AVETRA 2008

11th Annual Conference

03 - 04 April 2008

Adelaide Holiday Inn, Adelaide, South Australia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The AVETRA 2008 Organising Committee would like to warmly thank the following who at the time of printing have given their support in many different ways:

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The University of South Australia is an innovative and successful institution with a distinctive profile. It is committed to educating professionals, creating and applying knowledge and engaging its communities. The School of Education offers the largest range of teacher education programs in South Australia, from Early Childhood to Adult and Vocational Education, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The School has played a key role in professionally developing VET staff since 1969, and its successful research centre in this field – the Centre for Research in Education, Equity and Work – has been operating since 1994.

AVETRA PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the members of the Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA), I would like to welcome participants to the 11th Annual Conference of the association. This is the second AVETRA conference in Adelaide and it's great to be back here again. I hope you enjoyed last evening's Welcome Reception generously provided by the University of South Australia and which gave visitors and locals an opportunity to see the new Uni SA Bradley Forum in the Hawke Building.

This year we are fortunate to have a highly regarded international keynote speaker, Thomas Deissinger, Professor of Business and Economics Education at the University of Konstanz in Germany. We are also privileged to have three notable Australia keynote speakers: Margaret Somerville, Professor of Education (Learning and Development) and Research Director of the Institute of Regional Studies at Monash University, Sue Bullen, Training consultant with QSR International, and Terri Seddon, Professor of Education and Director of the Centre for Work and Learning Studies at Monash University. I welcome all our keynote speakers and also our many presenters and thank them for their contribution towards making this conference a memorable and rewarding experience.

With the theme 'VET in Context' this conference seeks to explore the role of VET in economic, social and regional development and the wider post-compulsory education sector, and what this means for VET teaching and assessment practice. The conference provides participants an opportunity to step outside of VET and take a look at where it fits into today's society and appreciate its growing importance.

We welcome the support of our 2008 Silver sponsors-the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), the South Australian government Department of Further Education Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) and the University of South Australia, for showing their commitment to VET research and the VET sector. We would like to thank NCVER for providing support including for the AVETRA 2008 Conference Early Career Researcher Award. Special thanks also to Emerald Publishing UK for contributing to the 2008 AVETRA Conference Best Paper Award. Emerald Publishing is celebrating the 50th year of its journal *Education + Training* in 2008, and we will join in this at the first morning tea coffee break.

It is important to get together as members and a community of people interested in promoting the status, profile, impact and quality of VET research. I hope you enjoy this opportunity to network with other researchers, administrators, practitioners and policy experts and enjoy Adelaide's hospitality.

On behalf of AVETRA I welcome you to the conference.

Associate Professor Peter Kell
President – AVETRA
2006-2008

MEETING SECRETARIAT

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ORGANISING COMMITTEE

- Kaye Bowman – Convenor, Consultant
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- Steven Hodge, UniSA
- Suzy McKenna, Reframing your future, TAFE SA
- Robin Ryan, Flinders University
- Elaine Butler, UniSA
- Stephen Conway, TAFE SA

MEETING VENUE

The AVETRA 2008 Conference will be held at:

Adelaide Holiday Inn
65 Hindley Street
Adelaide SA 5000

Tel Front Desk: +61 (0)8 8231 5552

SOCIAL EVENTS

WELCOME RECEPTION
The Welcome Reception is kindly sponsored by the University of South Australia for the Conference delegates and partners
Venue: University of South Australia
Bradley Forum HE05-02,
Level 2 Hawke Building,
55 North Terrace, Adelaide
Date: Wednesday, 02 April 2008
Time: 18.30 – 20.00 hours
Cost: Included in Full Delegate Registration Fee

It is hoped all delegates and partners will be able to attend this evening.

CONFERENCE DINNER
Venue: Adelaide Holiday Inn
Room: Ballroom (Hindley 1, 2 & 3)
Date: Thursday, 03 April 2008
Time: 1900 - 2300 hours
Cost: $75.00 per person

We hope all delegates and their guests will join us on this occasion to make it a memorable evening of the event. The AVETRA and Conference Awards will be presented at the Conference Dinner.

GENERAL INFORMATION

REGISTRATION DESK
The Registration Desk will be located at the top of the staircase, in the Ballroom's pre function area (Hindley 1, 2 & 3 combined) at the Adelaide Holiday Inn.

Registration hours:

Thursday, 03 April 2008	0800 – 1715 hours
Friday, 04 April 2008	0800 – 1700 hours

NAME BADGES
All delegates will be given a name badge at registration. For security reasons, we ask that you wear your name badge at all times. This name badge is also the official entrance pass to all conference sessions, teas & lunches each day and inclusive social functions.

MESSAGES
All messages received during the Meeting will be displayed on the message board near the registration desk.

SMOKING POLICY
There will be no smoking in all conference sessions or in areas where food and beverage are served.

HOTEL ACCOUNTS
All delegates are reminded to pay their hotel account prior to departure from their hotel. Please note that the deposit you have paid on the AVETRA 2008 registration form has been credited to your room account, however, each delegate is responsible for the payment of incidentals and any further room costs.

CREDIT CARDS
Credit cards accepted at the Registration Desk are Mastercard and Visa only– please note that American Express and Diners will not be accepted.

DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY
The Conference Organising Committee reserves the right to amend any part of the program or event should it be necessary.

AVETRA and the Conference Secretariat will not accept liability for damages of any nature sustained by participants or their accompanying persons, or loss of, or damage to, their personal property as a result of the 2008 Conference or related events.

TRANSPORT

As public buses, trams and trains run close to the venue, there won't be any transport organised for the AVETRA Conference 2008.
The University of South Australia, where the Welcome Reception will be held, is a short walk from the conference venue and from the last tram stop on North Terrace.

SPEAKER PREPARATION AREA

Speakers are asked to check their audio visual material before presenting. We ask that you check-in with the audio visual technicians in Torrens Room 3 at least two hours prior to your presentation. At this time you will be able to provide the technician with a copy of your presentation.
Please also make yourself known to the Chairperson for your session.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

MARGARET SOMERVILLE – Australia

Margaret Somerville is a Professor of Education (Learning and Development) and Research Director of the Institute of Regional Studies at Monash University. She is located at the Gippsland Campus in the heart of Latrobe Valley and her brief is regional and community engagement and research. She has two current research projects funded by the Australian Research Council into how we learn about place and form community. One concerns water in the Murray-Darling Basin and the other is about how we can integrate enabling pedagogies of place across the curriculum from early childhood to school and adult and community education.

SUE BULLEN - Australia

Sue Bullen is a Training Consultant with QSR International, the company that develops NVivo software. She is responsible for developing and delivering training courses in QSR software throughout the Australasian region.

Sue has extensive experience in the field of IT training, and has been employed with QSR for eight years. Together with Fiona Wiltshier, she was responsible for establishing QSR's Training and research consultancy and has been critical to the 90% increase in training workshops in the Asia Pacific region in the past two years. Prior to her training role, Sue was QSR's Customer Services Manager. She has also previously been employed with La Trobe University in Victoria, Australia where she managed the staff IT training program.

THOMAS DEISSINGER – Germany

Thomas Deissinger studied at the University of Mannheim (Baden-Württemberg/Germany) where he completed his PhD in 1991. He was a temporary professor at the Friedrich-Alexander-University of Nürnberg (Bavaria/Germany) before becoming Professor of Business and Economics Education at the University of Konstanz (Baden-Württemberg/Germany) in 1998.

His duties outside the university system include lectures and seminars with the German Foundation of International Development (DSE), now InWEnt GmbH, in Mannheim, in the field of VET in developing countries. He specialises in vocational training policy and comparative research activities in the area of VET. His research interests also include didactic issues and the history of VET as well as school-based VET and practice firms in vocational schools. Several of his publications focus on the nature and development of the VET systems in the UK and Australia from a comparative perspective.

TERRI SEDDON - Australia

Terri Seddon is Professor of Education at Monash University and Director of the Centre for Work and Learning Studies. She has longstanding interests in social and historical analysis of education and educational change. She is currently researching the way changes in work and society, especially greater global interconnectedness and the drive to a knowledge economy and learning society, are diversifying learning spaces and educational work in and beyond formalised education and training.

She has continuing interests in adult education and VET with a particular focus on teachers' and managers' work in TAFE Institutes and the challenges of workforce development. She is also actively involved in European projects that address the way Europe is negotiating economic development and social inclusion as an outcome of the Lisbon Declaration, which aims to position Europe as the 'most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world'. She is currently completing a book with colleagues in Finland, Germany and the US called Disturbing Work: Approaching Agency that considers changes in work and working life in human services work. In 2008, she is coordinating an Erasmus-Socrates project which is developing a study program to support professional education that develops competencies and capacities in cross-cultural collaboration and global networks amongst European and Australian VET professionals and researchers. Terri was a member of the Australian Research Council College of Experts on the Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences Panel in 2005-7.

OPENING ADDRESS

The Opening Address will be given by Peter Kell, President of AVETRA.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING PROGRAM IS CORRECT AT TIME OF PRINTING AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGES

DAY 1: THURSDAY, 03 APRIL 2008

08.00 – 17.15 Registration

08.45 Welcome by Klinton Wanganeen and Opening by Peter Kell

09.30 – 10.15 **Keynote Address – Where is 'Place' in VET?**
Hindley room 1&2
Chaired by: Peter Kell
Professor Margaret Somerville, Monash University, Victoria, Australia

10.15 – 10.45 *Morning Tea – Sponsored by Emerald Publishing, celebrating 50 Years of its journal Education + Training*
Hindley Rooms' Pre-function area

10.45 – 1215 **Concurrent Sessions**

	Session 1A - Education *Chaired by: Suzy McKenna* Hindley 1	**Session 1B - Practice** *Chaired by: Kevin Heys* Hindley 2	**Session 1C - Practice** *Chaired by: Marcus D'Assumpcao* Hindley 3	**Session 1D - Social** *Chaired by: Sue Shore* Torrens 1	**Session 1E - Place** *Chaired by: Ruth Wallace* Torrens 2	**Workshop** *Chaired by: Erica Smith* West End – level 3
10.45 – 11.30	Career advice and career plans: Sources, satisfaction and realisation David Curtis, Sheldon Rothman, Kylie Hillman, Julie McMillan	Can learning outcomes be divorced from processes of learning? Or why training packages make very bad curriculum Leesa Wheelahan	Doing an Apprenticeship: What young people think Josie Misko	LLN teachers and health workers: Partnership programs in action Stephen Black	The role of e-learning in 'holistic' approaches to VET in remote Indigenous contexts Alicia Boyle, Ruth Wallace	From Research to Publication: A (new) writer's workshop
11.30 – 12.15	VET in a dual sector context: augury or anomaly? Gavin Moodie	Disorienting VET: Enhancing VET practice through transformative learning Steven Hodge	Wasted skills: The hospitality industry and its young chefs Richard McDermott	Disrupted education and educational pathways to employment for Somali young people Maree Keating, Bonnie Simons	Trust and the informal communication of training need and demand between VET providers and users Peter Rushbrook, Richard Pickersgill	Rick Holden, Erica Smith

12.15 – 13.15 *Lunch*
Oli's function room, Ground floor and
Sirocco Restaurant, Mezzanine

13.15 – 14.00 **Keynote Address - Technology in qualitative research: explore and analyse your information as never before**
Hindley room1&2
Chaired by: Michele Simons
Ms Sue Bullen, Training Consultant, QSR International.

