

**Reviewed by  
Tim Riessen**

Tim Riessen has lectured in Multimedia Central TAFE Perth for 20 years. A previous background as a high school science teacher makes books on science and the environment of keen interest.

**A Thirsty Country**  
Author: Asa Wahlquist

Publisher: Allen and Unwin  
Published: 2008

ASA WAHLQUIST is a rural journalist with over 20 years experience, thus bringing first-hand knowledge of the issues. The book has clearly been written by someone who has done the necessary background research and understands the current implications of water usage in rural and suburban communities.

Climate change initially dominates discussion, with official historical rainfall and runoff statistics providing a foundation for the book. However, there is the caveat that climate change may render these figures useless if the future patterns no longer follow previous norms.

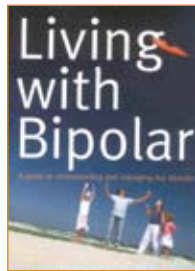
Much of the book outlines the background history leading to the current situation, decisions built on European understandings and large scale water storage solutions which have proven not directly applicable to Australia. It notes the variety of agencies and government levels involved in decision making, and how this has resulted in a failure of consensus concerning the whole system. It demonstrates how decision makers often seek outcomes based on populist short term political gain.

Wahlquist does not overly criticise these factors, but with journalistic evenness reports what has happened and how it has led to the current environment in which in recent times, for example, Sydney nearly ran out of water.

From my perspective a number of references to Perth make the thrust of the book relevant. Wahlquist makes reference to good and bad situations in all states, thus giving any Australian reading a local perspective.

From an historical background of false assumptions and in some cases mismanagement, the book looks at solutions, both from the grass root level of individual innovation to that of wider policy directions aimed at securing more noble outcomes. It discusses a range of approaches in use across the country.

*A Thirsty Country* is well worth a read to gain a better understanding of water use. ❖



**Reviewed by  
Liz Henigan**

Liz is Head Teacher of Community Services at Illawarra Institute Nowra and Ulladulla Campuses on the south coast of NSW

**Living with Bipolar**

A guide to understanding and managing the disorder  
Authors: Lesley Berk, Michael Bok, David Castle and Sue Lauder

Publisher: Allen and Unwin  
Published: 2008

THROUGHOUT the VET sector teachers talk, sometimes disparagingly, about the increasing number of learners with mental health problems. Our teaching is enriched if we have an understanding of common mental health problems and their impact on learning.

While directed at the one person per hundred diagnosed with bipolar in Australia and their families and friends, this book can also inform teachers.

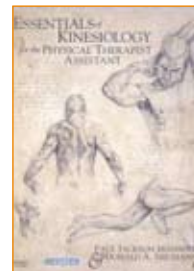
Bipolar is not a character flaw. The book also reminds us that bipolar is often associated with creativity, citing van Gogh, Schumann and Wolf. In other words bipolar does not equate with poor learning!

Bipolar is characterised by episodic mood swings, from which comes the old term *manic depression*. For some the depression dominates, for others the opposite is true. These changes make it difficult for those around, including teachers. A student who initially may be "firing on all cylinders", may later be struggling to get out of bed, much less demonstrate the skills they possess in a structured assessment.

The episodic nature of bipolar may lead to breaks in a learner's vocational education. This needs to be accepted, and the student supported. The writers stress that participating in life is an important part of recovery and maintenance. Vocational education may play an important part in this participation.

Teachers are not counsellors and should not be tempted to step outside their role. However, there are some suggestions in the book that we could utilise in our work with learners, particularly in terms of goal setting and suicide prevention.

Overall, this book is well written and accessible, well organised and practical, using a combination of clinical knowledge and the voices of those with bipolar. A good resource for teachers who want to know a little about bipolar and its impact on their students. ❖



**Reviewed by  
Cecilia Blackwell**

Cecilia Blackwell is a mental health teacher, currently researching psychosocial approaches to working with those with mental health problems.

**Essentials of Kinesiology for the Physical Therapist Assistant**

Authors: Paul Jackson Mansfield & Donald A. Neumann

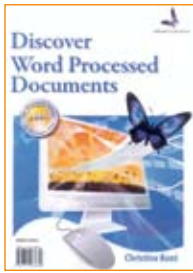
Publisher: Elsevier Australia  
Published: February 2008

THIS interesting and beautifully illustrated book is aimed at an audience that doesn't yet have an autonomous existence in Australia – the physical therapist assistant. Given the ever expanding role of aged care assistants, however, this text could clearly be of use in providing an effective guide to supporting the mobility and physical functioning of a wide range of clients.

It explains both the skeletal and the muscular systems of the body in easily understood language, providing an extensive glossary of the essential medical terms. It delineates the role of these systems in maintaining a full range of movements and mobility, and does so in ways that are more practical than any previous references that I have seen. For the first time, the complex role of support workers in both aged care and disability work is finally acknowledged.

This basic information is followed by detailed descriptions of the disorders that can arise as a result of genetics, disease processes or injury. Each section is accompanied by simply explained and easily understood diagrams and exercises that can correct these difficulties. It identifies those more complex cases that need surgical interventions as well as offering a range of easily followed activities suited to many settings. In particular the sections on back awareness, including lifting (pages 222-223) and that dealing with pressure sores and their prevention (page 233) would be of great benefit.

