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A new name for LDA?

Members of LDA will be aware that the Association is currently considering a change of name.

One of the issues considered by the recent review of LDA was the option of seeking to expand its membership to a wider group of members, including classroom teachers, with a view to promoting effective evidence-based instruction for all students. In considering this option LDA identified the name of the organisation as a potentially limiting factor in the growth of our association. It was felt that our current name does not reflect LDA's broader aim of ensuring that all students have access to an effective instructional program that is preventative in terms of reducing the likelihood of learning difficulties that arise from poor or ineffective teaching, as for example in those cases that have been described as 'teaching casualties', in the sense that their problems result from ineffective teaching rather than any fundamental problem in their ability to learn, given appropriate instruction. It was felt that a new name that better expresses the broader aims of the association would attract more members and raise the profile of the organisation. Hence the search for a new name.

At the same time changing the name could alienate many of our current members who see themselves as committed to supporting the needs of students with learning difficulties, and feel that a change in name may bring with it a change in focus, and perhaps a rejection of their core commitment to meeting the needs of students with learning difficulties.

This poses something of a dilemma for LDA. In seeking to expand our membership to include a wider range of teachers whose role involves teaching initial skills in a regular classroom rather than providing intervention support in a small group or on a one-to-one basis, are we going to lose our core group of members? And is a change in name really going to attract a whole lot of new members to LDA?

A number of potential new names have already been suggested. These include *Australian Association for Effective Teaching*, *Australian Association for Effective Instruction*, *Learn Australia*, *The Learning League*, *Learning Science Australia*, *Learning Scientists Australia*, *Australian Association of Learning Association*, and others.

This is not the first time that LDA has gone through a name change.

It started off in Victoria in 1965 as the *Diagnostic and Remedial Teachers Association of Victoria*, but when it became a national organisation a new name was necessary, and in 1987 it became the *Australian Remedial Education Association*. However, in the 1990s, as the term 'remedial' fell into disfavour, the name was changed again to *Australian Resource Educators Association*. The name *Learning Difficulties Australia* was adopted in 2001.

So is it time for a new name for LDA? Or are we better off with our current name?

What attracts, and keeps, new members?

Is it a name? Or is it the quality and the nature of the services we provide?

This is a decision that our members will be asked to make at a Special General Meeting of the Association scheduled for Saturday 9 May in Melbourne. Further details of this meeting will be provided in due course. In the meantime members are encouraged to respond to President Lorraine Hammond's invitation for members to contribute alternative names to her by email at enquiries@ldaaustralia.org prior to the next LDA Council meeting on 14 April, or to seek further information about the proposed change of name from her or other members of LDA Council.