14.00 – 15.30 **Concurrent Sessions**

	Session 2A - Education *Chaired by: Peter Kell* Hindley 1	**Session 2B - Practice** *Chaired by: Elaine Butler* Hindley 2	**Session 2C - Economic** *Chaired by: Ray Tolhurst* Hindley 3	**Session 2D - Social** *Chaired by: Steven Hodge* Torrens 1	**Session 2E - Place** *Chaired by: Ruth Wallace* Torrens 2	**Session 2F - Papers** *Chaired by: Cathy Down* West End – Level 3
14.00 – 14.45	What's it like for students? Enhancing the student experience from VET to University Barbara Cram, Vaughan Croucher, Bruce Lines	What do senior figures in Australian VET think about quality in traineeships? Erica Smith	Aligning human resource development with business strategy Tom Short	What's in a word? The 'problem' of women and 'barriers' to VET participation Jeannie Daniels	Let the men speak: health, friendship, community and shed therapy. Annette Foley, Barry Golding, Mike Brown	The Question of Competency Certainty; moving from quality to excellence in vocational education Homi Azemikhah
14.45 – 15.30	Managing credit transfer from TAFE to university: the case for cross-sectoral collaboration Louise Watson, Barbara Cram	Improved student satisfaction with teaching quality in VET: how it may have happened Peter Murphy	Enhanced training models for higher level VET qualifications Sarojni Choy, Kaye Bowman	Supporting Women in Non-traditional Trade Fiona Shewring	The implications for VET policy and practice arising from the findings of PhD research exploring the impact of privately owned RTOs in Victoria Joan McPhee	Designing and validating a new research methodology: learning through practice. Cathy Down

15.30 – 15.45 Afternoon Tea
Hindley Rooms' Pre-function area

	Session 3A - Education *Chaired by: Roger Harris* Hindley 1	**Session 3B - Practice** *Chaired by: Josie Misko* Hindley 2	**Session 3C - Economic** *Chaired by: Susan Dawe* Hindley 3	**Session 3D - Social** *Chaired by: Kevin Heys* Torrens 1	**Session 3E - Place** *Chaired by: Annie Fergusson* Torrens 2	**Session 3F - Papers** *Chaired by: Peter Kell* West End – level 3
15.45 – 16.30	General Staff in VET Contexts: what are their working lives like? Michele Simons, Roger Harris	RPL in Australian VET: What do we know (about it)? Helen Smith	A model for the design of a new-skills-strategy for the Creative Industries sector Kelvin Baker	The experience of piloting a multi-disciplinary community leadership program that aligns to education for sustainable development principle Sharon Zivkovic	E-learning for the Mature Age Worker Annie Fergusson, Kaye Bowman	Developing workforce planning and training models for the resource industries, using needs-based research E. Baafi, Peter Kell, Ray Tolhurst
16.30 – 17.15	Human Capital Enhanced by VET Suzy McKenna	Investigation into developing ePortfolios for VET: Policies issues and interoperability Jerry Leeson	Workforce Planning & Development Challenges: Implications for the VET Sector John Spoehr, Kate Barnett, Eric Parnis	Technical and vocational learning: Crafting Toolboxes from Metal and Clay John Pardy	Risky business all round: prompting awareness of whiteness in an online learning space Sue Shore	Safe places training framework: building Indigenous capacity through work based VET in remote communities Ruth Wallace, Lyn Chick

19.00 – 23.00 Conference drinks, Dinner & Awards Presentations

DAY 2: FRIDAY, 04 APRIL 2008

08.00 – 17.00 Registration

08.45 Welcome

0900 – 09.45 **Keynote Address – Institutional and cultural determinants of national VET systems – problems arising with the European Qualifications Framework**
Hindley room 1&2
Chaired by: Erica Smith
Professor Thomas Deissinger, Konstanz University, Germany

09.45 – 10.15 *Morning Tea*
Hindley Rooms' Pre-function area

10.15 – 11.45 **Concurrent Sessions**

	Session 4A - Education *Chaired by: Susan Dawe* Hindley 1	**Session 4B - Practice** *Chaired by: Kaye Bowman* Hindley 2	**Session 4C - Practice** *Chaired by: David Curtis* Hindley 3	**Session 4D - Social** *Chaired by: Ruth Wallace* Torrens 1	**Session 4E - Economic** *Chaired by: Erica Smith* Torrens 2	**Workshop** *Chaired by: Michelle Circelli* West End – Level 3
10.15 – 11.00	Equivalence and Contextualisation in Transnational Education Carolyn Woodley	Avenues other: A limited enquiry into workplace delivery and assessment Glenn Costin, Andrew Nichols	The Bold and the Beautiful: Tuning into Millennials David McLean	Shedding School Early: Insights from School and Community Shed Collaboration in Australia Barry Golding, Annette Foley, Mike Brown	The cost to employers of hiring apprentices Lisa Nechvoglod	Understanding and making use of VET statistics
11.00 – 11.45	VET support system for disadvantaged young People in Germany - best Practices, Deficiencies and Changes against the Background of the Education Policy of the European Union Bettina Siecke	From the learners' perspective: a case study of VET Graduates Louise Fitzgerald	Participation in Senior Schooling: The Vocational Alternative and the Role of VET David Curtis & Julie McMillan	Working from Our Strengths: Indigenous Enterprise and Training in Action and Research Ruth Wallace, Cathy Curry, Richard Agar	The impact of globalisation on national VET systems Mark Cully	Michelle Circelli, Bridget Wibrow

11.45 – 12.40 *Lunch*
Oli's function room, Ground floor
Sirocco Restaurant, Mezzanine

12.00 – 12.40 AVETRA AGM
Hindley 1&2

12.40 – 13.00 **Plenary Address: History of AVETRA**
Hindley Room 1&2
Cydde Miller, 2007 Dr Ray Barker Fellowship Winner

13.00 – 13.45 **Keynote Address – Crafting VET and VET research: the VET workforce in context – past, present, future**
Hindley room1&2
Chaired by: Kaye Bowman
Professor Terri Seddon, Monash University, Victoria, Australia

13.45 – 15.15 **Concurrent Sessions**

	Session 5A - Education *Chaired by: Robin Ryan* Hindley 1	**Session 5B - Practice** *Chaired by: Ruth Wallace* Hindley 2	**Session 5C - Practice** *Chaired by: Cathy Down* Hindley 3	**Session 5D - Education** *Chaired by: Francesca Beddie* Torrens 1	**Session 5E - Economic** *Chaired by: Kaye Bowman* Torrens 2	**Session 5F - Papers** *Chaired by: Llandis Barrat-Pugh* West End – Level 3
13.45 – 14.30	'ACE outcomes - following suit?' Helen Kimberley	Exploring the working knowledge of teachers in a multi-sectorial institution Rhonda Hallet	Capabilities of the emerging 'Advanced VET Practitioner John Mitchell	Serving multiple masters: Reviewing the role and recognition of VET within the Victorian Senior Secondary School Certificates Mike Brown, Darryl Sutton	Are Australian jobs becoming more skill-intensive? Evidence from the HILDA dataset Doug Fraser	Putting Research to work Cheryl Wilkinson
14.30 – 15.15	Recontextualising the Context of VET research? Beyond Instrumentalism to Ulrike Beck's risk society Peter Kell	Two way mentoring for Indigenous apprentices and Staff Tanyah Nasir	Professional Development: What Casual TAFE Teachers Want Susanne Francisco	Engaging the disengaged: a journey of discovery, despair and delight! Jenny McCormick, Genevieve Haskett	Skills shortages and future skills requirements for the Labour force Angel Calderon, Lucy Stockdale	Discourse Analysis as a VET research tool: analysing the frontline management initiative Llandis Barratt-Pugh

15.15 – 15.30 *Afternoon Tea*
Hindley Rooms' Pre-function area

15.30 – 17.00 **Concurrent Sessions**

	Session 6A - Education *Chaired by: Kaye Bowman* Hindley 1	**Session 6B - Practice** *Chaired by: Roger Harris* Hindley 2	**Session 6C - Practice** *Chaired by: Robin Ryan* Hindley 3	**Session 6D - Practice** *Chaired by: Francesca Beddie* Torrens 1	**Session 6E - Practice** *Chaired by: Ray Tolhurst* Torrens 2	**Symposium** *Chaired by: Sue Shore* West End – Level 3
15.30 – 16.15	High level vocational qualifications in theory and practice: the operationalising of certain vocational graduate qualifications Elizabeth Ruinard	Knowledge sharing as a key driver of professional learning and development for an ageing VET practitioner workforce Mark Harris, Terry Clark	Problem based learning and internship: Moving from industry to school Annette Green	RPL Policy to Practice: Why the reticence of practitioners to engage? Janet Hewson	Perception of change in education, training and development in the NSW Police Service, post the Wood Royal Commission Don Gillies	Literacy and lifeskills in Australia: implications for policy activism
16.15 – 17.00					The Art of Making: Towards descriptions of being and doing Glenn Costin	David Tout, Jean Searle, Sue Shore

2008

AVETRA

ABSTRACTS

(Abstracts are listed as follow: first, Keynote sessions, then in sessions order.)

*** **Refereed Papers** – papers annotated with three asterisks have been refereed to comply fully with the verification requirements of the Department of Employment, Science & Training for a conference publication, full written paper refereed. An Anonymous refereeing process has been used.

Note – full papers will be available on the AVETRA web site at the conclusion of the conference.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
03.04.08: 0930 – 1015 hours

WHERE IS 'PLACE' IN VET?

Prof. Margaret Somerville
Monash University, Victoria, VIC, Australia

In this keynote presentation I will ask how has 'place' been conceptualised in the vocational education and training sector in order to achieve community and regional development. What philosophies have informed the theoretical and practical bases of this work? and What are the consequences for preparing workers to work in a global context of climate change and environmental crisis? I will propose that place is the unmarked category, the 'context' or background of our work. If we think through place as a constitutive category, as active rather than passive, we would see the world and our work in VET quite differently. I will explore these questions through empirical work about water in the Murray Darling Basin and about how we learn place and form community Gippsland, Victoria.

