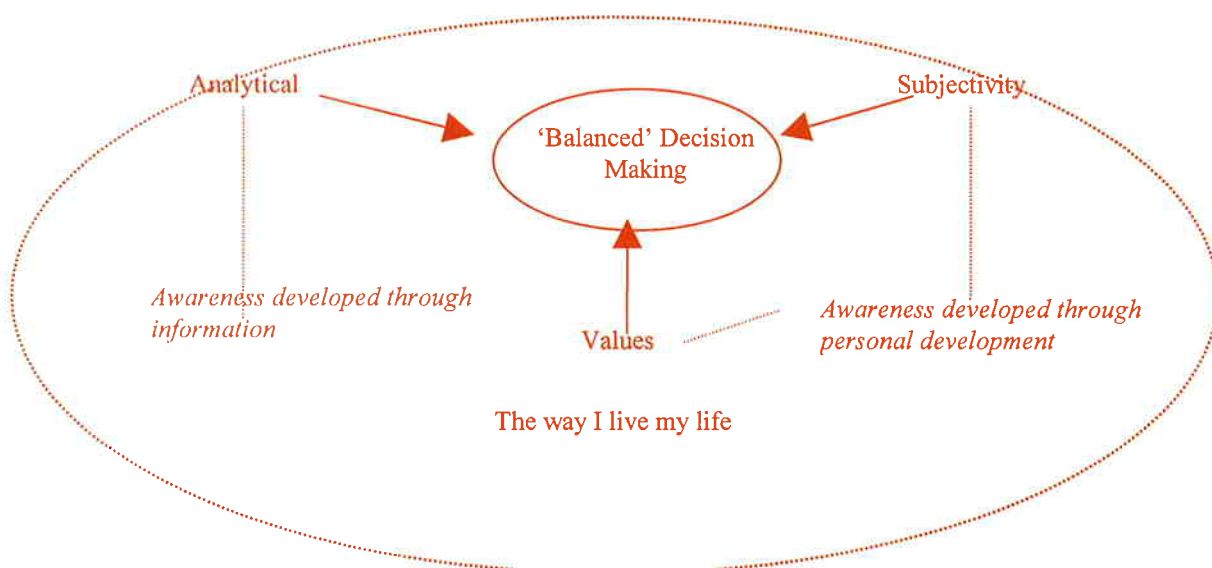


Fig. 1 The Decision making model (adapted from Korten and Klaus, 1984).

agriculture that accommodates the economic, ecological and cultural requirements of society which is necessary for long term sustainability (Rivera, 1991).

An extension officer who has the capacity to facilitate the development of the farmer, providing for the exploration of fundamental values, will enable farmers to determine what is important to them. An adult learning model, where the over riding goal is to facilitate the learning of the farmer (McKenzie, 1990) is a model that provides for the farmer being the focal point. There is fairly common acceptance that farmers should be treated as learners, as farmers will not

change unless they see it in their interest to do so (McKenzie, 1990). Each farmer's needs are different, which means that we should not assume that what we know will motivate them.

Adult learning principles promote self directed learning which inherently relates to needs and values. Thus, the farmer determines what is fundamentally important, then seeks information and technology to satisfy those needs. Extension officers have an important role to play in supporting and facilitating this process of self-directed learning (Evans & Dahl, 1984 in van den Ban & Hawkins, 1996).

A model for adult learning requires the simultaneous learning of all parties as they work together to solve problems. Problem solving will need to use a variety of ways of thinking including analytical thinking, subjectivity and value exploration (Miller, 1985). Thus,

the focus is on **learning about 'the way I live my life through these changing times'** (Bawden & Macadam, 1991).

References

Sally has a list of references should you want to follow them up.



Facilitating in Cyberspace

Viv McWaters, Integra Pty Ltd, Melbourne

Predictions are made about the future every day: the weather bureau predicts the temperature, organisations meet to predict their future and call it strategic planning, scientists predict the outcomes of their research, workers everywhere predict who might win the footy and of course, politicians, predict just about everything.

Yet one prediction which sticks in my mind is from many years ago when a social commentator said that 'jobs will be different - so different in fact, that many of them haven't even been invented yet!' It's impossible (for most of us) to imagine something that doesn't exist. Yet how quickly we adapt.

I remember writing an article for a staff newsletter about the introduction of a facsimile machine. We even had a photographer on hand to take a photo of the first user of the machine! Yet just a few years later (it wasn't that long ago!) even the fax is seen as old hat.

Take the computer I'm typing on as an example. Most of you reading this will have experienced the extraordinary introduction of personal computers. Imagine life without computers now! And it's not only computers but also the way we work. My office overlooks my backyard and for most of the day I work alone, yet I am even more connected to the outside world than ever before. The work I do is different too - when I used to respond to that universal question with the answer 'journalist' there was usually mild interest and absolutely no doubt about what I did. Now when I say 'facilitator' there's often no interest and lots of doubt! This is not surprising. A decade ago I had never heard of a facilitator either.

Facilitation as a process has been going on for decades, yet it is only now being recognised as a profession. Facilitation helps people to be conscious of their thinking; their decision-making; their beliefs and assumptions; their choices; and their learning. Facilitation processes enable problem solving, planning and team development. And



for me, it's fun. I enjoy helping people struggle with new ideas and resolve problems, learn about themselves and others, and feel excited and motivated about the difference they can make.

It was only natural then that my newfound interest in facilitating would make its way into cyberspace. There was, of course, a catalyst in the form of an essay on inquiry for my course-work Masters at the University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury. Suffice