This book should prove to be a useful guide for people employed in aged care or disability work wanting to improve the quality of life of those affected by these problems by promoting improved physical skills and mobility. ❖



**Reviewed by Anne Walsh**

Anne Walsh is part of the Organisational Improvement team in North Coast Institute (TAFE NSW). She has nearly two decades of experience delivering and assessing in the vocational and tertiary sectors across a range of qualifications including

Electrical Trades, Business Studies, Communication and initial teacher education.

**Discover Word Processed Documents**

**Author: Christine Kent**

Publisher: Software Publications  
Published: 2008

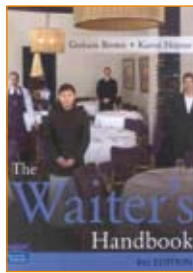
THIS book is one of an extensive series by Software Publications based on units from the Business Services Training Package. It addresses the unit BSBITU201A, which teaches how to produce simple word processed documents using Word 2007. Every section and activity is carefully mapped to the elements in the unit of competence making it easy for both teacher and student to monitor progress.

The explanations and activities in this book are very logically structured based on the assumption that the learner is brand new to word processing. This is a great advantage for beginners and also those with limited experience. All the detail is there for them to draw from with very clear instructions for practising the learning. The author has been conscientious about referring the student to the work practices of the organisation they are using as the context of their learning. This may be their employer, a community organisation or virtual organisation such as a simulated office.

Although this is visually a very busy book, the instructional design is such that the reader does not have a feeling of being overwhelmed by the content. The explanations are supported by screen dumps and referral to a range of freely available online tutorials and sources of related information.

Of particular interest to me was the final section. Here I found a comprehensive set of resources to support the assessment process. Although they are presented in the form of checklists, it is not necessary for each to be ticked and signed off. Rather, the value of some is that they show how the various learning activities map to aspects of the competency, such as the range statement and employability skills. The assumption is that if a student has completed all the activities they will have addressed those aspects of the unit of competence.

I would recommend this book for self-paced and/or class-based learning. ❖



**Reviewed by James Worner**

James Worner spent most of his 20s working in restaurants, bars, clubs and cafes. He is now much happier as a customer in same.

**The Waiter's Handbook (4th Edition)**

**Authors: Graham Brown and Karon Hepner**

Publisher: Pearsons  
Published: May 2008

THERE is no doubt we live in times defined by more relaxed approaches to dining. The traditional emphasis on many of the technical and interpersonal skills and knowledge of the waiter, rightly or wrongly, has diminished.

This 4th edition of *The Waiter's Handbook* acknowledges the seismic shift in a trade that used to offer an industry apprenticeship, but now skills its own almost entirely on the job. As such, the book is more likely to be referenced by team leaders or restaurant managers responsible for training their café, restaurant, function or room service waiters. As a classroom resource for students of Food and Beverage units of the revamped *SIT07 Hospitality Training Package*, its application is more limited.

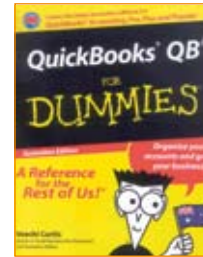
Most usefully, this edition includes a new chapter on the making and service of espresso coffee and is updated to include new smoking laws.

We need to remember most waiting skills such as beverage, plate and other food services are best learned by observation, reflection, practice and feedback. While this edition contains some supporting photographs and images, it has missed an opportunity to accompany the text with multimedia demonstrations of best practice performance.

Each chapter opens with a list of learning outcomes and concludes with a set of questions.

Surprisingly, almost a full third of this book is occupied by the glossary. Again, both teachers and AQF3 learners would have benefited from additional graphic or multimedia explanations.

Quality service standards are measured in different ways in different restaurants. Café and restaurant lovers among us can only hope books of this quality find their way to the squadrons of university students and backpackers who tend our bars, cater our events, run our plates and wait our tables. ❖



**Reviewed by Anne Walsh**

Anne Walsh is part of the Organisational Improvement team in North Coast Institute (TAFE NSW). She has nearly two decades of experience delivering and assessing in the vocational and tertiary sectors across a range of qualifications including

Electrical Trades, Business Studies, Communication and initial teacher education.

**Quickbooks for Dummies**

**Author: Veechi Kent**

Publisher: Wiley Publishing Australia  
Published: 2008

I THINK everyone has at least heard of, if not used, an item from, the "... for Dummies" series of books. They are brilliant for those of us who do not want the complicated explanation, just to know how to do it. Veechi Curtis has done a really good job with this book. When it comes to accounting software I really am a Dummy, but I was able to understand and follow Veechi's simple instructions. I particularly liked her humour. It made me feel like someone talking me through the various processes rather than being lectured to by a geek.

With *QuickBooks for Dummies* I received a student edition of the QuickBooks program. The CD contained software together with some notes, tutorials, exercises and sample files. These were simply text files that I had to either print or swap screens to use (software to notes and back again). After a very short period I gave up. *QuickBooks for Dummies* was much easier and more comprehensive.

Although *QuickBooks for Dummies* is low key in design, in keeping with the rest of the series, it is very professional in terms of the educational design, sequencing, layout and general usability. After I got the hang of the basics I found I could jump around in the book to any section I needed and be able to follow the instructions. In other words, you do not have to begin at the beginning and work through sequentially.

My only cautionary comment about *QuickBooks for Dummies* is that it assumes you know your business and only need help with understanding and using the software. Hence, if you are relying on this to teach accounting it would need to be used in conjunction with classroom sessions with a teacher. Its purpose is to teach you how to use QuickBooks, not how to do basic accounting for a small business. ❖