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS
03.04.08: 13.15 – 14.00 hours

TECHNOLOGY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: EXPLORE AND ANALYSE YOUR INFORMATION LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Ms Sue Bullen
Training Consultant, QSR International

Imagine working with your qualitative research project in software where your Word documents, PDF documents, photos, audio and video data sit side by side. Click on a video file and see a group discussion in action. Then click on a link in that file to an audio recording, where you hear a related interview. At the same time, read your linked transcript to find out more about the speaker and the body language they're using, and make a note about your interpretation. Then when it's time to share your findings, export your project information as a web page. NVivo 8 makes all this and more a reality.

QSR International's new software release, NVivo 8, has just been launched. Be one of the first in the world to see the software. We'll conduct a live demonstration, using data from a sample project to show you how NVivo 8 can revolutionise your next project.

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS
04.04.08: 09.00 – 09.45 hours

INSTITUTIONAL AND CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF NATIONAL VET SYSTEMS – PROBLEMS ARISING WITH THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Prof. Thomas Deissinger
Konstanz University, Germany

The focus of my speech is on cultural patterns still determining national VET systems and policies around the world. Within established typologies VET systems are normally distinguished by referring to institutions and steering mechanisms. However, behind these, cultural patterns underlie both the practice and the theory as well as the policy of VET in various countries. Specific problems arise when it comes to “harmonising” VET systems “through the backdoor”. One of the current supranational instruments in this context is the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

The paper picks up “matching problems” related to the philosophy of this framework by referring to the German, the French and the British VET system respectively. As we here refer to "dual systems", "school-based systems" and "industry-led systems" respectively, the preconditions for transforming European policy into national policies are very different. One major aspect here is the institutional framework, including forms and practices of non-state intervention into the VET system and the responsibility of non-state institutions. In Germany, the chamber system represents a cultural construction which, at first sight at least, seems incompatible with many European ideas accompanying the present "Lisbon-Brugge-Copenhagen Process" which demands the opening-up of education and VET in the context of concepts such as the "learning economy" or "lifelong learning". VET systems with a strong focus on initial training hereby obviously face the most serious challenges. Solutions may lie in a "nation-specific" strategy which encourages and enables change without dumping the benefits and the functionality of the established system.

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS
04.04.08: 13.00 – 13.45 hours

CRAFTING VET AND VET RESEARCH: THE VET WORKFORCE IN CONTEXT – PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Prof. Terri Seddon
Monash University, Victoria, VIC, Australia

This presentation will build on my current cross-national research project that is looking at the way occupational and educational orders and working lives are being reconfigured under the influence of globalisation and lifelong learning policy regimes. It will discuss the reconfiguration of VET work and the VET workforce over time and place and the implications of these trajectories in the current context in which nations are seeking to build knowledge economies with social inclusion. Some of the questions that I would hope to open up are:

- How has VET work changed?
- What is the place and significance of VET research in these processes?
- What is the contribution of the VET workforce to crafting VET as a domain of social practices?
- Who is and is not included and why?
- What do these issues about the composition, organization, capacities of the VET workforce mean for VET within a globally interconnected knowledge economy/society?
- What needs to be done to form, maintain and sustain a VET workforce for the future?

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ABSTRACT 77 - Education

CAREER ADVICE AND CAREER PLANS: SOURCES, SATISFACTION AND REALISATION

Sheldon Rothman[1], Kylie Hillman[1], David D Curtis[2] and Julie McMillan[1]
[1]*Australian Council for Educational Research*
[2]*School of Education, University of Adelaide*

The literature on career decision-making suggests that students make their decisions based on the degree of match between their own attributes and certain perceived characteristics of occupations and that these perceptions are generally accurate (Gottfredson, 2002). However, in Australia, there is also evidence that students have misunderstandings about the status of some occupations, including trades (Alloway, Dalley, Patterson, Walker, & Lenoy, 2004). The sources of career advice available to middle-secondary students and their satisfaction with that advice was found through a survey of a representative sample of Australian 15-year-old students. Nearly all Year 10 students reported that they had received career advice at school and they stated that they were satisfied with that advice. It was found, however, that students' career aspirations do not match well with the opportunities in the Australian labour market and that some students (a minority) are embarking on educational pathways that will not lead to the careers to which they aspire. Thus, there are several areas of mismatch in the career advice available to students, their satisfaction with it, their career aspirations and their educational plans. These discrepancies may contribute to an explanation of labour and skills shortages and suggest that there is some scope for remediation to the benefit of students and the labour market.

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ABSTRACT 27 - Practice

CAN LEARNING OUTCOMES BE DIVORCED FROM PROCESSES OF LEARNING? OR WHY TRAINING PACKAGES MAKE VERY BAD CURRICULUM

Leesa Wheelahan
School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University

Training packages are based on the divorce of learning outcomes from processes of learning and curriculum. Policy insists that training packages are not curriculum, and that this 'frees' teachers to develop creative and innovative 'delivery strategies' that meet the needs of 'clients'. This paper argues that training packages deny students access to the theoretical knowledge that underpins vocational practice, and that they result in unitary and unproblematic conceptions of work because students are not provided with the means to participate in theoretical debates shaping their field of practice. Tying knowledge to specific workplace tasks and roles means that students are only provided with access to contextually specific applications of theoretical knowledge, and not the disciplinary framework in which it is embedded and which gives it meaning. The paper illustrates this argument by comparing the current Diploma of Community Services (Community Development) with a previous qualification that preceded training packages in the same field.

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ABSTRACT 81 - Practice

DOING AN APPRENTICESHIP: WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE THINK

Josie Misko
Senior Research Fellow, National Centre for Vocational Education Research

A recent study of 1700 secondary school students and 850 current apprentices in South Australia identifies the key factors which encourage young people to pursue an apprenticeship. Information from students and apprentices indicates that the key drivers of apprenticeship uptake are intrinsic interest and academic ability. School students with higher academic ability are less interested in apprenticeships. In contrast, those who are part way through their apprenticeship are very positive about the experience, especially the enjoyment of learning new skills and future prospects for career progression and pay. The author also discusses the impact of socio-economic factors, and influence of parents, friends and teachers on decisions to take up an apprenticeship.

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ABSTRACT 26 - Social

LLN TEACHERS AND HEALTH WORKERS: PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS IN ACTION

Stephen Black
TAFE NSW, Northern Sydney Institute

This paper will examine several case studies of partnerships between language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) teachers and health professionals undertaken as part of two research studies: an NCVER funded project entitled *Literacy and numeracy development in partnership: Social capital perspectives*, and a DEEWR funded project entitled *Diabetes Literacy*.

The research is ongoing and the projects will be due for completion by mid 2008. The three case studies involve: an LLN teacher working in an inner city medical centre for sex workers and intravenous drug users; an LLN teacher working with a women's health coordinator at a Muslim women's centre in western Sydney; and an LLN teacher working with a nutritionist at a local neighbourhood centre with mainly Chinese students. All three case studies represent LLN teachers and health professionals working together for largely health and social capital outcomes for their respective client groups. Action research was undertaken to document the pedagogical processes involved in each of these programs. This mainly involved taped, semi-structured interviews with both teachers and health professionals at the conclusion of each session.

Within the context of the call for greater integrated literacy programs involving cross-sectoral partnerships between LLN providers and different public sectors (Wickert & McGuirk 2005), these case studies represent early attempts to document how LLN teachers and health professionals can work together effectively. In particular, they examine the influence of an adult literacy pedagogy and how this results in social capital outcomes

NOTES

ABSTRACT 33 - Place

*** THE ROLE OF E-LEARNING IN 'HOLISTIC' APPROACHES TO VET IN REMOTE AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS CONTEXTS

Alicia Boyle and Ruth Wallace
Social Partnerships in Learning Research Consortium, Charles Darwin University

Indigenous[a] peoples in remote contexts are engaging with new communication and information technologies, yet this may not be realised by mainstream vocational education and training (VET) providers. This paper will utilise evidence from recent case studies that suggests that new technologies have a significant role to play in the development of networks, resources and learning spaces for remote Australian Indigenous peoples. We explore key barriers to the use of new technologies including restrictive funding models and poor cross-agency and organisation coordination which hinders the provision of services, interoperability issues and the ability to respond to the demand for emerging uses for technologies. This paper also discusses key issues around the suitability of available resources, applicability of the industry-based nationally accredited training packages in remote contexts, variable educational profiles of the learners, and the variable skills of teaching staff to develop and use suitable resources and technologies.

NOTES

[a] The words Indigenous and Aboriginal are used throughout this paper as regionally appropriate.

Concurrent Sessions 1.2 – 03.04.08
11.30 to 12.15

ABSTRACT 20 - Education

*** VET IN A DUAL SECTOR CONTEXT: AUGURY OR ANOMALY?

Gavin Moodie
Griffith University

Until the 1990s dual sector universities have been understood as a Victorian eccentricity shared by the Northern Territory, understandable because of its small size. Since then several Australian universities have become more vertically integrated by offering programs at vocational and secondary education levels, often as registered training organisations and often through wholly owned colleges, such as the Australian Catholic University, ANU, Charles Sturt University, Curtin University, Edith Cowan University, Monash University, University of Adelaide, University of Queensland, University of Technology, Sydney and the University of Wollongong. Interest in dual sector universities is also developing overseas. New Zealand's Unitech and London's Thames Valley University identify as dual sector universities and South Africa's Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University describes itself in terms used by dual sector universities.

This paper considers whether vocational education in a dual sector institution is an anomaly or an augury of future developments. It posits a definition of dual sector universities that distinguishes them from predominantly single sector institutions that offer a modest proportion of load in the other sector and from dual sector educational institutions that are not universities. The paper describes the emergence of dual sector provision: initially in Victoria from the bottom up, more recently in Australia from the top down, and by amalgamation overseas. It considers why dual sector universities emerged in Victoria but not in New South Wales where institutions with otherwise similar histories developed as single sector universities. The paper concludes by considering the potential for the development of new dual sector universities in Australia.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 50 - Practice

*** DISORIENTING VET: ENHANCING VET PRACTICE THROUGH TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY

Stephen Hodge
PhD Candidate, University of South Australia

This paper will explore the contention that Australian VET may be an environment in which transformative learning can occur, and indicate ways to enhance VET practice in relation to this kind of learning. Mezirow's theory of transformative learning is surveyed to provide background. Two examples of VET programs are described to show how VET can serve as a context for transformative learning. It is suggested that if there are VET programs that produce conditions favourable to transformative learning, then practitioners working in these areas can enhance their practice through familiarity with the features of transformative learning and ways that have been promoted for the support and facilitation of transformative learning.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 62 - Practice

WASTED SKILLS: THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY AND ITS YOUNG CHEFS

Richard McDermott
Ed.D student University of Technology Sydney

Rapid changes in industry and the world of work require vocational education training (VET) providers to consider their role in industry skills shortages and how they respond to pressure from government and industry groups to address the need for effective training. This research seeks to throw light on how large training organisations, such as TAFE and industry have responded to government reports on critical skills shortages within the industry(ACTU 2004, July; McKenzie 2004, July). It will seek to probe commercial cookery training(NCVER 2001, June) and the hospitality industry, to ask the question as to what can be done to stem the high turnover of young chefs.

The research will also explore the composition and effectiveness of both formal and informal learning of the trainee combined with the industry and training organisation's capacity to produce long term employment prospects for the trainee to meet the industry's need to retain skilled, productive employees.

What is emerging, from the initial research findings are concerns such as the changing profile of the students now enrolling in apprenticeships and traineeships (they are of all ages) (Karmel 2006) with formal vocational education and workplace training's ability to meet the needs of these new students. Of particular interest, to my research, are the Generation Y (Coupland 1991) trainees who appear to have divergent aims of their learning and employment expectations to their employers and teachers. It has also been reported (Toner 2003, July) that a gap has developed, over the past decade, between the formal training delivered by VET organisations and the training requested by employers, although vocational education providers have endeavoured to reduce that gap with a raft of tailored, flexible courses (DEST 2004 December) to meet the needs of employers but not necessarily the trainees.

In conclusion, the research is revealing an industry that, on first view, seems unwilling or unable to fulfil the tripartite training agreement, as employer, with the trainee and their vocational education needs. Initial evidential data shows financial pressure as a common response, in that they have little time or resources to provide adequate workplace training coupled with an historical culture of poor employee dealings and working conditions.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 19 - Social

DISRUPTED EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR SOMALI YOUNG PEOPLE

Maree Keating and Bonnie Simons
Equity Research Centre, Collingwood, Vic

Many Somali young people are under enormous pressure from their parents to do well educationally. Interestingly the research conducted in 2007 with Somali young people in Victoria found that there seems to be a critical age at which young Somali people arriving in Australia with no formal education are more likely to be able to make up for their educational gaps.

Our research indicated that there are strong links between disrupted education, age of arrival and the pathways these young people take through TAFE to employment. One group of students tended to use TAFE as a direct pathway to employment whilst the other saw TAFE as a stepping stone to a tertiary qualification.

This paper explores the factors which appear to influence Somali expectations of and attitudes towards TAFE as well as patterns of using TAFE amongst this group of young people.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 01 - Place

*** TRUST AND THE INFORMAL COMMUNICATION OF TRAINING NEED AND DEMAND BETWEEN VET PROVIDERS AND USERS

Peter Rushbrook and Richard Pickersgill
Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW

The paper focuses on the processes, and in particular non-market mechanisms, through which training needs are communicated or signalled to VET providers in rural settings. Qualitative data were gathered through interviewing a range of VET providers, employers, community groups and VET clients. A key outcome of the research suggests that 'trust', when contextualised within the interactions occurring in rural settings, often leads to the communication of client needs to VET providers. Unlike urban settings that through geographic size and greater demographic distribution tend to separate professional and social networks, 'the bush' conflates social and professional networking through regular formal and informal meetings in a variety of workplace, community and social settings, thus creating opportunities for the communication of a range of commercially utilisable knowledges, including VET issues of supply and demand. The glue binding these 'intellectual spillovers', 'non-market mechanisms' or 'non-price signals' is trust. Information gleaned from focus groups, key informants, sites visits and desktop research consistently demonstrated 'trust', defined as the micro-observable and mutually accountable reciprocity of needs, as the basis of informal and most formal communications of VET need and demand. The researchers conclude that the dilemma with informal, trust-based communication is its randomness, which mitigates its potential for enhancing VET provider-client relationships and partnerships. A proposed solution to capture the inherent value of informal communication, while recognising the realities of the rural and regional VET marketplace, is to bring together VET providers and clients in a 'neutral space' auspiced by a non-VET body such as a purpose constructed local government body; for example the range of bodies created through the Victorian 'learning towns' network.

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Workshop – 03.04.08
10.45 to 12.15

ABSTRACT 22

FROM RESEARCH TO PUBLICATION: A (NEW) WRITER'S WORKSHOP

Rick Holden[1] and Erica Smith[1]
[1]*Leeds Business School, UK*
[1]*Charles Sturt University, Australia*

The aim of the workshop is to encourage and assist participants develop and translate their research into a successful publication. Participants will be invited to engage in a number of activities critical to the process of submission and eventual acceptance of a research paper within a peer-reviewed journal.
Key processes which will be addressed in the workshop include:

- an exploration of paper aims, focus and content vis a vis a journal editorial objectives
- a critical assessment of abstracts / outlines
- strategies and actions likely to remove barriers and facilitate pathways to successful publication

The workshop is principally aimed at new and aspirant writers within the vocational education and training (VET) research field. The Emerald publication *Education + Training* will be used as the principal illustrative journal within the workshop. This is pertinent given the resonance between the journal's editorial objectives and the key themes of the AVETRA Conference. Also, the journal was ranked '1' in Vocational/Further/Adult Education/Training for quality and esteem in the recent Australian Association for Research in Education journal ranking exercise.
The workshop will be led by Dr Rick Holden, Editor of *Education + Training* and Dr Erica Smith, Associate Editor of *Education + Training* and national secretary of AVETRA.

NOTES

Concurrent Sessions 2.1 – 03.04.08
14.00 to 14.45

ABSTRACT 10 - Education

*** WHAT'S IT LIKE FOR STUDENTS? ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE FROM VET TO UNIVERSITY

Barbara Cram[1], Vaughan Croucher[2] and Bruce Lines[1]
[1] *University of Canberra*
[2] *Canberra Institute of Technology*

Credit transfer and articulation arrangements present valuable opportunities for students with VET sector experience and qualifications to access higher education in Australia and overseas. However, as the MCEETYA *Good Practice Principles* suggest, ad hoc articulation programs are often characterised by inconsistency or lack of transparency and do not always serve students well.

The Collaborative Development Program between Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) and the University of Canberra (UC) has monitored the difficulties students encounter when transitioning from CIT to UC and designed a longitudinal program to improve the student experience. The achievements of the project, acknowledged in 2006 through both a Carrick Citation and a three-year Collaborative and Structural Reform (CASR) grant, arise not only from the alignment of governance, process and infrastructure support but also from a shared focus on students.

This research analyses the achievements of the UC-CIT Collaborative Development Program from the student perspective, focusing on cross-institutional programs to improve: the management and granting of credit for completed VET studies; presentation and accessibility of information to students and stakeholders; and support for articulating students during both vocational and university studies.

The analysis suggests that the cross-sectoral Collaborative Development Program, which is continually reviewed and revised to address student concerns, has enhanced the overall experiences of CIT graduates who are studying at UC. Evidence of outcomes includes greater participation in campus services, improved student satisfaction ratings and high success and retention rates for target students. The extent to which the model described in this study could be extended to other institutions is considered.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 04 - Practice

*** WHAT DO SENIOR FIGURES IN AUSTRALIAN VET THINK ABOUT TRAINEESHIPS?

Professor Erica Smith
School of Education, Charles Sturt University

This paper reports on the perceptions of key Australian stakeholders who were interviewed about the controversial issue of quality in traineeships. Interviews were carried out with thirteen people holding senior positions in State and national government departments, major employer and employee organisations, and peak bodies of intermediary organisations. The process was the initial phase of a national NCVER-funded project on identifying the features of high-quality traineeships. The interview transcripts were then analysed to draw out key themes. Themes included issues to do with pedagogy both on and off the job, workplace arrangements and work organisation, relationships between employers and training providers, progression to higher level qualifications and within careers, the intended strategic use of trainees by organisations, and the use of traineeships for equity purposes. On the whole, strong support was expressed for the traineeship system although there were some dissenting views. The research provided a useful backdrop for the fieldwork in the remainder of the project.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 08 - Economic

***** ALIGNING HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT WITH BUSINESS STRATEGY**

Tom Short
Director, Performance Improvement Centre Ltd. – Auckland, New Zealand
Doctoral candidate with CREEW, University of South Australia, Adelaide

There is a growing interest among senior managers, human resource professionals and business school academics about evaluating the strategic benefits of workplace learning; particularly how organised training and development activities contribute to an organisation's success. The opinion is polarised: one school of thought takes a pro-human resource standpoint and advocates a strong and irrefutable connection, while the other view offers a more critical and independent perspective, arguing the evidence is not convincing.

Despite this division, all sides give the impression that the best chance for evaluating the success of training may rest in aligning learning and development activities with the business strategy (Phillips 2007; Sloman 2007). The term alignment has grown to become a popular expression for directing effort towards organisational success. However, this is not as straightforward as it may first appear, as business strategy can change perpetually - especially in a competitive and globalised marketplace (Thompson 1995). Hamel (1996), a global expert on strategy, has even suggested the increasing complexity of what organisations have to deal with, makes strategic planning a tenuous activity, if not almost impossible. These assertions present a significant challenge for those wishing to align training activities with strategy and this paper contends the term alignment needs to be understood more fully if is to serve a useful purpose.

Drawing on case study evidence, collected in the New Zealand manufacturing sector, this paper examines how three organisations responded to global market challenges, and explores how workplace training and human resource development projects concealed a multi-dimensional face of alignment, offering both strengths and limitations to the success of the enterprise. Employees from five different roles within three organisations took part in in-depth interviews. Information from a literature review and documents from the organisations complement the evidence. The findings offer new possibilities for aligning human resource development initiatives successfully with business strategy.

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ABSTRACT 11 - Social

WHAT'S IN A WORD?: THE "PROBLEM" OF WOMEN AND "BARRIERS" TO VET PARTICIPATION

Jeannie Daniels
School of Education, University of South Australia

In this paper I explore how dominant discourses of VET construct access and equity issues for women via the notion of barriers, and in doing so, frame the terms of debate about how women enter, participate in, and benefit from VET. Current VET research takes as its starting point a set of language rules that carries already constructed meanings: barriers to women's participation are presented as a set of conditions to be dismantled or overcome. Rather than obstacles that prevent 'successful' participation, I assert that these barriers are structural, systemic and social conditions within which women define their understandings of self. The central problem therefore emerges, not as the presence of barriers, but in the naming of certain experiences as such, and the underlying assumption that once entry to the VET space is achieved, barriers cease to exist.

I argue that the notion of barriers can be explored as a construct of a particular discursive approach that carries problematic implications, not for women learners in VET, but rather for educators, providers and funding agencies who set the terms by which barriers are reinscribed through contemporary provision.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 41 - Place

***** LET THE MEN SPEAK: HEALTH, FRIENDSHIP, COMMUNITY AND SHED THERAPY**

Annette Foley, Barry Golding and Mike Brown
University of Ballarat, Victoria, Australia

Our paper is based on our recently published NCVER project on Men's sheds in Australia, Learning through Community Contexts (Golding, Brown, Foley, Harvey & Gleeson, 2007), which showed that men's sheds informally cater for non vocational, social, health, wellbeing and learning needs of mainly older men.

We deliberately used unedited transcripts from the NCVER project in the form of narratives or stories to give the men an opportunity to speak for themselves about the benefits of participating in men's sheds. The paper highlights some of the limitations of the methodology used in the attempt to allow the men themselves to make sense of the benefits they experience and enjoy from participating in men's sheds as conveyed through their own voices.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 32 - Papers

THE QUESTION OF COMPETENCY CERTAINTY; MOVING FROM QUALITY TO EXCELLENCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Homi Azemikhah
University of Sunshine Coast

Given that, Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) 2007 is designed to encourage Registered Training Organisations (RTO'S) to focus on quality and continuous improvement to better meet client needs", a key aspect of AQTF 2007 has been on the inclusion of "a continuum that allows for recognition of quality of RTO performance at several points", including quality training and assessment.

While the new AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria, within the Australian Quality Training Framework, focus on the use of five inter-related categories for excellence, including: Learning and Assessment, leadership, people focus, client and community focus and management systems, this paper focuses on one criterion, that of Learning and Assessment. The paper illustrates how the achievement of this criterion relies on the pedagogical expertise of VET educators to ensure the delivery of products are informed by current thinking and research about learning and assessment, so that the essential standards of quality delivery are met. This depends to a large degree on how the required knowledge and skills are integrated in teaching, learning and assessment. Currently, by the advent of "Employability Skills" the integration of skills into teaching, learning and assessment has gained momentum.

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Concurrent Sessions 2.1 – 03.04.08
14.45 to 15.30

ABSTRACT 09 - Education

*** MANAGING CREDIT TRANSFER FROM TAFE TO UNIVERSITY: THE CASE FOR CROSS-SECTORAL COLLABORATION

Barbara Cram and Louise Watson
University of Canberra ACT

Federal and state governments in Australia are committed to improving the opportunities for vocational award holders to make a successful transition to higher education. However the outcomes of many students granted entry to university on the basis of a vocational award are generally worse than students admitted on the basis of a Year 12 qualification. With weakening domestic demand for university places, unstructured or overgenerous credit transfer may compound the difficulties faced by articulating students.

This research explores the structures for admission of students to the University of Canberra (UC) on the basis of a vocational award completed at the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT). Under a long-standing articulation agreement between the two institutions, over 170 articulation pathways have been created to enable holders of a CIT Diploma or Advanced Diploma to enter UC Degree courses, and the way in which credit is granted can vary between courses. The authors examine three models for determining the credit granted for completed TAFE awards. The management of each model and the learning outcomes of articulating students under each model are analysed and compared.

From their analysis of the students' experiences under each of the three models, the authors suggest that student transition from TAFE to university is most effective when credit transfer arrangements are characterised by high levels of collaboration at the course delivery level. The authors explore the nature of effective cross-sectoral collaboration and identify the ways in which institutions can support collaboration to enhance opportunities for articulating students. The extent to which the outcomes of this study can be generalised to other institutions is discussed.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 34 - Practice

*** IMPROVED STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH TEACHING QUALITY IN VET: HOW IT MAY HAVE HAPPENED

Peter Murphy
RMIT University

Using the Good Teaching Scale of the NCVER Student Outcomes Survey for the years 2004 and 2005, two TAFE programs at a Victorian dual-sector university were identified as having an increase of approximately 20% or more in student satisfaction ratings with teacher performance in 2003-2004. To investigate what had happened in these programs to produce such increases, semi-structured interviews were conducted with staff who taught and/or managed them. The research showed that while there was no one key causal factor which explained the increases, staff suggested several factors as possible explanations for the increase: a personnel change in the key role of program manager; the introduction of new teaching staff, which had both a positive and a negative effect on the GTS scores; and differences in the student cohort itself. No specific efforts were made by staff to increase the GTS score in 2003-04.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 47 - Economic

*** ENHANCED TRAINING MODELS FOR HIGHER LEVEL VET QUALIFICATIONS

Sarojni Choy[1] and Kaye Bowman[2]
[1]*Queensland University of Technology,*
[2]*Consultant*

This paper is based on a research project[b] that explored effective training models at the VET Certificate III level and above in two industry areas as case examples: process manufacturing occupations (based in Victoria) and child care occupations (based in Queensland). In the case study industries higher level vocational education and training qualifications were being pursued through an "apprenticeship" or formal contracted employment based training arrangement along side the traditional vocational course approach. Customised skills sets also featured as did fast tracking options. Thirty three individuals including employers, employees/ apprentices, training providers, industry representatives and Training Package developers were interviewed to explore current concerns around each model and suggest arrangements that reasonably withstand limitations and issues surrounding employment based training for higher level VET qualifications.

The data for this project informed the development of a set of five 'best-fit' training models for higher level vocational qualifications to suit the process manufacturing and child care industries. These five models are expected to also be adaptable to other industry areas. The models include options for existing workers who already have a lower qualification and seek an upward movement in their careers, as well as ones for new entrants to the workforce who are seeking to enter at an intermediate level. The proposed models are expected to increase employers' preferences for VET graduates particularly for a growing number of associate professional jobs.

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[b] Choy, Bowman, Billett, Wignall and Haukka, 2008, *Effective models of employment based training*, NCVER, Adelaide.

The authors acknowledge the contributions of Prof. Stephen Billett, Dr Sandra Haukka and Ms Louise Wignall to the research that formed the basis of this paper, the support of NCVER and the Commonwealth government. We appreciate very much the advice from employers, employees, and other representatives of the manufacturing and aged care industries, who participated in the research.

ABSTRACT 65 - Social

SUPPORTING WOMEN IN NON-TRADITIONAL TRADE

Fiona Shewring
Illawarra Institute

There are many myths around women working in non-traditional trade areas which are treated as fact and provide reasons for people to continue maintaining the status quo which prevents women entering these trades. Women represent half of the population yet account for less than 0.1% of some areas of non-traditional trade training. Occupations which have been male gender dominated but which have shown shifts in parity have been considered as examples of how change can be effected.

Sixteen women who were engaged in training on trade courses at the Illawarra Institute were interviewed for this report. The trades included building and construction, fitting and machining, welding, auto spray and butchery. Most of the women came from strong trade families although not generally with family members in the same trade. Almost all the women commented on their love of their trade and their need to be passionate about it to survive. Family influence and particularly the attitudes of the women's fathers were found to be important.

Most of the women were apprenticed and were high achievers in their training and an excellent influence on the trade classes, according to their Head Teachers. The women who were training without apprenticeships were equally committed and had gained work on a self employed basis. It is currently difficult for women to gain access to training in the trades and the report highlights the way this has been overcome in one trade department at The Illawarra Institute, which now has a participation rate of 12% women in its trade courses. Other avenues which could facilitate women's participation in the trades are also considered. Without an engagement by all parties (employers, Registered Training Organizations, schools and society) in the spirit of true Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO), where any person capable of the job is trained and employed to do the job, nothing will change.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 13 - Place

***** THE IMPLICATIONS FOR VET POLICY AND PRACTICE ARISING FROM THE FINDINGS OF PHD RESEARCH EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF PRIVATELY OWNED RTOS IN VICTORIA.**

Joan McPhee
RMIT PhD student

This paper draws on data gathered as part of a PhD study undertaken to assess how the nature and scope of the VET system has changed, as a result of the entry of privately owned RTOs into the Victorian market for accredited training. A purposeful sample of 21 privately owned Victorian Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) which were either Commercial, Industry or Enterprise RTOs were interviewed in 2003/4.

The methodological approach and relevant literature are briefly recounted; with a particular focus on my own role as a research instrument.

The findings to be discussed include

- The ways in which the RTOs interviewed differentiated their services, focused on their client's needs and met changes in the training environment quickly and decisively.
- The high degree of flexibility and adaptability exhibited by these RTOs in the mode, timing and location of delivery for those clients who were employed in workplaces
- The extent to which customised and contextualised training ensured 'fitness for purpose' and enhanced the relevance and quality of the training provided by these RTOs
- The problematic nature of assessing quality when the focus has been on procedural compliance through the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) rather than on finding ways to improve the relevance and value of program content, assessment and delivery.
- The increase in diversity, choice and competitiveness illustrated by the presence of privately owned RTOs.
- The consequences of my findings for a number of stakeholders in the VET training system are discussed briefly.

This paper represents work in progress. Comments will be very welcome.

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ABSTRACT 06 - Papers

***** DESIGNING AND VALIDATING A NEW RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: LEARNING THROUGH PRACTICE.**

Cathy Down
School of Education, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW

This paper reports on my completed PhD research which investigated how educational practitioners were able to adapt and apply their knowledge and skills across different workplace contexts.

One of the challenges in my research was to find a suitable methodology to use to validate an explanatory model which had been developed in the first stage of the research. Because the theoretical framework of the research was essentially based on Activity Theory precepts, I needed to find a methodology which would enable my stage 2 participants to validate the model in a manner which was inclusive of contextual differences. This meant that the generalisations which they made in the validation process needed to be the result of the embedding of different contexts within one another, rather than the more prevalent type of generalisations which result from abstraction.

Predictably, I could not identify an existing methodology which would do what I required. Therefore, with the invaluable assistance of 90 stage 2 participants, I designed a process and questionnaire which I hoped would provide the type of embedded generalisations I was seeking. This paper reports on the resultant methodology, its effectiveness in the research process and the evaluative comments of my participants on their experience of the new methodology.

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ABSTRACT 59 - Education

*** GENERAL STAFF IN VET CONTEXTS: WHAT ARE THEIR WORKING LIVES LIKE?

Michele Simons and Roger Harris
University of South Australia, SA

In recent years, there has been a lot of research activity focussing on the changing role of teachers, trainers and assessor in VET contexts. However, equal attention has not been paid to the many general staff employed in a wide range of work roles in registered training organisations. Like teachers and trainers, the work of general staff contributes to the enactment of VET polices and their work is continually being reinvented in the changing context in which VET now operates. However, unlike their teaching /training counterparts, their voices and experiences have been largely absent from research examining issues related to the VET workforce and the building of organisational capability in registered training organisations.

The study reported in this paper is one attempt to address this significant gap in the VET literature. The paper will analyse data collected from general staff as part of a national study examining careers in VET. It will examine data that describes the ways in which general staff move into VET, how their working lives unfold over time and their plans for remaining in the VET workforce in the next five years. The paper will pay particular attention to the ways the working lives of general staff differ from those of their colleagues employed as teachers and trainers and the types of support that general staff are able to access in order to further their career ambitions in VET.

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ABSTRACT 51 - Practice

*** RPL IN AUSTRALIAN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: WHAT DO WE KNOW (ABOUT IT)?

Helen Smith
RMIT University

This paper is the first stage of a proposed research study that will look back over 18 years of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. The study aims to address a gap in the current VET research literature: that is an accounting for RPL as practice and as a device implicated in the political relations of Australian VET. In setting the scene for the larger study, this paper locates RPL in Australian VET in an historical context, and briefly explores its characteristics as a device for managing training outcomes: asking how we have come to understand and negotiate RPL as practice, and how our commonsense understandings have been theorised by Australian VET researchers. I start with an account, based on primary sources, of the first excursion into recognition assessment in Victoria in 1989; tracing the newly named RPL as it moves from this locale into the national VET policy arena. The second part of the paper addresses the various ways that RPL in Australian VET translates the workplace and the community into the academy, and recodes work and life experience as school knowledge. In concluding I propose that throughout its brief history in Australian VET RPL has been more productive in the political arena than it has as educational practice; and that its robust vigour as policy in the face of administrative and pedagogical obstacles is primarily owed to its rhetorical power to smooth over policy perplexities in a national VET system at odds with itself. I also point to the need for a new research focus if we are to work out how to achieve an equally robust vigour in educational practice.

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ABSTRACT 17 - Economic

A MODEL FOR THE DESIGN OF A NEW-SKILLS-STRATEGY FOR THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SECTOR

Kelvin Baker MSIT
Griffith University

The fast pace of change within the animation, computer game and post production industries has presented a problem for Vocational Education and Training (VET) programme developers who are finding it increasingly difficult to stay relevant and up-to-date with the latest employability skill-sets in this industry sector. A comprehensive study of the Australian digital media industry - including the latest systems, software, technologies and production pipelines - is not readily available, making it difficult for Training Package developers to create up-to-date, flexible, meaningful and transferable qualifications.

In response to this problem, research was undertaken to identify the needs and realities of work required for the production of digital content within the Australasian digital media and post-production industry sectors. Employability skill-sets and attributes have been recognized and categorized through a skills audit (quantitative data) of position descriptions and role statements advertised over a six year period. Progressive levels of skill, knowledge, problem solving and attitude have been applied to the researcher's own studio production through an Action Research process.

This paper documents the research and reports on findings identified through industry position descriptors making recommendations to support the integration of the new digital animation skills through a framework of progressive qualifications.

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ABSTRACT 85 - Social

THE EXPERIENCE OF PILOTING A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM THAT ALIGNS TO EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Sharon Zivkovic
Community Capacity Builders, SA

This presentation shares Community Capacity Builders experiences from piloting a multi-disciplinary community leadership program that aligns to education for sustainable development principles with the City of Onkaparinga in South Australia. Whilst Community Capacity Builders is not a Registered Training Organisation, it is able to offer an accreditation option for the program through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mission Australia Training Institute. The evaluation of the program's pilot showed that the program achieved its three target outcomes. All participants agreed or strongly agreed that the program enabled them to: develop the skills and knowledge required to form collaborative community capacity building projects, participate in 'whole of community' visioning and planning processes, and bridge their projects and activities to local, regional and state strategic plans.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 05 - Place

E-LEARNING FOR THE MATURE AGE WORKER

Kaye Bowman and Annie Fergusson
Australian Flexible Learning Framework

The current and projected skills shortage in many industries requires consideration of job seekers from the mature age cohort. In 2007 the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (Framework) commissioned research into E-learning for the Mature Age Worker (those over 45 years of age).

The aim of the research was to support the goal of increasing the use of e-learning practices, thereby supporting greater flexibility and efficiency in learning opportunities for the mature aged by

- Developing a picture of e-learning practice for the mature-age worker
- Developing a set of case studies that demonstrate good practice in e-learning for the mature age worker
- Developing guidelines to incorporate good practice in e-learning for mature age workers with a focus on up skilling or re-skilling.

Providers throughout all states and territories were interviewed, including private providers, industry/community services providers and VET public providers from rural and remote areas and in regional and metropolitan locations.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 52 - Papers

DEVELOPING WORKFORCE PLANNING AND TRAINING MODELS FOR THE RESOURCE INDUSTRIES, USING NEEDS-BASED RESEARCH

E. Baafi[1], Peter Kell[1], and Ray Tolhurst[2]
[1]*University of Wollongong*
[2]*Skills DMC*

Skill shortages in the resources industries have been extensively documented and the impacts outlined. To ensure that the minerals boom is sustained and to gain maximum benefits for the nation, it is crucial that training needs are addressed effectively. Workforce planning tools have been developed that provide both strategic and operational data for all of the key stakeholders to quantify the size of the workforce, future employment and training requirements, by industry sector and commodity, nationally, on a state-by-state basis, regionally, by company or at an individual work site. The information obtained from the research is valuable for companies and specific sites, training organisational planners at a national, state or regional level, RTO's and related providers, careers personnel and regional development organisations.

The workforce planning and training needs models are comprehensive, covering; the major sectors, coal, metalliferous and quarrying; managers, shift supervisors, other professionals, mineworkers, ancillary staff, tradespersons and apprentices/trainees; and mining, mineral concentration and metal production/refining, using a range of both operational and personnel factors.

NOTES

Concurrent Sessions 3.2 – 03.04.08
16.30 to 17.15

ABSTRACT 86 - Education

HUMAN CAPITAL ENHANCED BY VET

Suzy McKenna
National Project Director, Reframing the Future

This presentation draws on an evaluative report[c], published by DEEWR in 2007, on how VET sector staff development and change management projects funded through Reframing the Future began to address directions set by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in early 2006.

In particular it will highlight how VET organisations undertook activities that assisted the achievement of the following aims of COAG:

- increased workforce productivity and participation, requiring the enhancement of human capital in Australia
- improved relationships between industry and training providers
- better services for the recognition of prior learning.

The evidence for these achievements by VET organisations is drawn from a sample of 31 of the 215 projects funded by Reframing the Future in 2006.

A key finding is that project teams are effectively achieving the aims of COAG in a number of ways including:

- enhancing the human capital of people in industries as diverse as health, arts, metal and child care
- enhancing the human capital of a range of groups such as mature aged learners
- increasing workforce participation opportunities by providing appropriate training to disadvantaged groups
- improving relationships between industry and providers ,and
- improving the human capital in VET by addressing cultural and organisational barriers to VET staff becoming more responsive.

NOTES

[c] **Human Capital Enhanced by VET** by authors: Dr John Mitchell, Suzy McKenna, Cheryl Bald, Wendy Perry and Shane Earls is available from the reframing the Future website at http://reframingthefuture.net/PublicationsAll.asp

ABSTRACT 78 - Practice

INVESTIGATION INTO DEVELOPING EPORTFOLIOS FOR VET: POLICIES ISSUES AND INTEROPERABILITY

Jerry Leeson
Education.au limited, Adelaide

This paper summarises and provides an update on a recent investigation into the development of e-portfolios for the VET sector, and particularly into the associated policy and interoperability issues. The initial investigation was commissioned by the e-Standards Expert Group, an initiative of the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (http://e-standards.flexiblelearning.net.au/).

Interest in and use of electronic portfolios (e-portfolios) has increased dramatically in recent years. The concept of managing personal portfolios, however, pre-dates the Internet age and many earlier ideas about the use of portfolios in education and training are finding new expression. New possibilities arise through the adoption of standard approaches to e-portfolio development, enabling institutions to share and exchange e-portfolio data. In the education and training sector this could lead to streamlining of the processes associated with recognition of prior learning, student transitions through courses, and training that involves either sequential or parallel movement through multiple institutions.

Moving into the future, eportfolio services may need to interact with many other applications or services. Some of these will be other eportfolio services while others will be related services that exchange information or support eportfolio activities. It is worth considering the broader range of interoperability requirements beyond 'eportfolio to eportfolio' communication. This type of interoperability includes integrating with other applications found in organisations as well as other critical infrastructure such as authentication and authorisation services, digital rights management, persistent identifier services etc.

While other countries have worked for sometime on developing systemic approaches to eportfolios, Australia is really only just beginning to engage in this area. Our research examines emerging needs of the sector, policy implications for it and looks at some of the technical standards which may underpin a systemic approach to eportfolio development.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 82 - Economic

***** WORKFORCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE VET SECTOR**

Dr Kate Barnett[1], Assoc Professor John Spoehr[2] and Mr Eric Parnis[3]
[1]Deputy Executive Director, Australian Institute for Social Research, The University of Adelaide
[2]Executive Director, Australian Institute for Social Research, The University of Adelaide
[3]Research Fellow, Australian Institute for Social Research, The University of Adelaide

Sustained economic growth and population ageing are fuelling skill shortages and gaps, highlighting the importance of workforce planning and development. It is unclear how well positioned workplaces are to meet these challenges.

This paper reports on the results of a survey of workforce planning in South Australian workplaces. Through a series of case studies undertaken for a second study, the paper also identifies some of the wider implications for workforce planning of a number of initiatives being undertaken in South Australia.

We find that a high proportion of workplaces are aware of some of the challenges ahead and are involved in the preparation of workplace plans that are well integrated with their wider business planning processes. Many others however are not well positioned to tackle the challenges that they face. They lack access to appropriate tools or support services to support workforce planning.

A range of organisations are very actively engaged in workforce planning. Some of the lessons from this experience are identified. Finally, we identify a number of potential implications from our research for the role of the VET sector in workforce planning. In particular we examine the role that the VET sector might play in the provision of structured, accredited training and education for workforce planning practitioners.

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ABSTRACT 61 - Social

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL LEARNING: CRAFTING TOOLBOXES FROM METAL AND CLAY

John Pardy

This paper looks at learning that occurs in a ceramics studio and a machine workshop as specifically technical and vocational learning spaces. Drawing on qualitative data (in-depth interviews) from two TAFE students, this paper explores the ways technical and vocational learning contributes to the development of the self. The students discussed, deployed learning in TAFE as a strategy to differently position themselves in employment and in the world more generally.

With an understanding of society as fluid, rather than as a fixed structure, people today are now required to live with uncertainty as never before. No longer do people train for or expect a 'job for life' nor is one set of skills sufficient. The skills needed to gain a position or move between different positions in a society, which has itself become more fluid, requires individuals to continually learn for life. These two case studies of a ceramics and metal work student provide an example of learning for life associated with craft, occurring in spaces that can enable people to (re)make themselves and to inhabit, on different footings, a world that is uncertain.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 35 - Place

RISKY BUSINESS ALL ROUND: PROMPTING AWARENESS OF WHITENESS IN AN ONLINE LEARNING SPACE

Dr Sue Shore
University of South Australia, SA

This presentation reports on a longitudinal study of a required course in an undergraduate adult/VET teacher education program. The course uses postcolonial, feminist and cultural studies literature to foreground the often invisible and unarticulated dimensions of whiteness which underpin many claims for inclusivity. Delivered online, the course was first offered in 2005 and has two distinctive features. First, it prompts students to consider how white people can also be thought of as racialised subjects. This has implications for discussions about the effects of culture and race in classrooms and is also something many of the students who identify as white find very confronting. Second, the course troubles processes of learning to teach/train by locating discussions about inclusivity and difference in the everyday racialised lives of the VET teachers and trainers. Analyses of online postings, course assignments and post course interviews indicate that students find the course challenging and *unnecessarily* explicit about racialised life experiences which they see as irrelevant to their teaching contexts. Others find it challenging and *very practical* in terms of what they 'take back' to their dialogues with colleagues and into their VET settings. What emerges most clearly from the post-course interviews is the dissonance many practitioners experience between their public identities and required practices as VET educators, and their private racialised histories and everyday lives as parents, colleagues, friends and lovers.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 80 - Papers

*** SAFE PLACES TRAINING FRAMEWORK: BUILDING INDIGENOUS CAPACITY THROUGH WORK BASED VET IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Ruth Wallace and Lyn Chick
Social Partnerships in Learning Research Consortium, Charles Darwin University

The Safe Places Training Framework project, funded by the Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services (NTDHCS,) is part of the implementation of the Federal intervention into remote NT Indigenous communities. This project seeks to address many of the issues relating to formal training and capacity development in partnership with government-initiated social and workforce development programmes. This paper highlights some of the project's emerging outcomes and discusses insights into its effectiveness and potential as a model for training and professional development in remote Northern Territory Indigenous workplaces. The innovative approach to professional development and training focuses on Safe Places staff within remote organisations has three key areas; designing appropriate courses, establishing 'communities of practice' to support participation and developing relationships with government staff that develop positive and self sustaining learning experiences, networks and environments. This paper discusses issues related to the development and implementation of this approach and the role of VET delivery within the project.

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ABSTRACT 12 - Education

EQUIVALENCE AND CONTEXTUALISATION IN TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION

Carolyn Woodley
Victoria University

Between 2005 and 2007, the Australian Government's *Transnational Quality Strategy* funded 36 different projects that looked at Australian Transnational Education (TNE) provision of Higher Education (HE), Vocational Education and Training (VET) and ELT (English Language Teaching) offshore with the aim of promoting the quality of Australian TNE. The reports of these projects have highlighted a number of issues for Australian providers of transnational education. To what extent should Australian providers customise and contextualise their programs to make programs more meaningful and relevant for offshore students? To what extent are offshore students buying an "Australian educational experience"? And what does that entail in an increasingly globalised and internationalised context?

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ABSTRACT 45 - Practice

AVENUES OTHER: A LIMITED ENQUIRY INTO WORKPLACE DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT.

Glenn P. Costin[1] and Andrew Nichols[2]
TAFE NSW Riverina Institute
[1]PhD B.Ed BA
[2]Dip. Teach

The purpose of this paper is to promote discussion of the practicalities, applicability, and implications, of delivering vocational qualifications in the workplace. After the initial presentation, the presenters promote discussion of the findings, and most importantly, the exploration of alternative avenues: what forms the models might take; the implications; and the issues of skill and knowledge development. In particular focus will be how workplace delivery of VET appears to be influencing perceptions of 'trade' qualifications.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 18 - Practice

*** THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL: EDUCATORS TUNING INTO MILLENNIALS

David McLean
Senior Educator – Graphic Arts & Multimedia, Kangan Batman TAFE

Engaging young 16-22 year old students is a contemporary issue for most large VET providers. This becomes a greater challenge with students that have: short attention spans, an obsession with communications technologies, and require instant gratification with products. Retaining young students and delivering effective training is intrinsically linked to instructional model and training environment. So what model could a large training institute apply to its course structures to produce effective outcomes for its youngest cohort?

This paper firstly acknowledges narrative as a structural model for understanding and defining teaching & learning. It then proposes the narrative structure of Soap Opera as being in tune with the way Millennial learners (under 23 years of age) comprehend time and space. The feminised narrative structure of the Soap Opera provides a framework for considering an alternative mode of delivery and way of organising instruction. Soap Operas provide answers to the question of youth engagement in education by developing shorter and more intensive bursts of training.

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ABSTRACT 46 - Social

*** SHEDDING SCHOOL EARLY: INSIGHTS FROM SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SHED COLLABORATION IN AUSTRALIA

Barry Golding, Annette Foley and Mike Brown
University of Ballarat, Victoria, Australia

Our paper focuses on evidence of positive interactions between schools and community sheds in Australia to examine what it is about shed-based community programs and pedagogies that are attractive to some early school leavers and school resisters. It is based primarily on interview data from the subset of men's sheds across Australia with school programs that formed part of our 2007 research into men's sheds. It is complemented by insights from interviews with men's sheds participants and rural fire volunteers about what it was that also led many of them to also 'shed' school early. Our paper identifies links between the success factors associated with informal learning pedagogies in voluntary and community groups identified in the UK and success factors associated with community-based shed programs in Australia. We identify the potential benefits of sheds in engaging both early school leavers and older men with negative recollections of school, in enjoyable, regular, hands-on activity. We also discuss ways in which some of the difficulties associated with shed-based school programs that seek to engage and reintegrate early school leavers might be avoided or minimised. Finally, we pose some unanswered questions about the implications of our research findings for education and training providers.

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ABSTRACT 70 - Economic

THE COST TO EMPLOYERS OF HIRING APPRENTICES

Lisa Nechvoglod
NCVER, Adelaide, SA

This research draws on a small number of detailed case studies to examine the total financial costs of training apprentices to certificate 3 in the plumbing and electrical industries. Total financial costs include costs associated with training that are borne by government, employers and the apprentice. Case studies include apprentices hired directly and through group training organisations to ascertain any difference between these arrangements. The research finds total cost to be fairly consistent across the case studies with employers incurring most of the costs associated with training. As apprentices progress through the apprenticeship their productivity increases therefore decreasing costs to employers. The opportunity cost to apprentices was also calculated and this increased the cost to apprentices who undertook training.

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Concurrent Sessions 4.2 – 04.04.08
11.00 to 11.45

ABSTRACT 16 - Education

*** VET Support Systems for Disadvantaged Young People in Germany – Best Practices, Deficiencies and Changes against the Background of the Education Policy of the European Union

Dr Bettina Siecke
University of Giessen, Germany

An increasing proportion of the school leaving population in Germany has difficulties in the transition from school to vocational education and training due to the lack of training places in companies and the rising demands facing trainees in vocational education and training, such as, e.g. key competences or social skills. The Federal Government uses a number of different strategies to address these challenges. The different strategies are also influenced by the education policy of the European Union (EU). In 2007, a high-ranking committee, convoked by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), published concrete suggestions to modernize the vocational education and training (VET) system. One important result is the development of a new concept of training modules, which offers disadvantaged young people in the transition system more and reliable opportunities.

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ABSTRACT 54 - Practice

*** FROM THE LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVE: A CASE STUDY OF VET GRADUATES

Dr Louise Fitzgerald
University Technology Sydney

Policy discussions and texts related to generic skills, variously referred to as key skills, competencies, employability skills, and graduate outcomes, share a tendency to foreground the needs of employers and industry (e.g. Employability Skills Report, 2002). A related policy concern to getting the skill mix 'right' is responding to Australia's skills shortage, again, by being led by the needs of industry and employer groups (see eg. Skilling Australia, DEST 2005). This paper proposes that VET graduates' perceptions of their needs, their responses to training and their experiences at work provide valuable insights to policy discussions of these issues in two ways: the ongoing development of generic skills training and more generally, to enhancing the contribution of skilled workers to organisations.

This paper reports on research conducted for a case study of a communication course, composed of many generic skills, in a (TAFE, NSW) Diploma of property (Real Estate) program. A longitudinal survey of the first cohort of thirty students in 2003 used methods including written course evaluations and interviews (both telephone and face-to-face in-depth), observations and systemic data on students' backgrounds to track how students fared both during the program and one year after graduating.

The findings revealed that students' motivation for undertaking the diploma were mixed and this was reflected in their diverse outcomes. They confirm that communication training is most effective when it develops generic skills in authentic work-related contexts. However, these graduates acknowledged the significant role of organisational learning in meeting the communicative, interpersonal and cognitive demands of their professional, flexible and evolving careers. The findings provide insights to how the relation between organisational and institutional learning could be developed. It reveals these graduates sought personal fulfilment in work and cared about their contribution to society. It is proposed that in order to optimise the mutual benefit that skilled workers can bring to organisations, policy discussions could consider more the role of employers and managers in meeting the needs of new graduates.

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ABSTRACT 39 - Practice

PARTICIPATION IN SENIOR SCHOOLING: THE VOCATIONAL ALTERNATIVE AND THE ROLE OF VET

Julie McMillan[1] and David D Curtis[2]
[1]Australian Council for Educational Research
[2]School of Education, University of Adelaide

Participation in senior secondary schooling increased substantially between 1980 and the early 1990s, but has been static since that time. Since the mid 1990s curriculum offerings in the senior school years have been broadened in order to cater for a wider range of student interests and aptitudes. The offering of vocational courses in schools has been a prominent component of this curriculum broadening. At the same time, changes have occurred in the post-school VET landscape with rapid growth in traineeships. The labour market context has also changed with a decline in full-time youth employment accompanied by growth in part-time youth employment for both males and females. Policies on youth participation in education and training have emphasised persistence at school or participation in a vocational alternative. Trends in school completion, VET-in-schools participation, post-school VET enrolments and labour force statistics are examined in order to explore possible causal relationships. The immediate post-school destinations of young people who do not complete secondary schooling are examined. For these young people, VET participation is an important component of their transitions between compulsory education and work. For some young people, especially males, post-school VET qualifications ameliorate their lower school completion rates. For others, post-school VET does not provide this compensation. Policy implications are considered.

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ABSTRACT 36 - Social

*** WORKING FROM OUR STRENGTHS: INDIGENOUS ENTERPRISE AND TRAINING IN ACTION AND RESEARCH

Ruth Wallace[1], Cathy Curry[2] and Richard Agar[3]
[1]*Social Partnerships in Learning Research Consortium, Charles Darwin University*
[2]*CHARTTES Training Advisory Council*
[3]*Kimberley College of TAFE*

Developing innovative and successful approaches to training in remote and regional contexts with Indigenous people necessitates effective partnership and the recognition of diverse knowledge systems as they relate to the worlds of work, community engagement and learning. Social partnerships catalyse and enable change in human or social policy (EU Guideline Principles 2004) Social partnerships *in learning*, then, are the interagency and interdisciplinary relationships that enable effective learning in different disciplines, workplaces and training sites. Social partnerships in learning frameworks are used to; examine diverse knowledge systems, develop capacity building processes and understand the underlying relationships that facilitate connections, engagement and decision making between government, non-government, enterprise, community, stakeholders and individuals (Wallace forthcoming:7). These frameworks operate at and across all levels i.e. involving individuals, organizations and learning systems.

Over the past four years a team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners in learning research across Northern Australia have identified many of the issues that must be addressed to improve economic and community outcomes of training and investment through enterprise development. As the issues have been widely reported, the project team are now looking to the future directions for enterprise development and training research indicated by the findings of these projects.

This paper provides an overview of a series of recent projects developed around enterprise development and training. The issues project teams have explored include the recognition of diverse knowledge systems within the Recognition of Prior Learning process, the role of digital literacies in sharing knowledge and work-based learning. The paper then foreshadows the future directions of this work; addressing a range of issues such as infrastructure, funding, technology and identifying relevant skills sets. Approaches to sustainable enterprise learning and production, professional development and support of successful Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers are also discussed. Essentially the paper focuses on the ways partnerships and relationships, rather than systems, can effect change in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system.

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ABSTRACT 71 - Economic

THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON NATIONAL VET SYSTEMS

Mark Cully
NCVER, Adelaide, SA

This paper shows, using Australia as an example, that the impact of globalisation on national VET systems is complex. It is also shown to be country contingent, depending on the nation's economic and social development, and its prevailing economic and educational institutions. Globalisation poses distinct challenges for VET, in terms of adapting to economic restructuring, as nations adjust to their areas of comparative advantage. Other challenges that are less often taken into account are the globalisation of training markets, and the entry and exit of skills embodied in people due to migration flows.

NOTES

Workshop – 04.04.08
10.15 to 11.45

ABSTRACT 69

UNDERSTANDING AND MAKING USE OF VET STATISTICS

Michelle Circelli[1] & Bridget Wibrow[2]
[1]*NCVER, Adelaide, SA*
[2]Graduate Research Officer, NCVER, Adelaide, SA

This workshop will provide participants with:

- an overview of information that is collected by NCVER and the ABS on students, apprentices and trainees, and employers, their interaction with training providers and the VET system, and the outcomes they experience
- small group demonstrations in how to access and interpret statistics available on the NCVER web site using a variety of tools – web tables, the VET Atlas, and data cubes

NOTES

Concurrent Sessions 5.1 – 04.04.08
13.45 to 14.30

ABSTRACT 28 - Education

'ACE OUTCOMES – FOLLOWING SUIT'?

Dr Helen Kimberley
Equity Research Centre, Collingwood, VIC

Over the past twenty years there have been three major studies of outcomes of adult and community education in Victoria: *Community learning: the outcomes report*, Kimberley, H., TAFE Board, Melbourne 1986; *Outcomes and pathways in adult and community education*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Adult, Community and Further Education Board, Melbourne 1995 and the *ACE Longitudinal Study*, Walstab, A., Volkoff, V., Teese, R., Adult, Community and Further Education Board, Melbourne 2005, 2005 and 2006.

Governments at both federal and state levels have risen and fallen over those twenty years, policies about ACE have changed as have the structures overseeing ACE government funding, which has increased exponentially since 1986, and more closely aligned with VET policy. Yet there is considerable congruence in what ACE was and is achieving and how it is and was valued by its students. This paper looks at the similarities and differences in these three studies that have reported outcomes of ACE in Victoria over those twenty years.

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ABSTRACT 79 - Practice

EXPLORING THE WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHERS IN A MULTI SECTORAL INSTITUTION

Rhonda Hallett
Victoria University, Melbourne Victoria

This paper reports the outcomes of a study that investigated the working knowledge of academics in a 'new generation' university in Australia. It investigates the implications of the findings of the study for professional development processes and practices in a multi sectoral university.

The study explored how academic staff ranging in academics level and experience makes sense of the knowledge they need in their everyday work. A series of phenomenographic analyses highlighted three distinctive but overlapping aspects of this knowledge. The first aspect was *teaching* which was talked about at length by all interviewees. The second aspect was *research* was mentioned by all interviewees but the discussion was not to the depth of those relating to teaching. The third area, not previously the focus of phenomenographic analysis dealt with *institutional administration*. It was this area that a significant proportion of academics devoted most time to discussing. The analysis revealed four themes that seemed to constitute the working knowledge of academics in this study. These themes were explored and were found to elucidate five different categories of working knowledge and ways of working as an academic. Five ways of being an academic were identified. The following verbs describe these ways of experiencing work: *Imitating (pseudo) Adopting (professional competence)*; *Adapting*, (ideas); Adapting (problem); *Defending*, (academic practice); *Rethinking*, (renewing academic practice).

This paper explores the possibility of a parallel study at the same institution which will investigate the working knowledge of VE teachers and elucidate possible ways of 'being' a VE teacher. It draws on what is known about the working knowledge of VE teachers and draws on the work of Chappell *et al* (2000) who suggest that the working knowledge of VE teachers has three distinctive aspects: teaching, institutional administration and entrepreneurialism. It suggests that in a multi sector institution, the working knowledge of VE teachers needs to be considered alongside what is known about the working knowledge of academics so that professional development processes and practices are sensitive to the demands of work of both academics and VE practitioners.

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ABSTRACT 24 - Practice

CAPABILITIES OF THE EMERGING 'ADVANCED VET PRACTITIONER'

Dr John Mitchell
Managing Director, John Mitchell & Associates

The notional 'new VET practitioner' is in tune with the needs of industry and the community, and seeks to customise programs to suit both enterprises and individuals. However, an exceptional version of this practitioner has emerged in recent times in the vocational education and training (VET) sector, who could be described as the 'advanced VET practitioner'. While the new VET practitioner is demand-driven, the advanced VET practitioner has extraordinary capabilities for building client relationships, ensuring customer responsiveness and supporting flexible delivery. This superior strand of VET practitioner is raising the bar of professional practice and deserves public profiling.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 66 – Education

*** SERVING MULTIPLE MASTERS: REVIEWING THE ROLE AND RECOGNITION OF VET WITHIN THE VICTORIAN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATES

Mike Brown and Daryl Sutton
School of Education, University of Ballarat and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

This paper reviews a selection of the policy, curriculum, operational and research literature associated with the recognition of Vocational Education and Training (VET) within the Victorian senior secondary certificates – the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). The central tenet of our paper is that VET in Victorian schools serves multiple purposes and in doing so it offers both risks and opportunities. While the achieved outcomes of the Victorian VET programs achieve national recognition, the recognition of these programs for broader educational certification has become diverse and complex. We use statistical participation data to argue that the incorporation of VET into these senior secondary certificates, appeals to students and offers increased options and pathways in the post-compulsory years of schooling. A range of assessment strategies and procedures have been developed to assist in the recognition of VET within these senior secondary school certificates. In particular, scored assessment and its contribution to national tertiary entrance (ENTER) scores is at the centre of the debates over recognition of VET within VCE. Also in this mix for recognizing VET within the senior secondary certificates are pre-apprenticeship programs, (included as part of the VCE VET suite of programs), school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. The operational, procedural and research literature associated with the complexities of the tandem usage of competency-based and scored assessment are reviewed as they apply in the Victorian context. As with the VCE, VET is also incorporated into VCAL programs through the industry specific and work-related skills streams. VET is mandatory within the intermediate and senior levels of VCAL. Our paper tries to identify and discuss the complexities in this area of VET provision.

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ABSTRACT 64 - Economic

*** ARE AUSTRALIAN JOBS BECOMING MORE SKILL-INTENSIVE? EVIDENCE FROM THE HILDA DATASET

Doug Fraser
Australian Innovation Research Centre, University of Tasmania

Labour market policy rhetoric since the 1980s has promoted the view that jobs in industrialised counties, if they are to survive the pressures of global competition, will need to place ever-increasing demands on the skills of the workforce. This paper describes a study designed to test this proposition on a representative sample of the Australian working population over the period from 2001 to 2005. The data come from HILDA (Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia), a panel survey of some 6,000 households and 18,000 individuals conducted annually since 2001. The dataset includes three indicators representing a common metric across industries, occupations and levels in the workforce hierarchy of the degree to which jobs "stretch" the skill base of those who work in them, together with three variables covering task discretion and worker autonomy, which past research has shown to be highly correlated with skill-intensity. These data make it possible for the first time to duplicate in Australia, albeit in lesser detail, the landmark research on the skills trajectory of the UK economy carried out over the last twenty years for the Economic and Social Research Council. Initial analyses suggest that in the aggregate, Australian jobs were *less* skill-intensive in 2005 than in 2001, a counter-intuitive trend for which an explanation has still to be found.

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ABSTRACT 48 - Papers

PUTTING RESEARCH TO WORK

Cheryl Wilkinson
Adult, Community & Further Education, Melbourne VIC

This seminar explores how the Research Circles experience in Victoria has brought together understandings of research, policy and practice to improve learner outcomes. It will stimulate VET researchers and research sponsors to share ideas on how they can put their research to work and to build VET capability for the future.

Presentation details

In 2007 NCVER released the report *Supporting vocational education and training providers in building capability for the future* (Roger Harris, Berwyn Clayton and Clive Chappell).

Circles of Professional Research Practice (Circles) have provided the opportunity for the research of the Victorian Adult, Community and Further Education Board to be 'put to work'. The aims of the Circles were:

- To bring together interested ACE practitioners and organisations from across Victoria to apply ACFE research to their own situation
- To provide an action research model that can be employed within the ACE sector for its own purposes
- To contribute to the ACE sector's collective capability to meet the goals of the Ministerial Statement

ACFE Research Strategy 2005-2007: *Putting Research to Work*

An evaluation has now shown what the Circles achieved and how and what that has to tell us about building organisational capacity and practitioner capability.

This seminar will explore:

- how the Research Circle model is congruent with current trends in work-based professional learning
- the Research Circle as a mechanism to create/support change and improvement in practice in the context of public policy
- what light the model and its implementation sheds on the nature of applied and action-research and its benefits
- wider applications of the Circle model to professional learning linked to research-based public policy

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ABSTRACT 42 - Education

RECONTEXTUALISING THE CONTEXT OF VET RESEARCH? BEYOND INSTRUMENTALISM TO ULRIKE BECK'S RISK SOCIETY

Peter Kell
University Of Wollongong, Wollongong, NSW

In the recent review of the NCVER contracts AVETRA made submissions discussing the need for a broader research agenda, a diversity of research methodologies and more innovative ways of exploring questions in VET research. This paper is a discussion on developing new theoretical and methodological approaches to VET research based on the work of Ulrike Beck to respond to the changing context of VET research.

Many existing research designs are often instrumental and disconnected from emerging aspects of social and cultural change. The question arises about how VET research can develop methodologies that come to terms with many of the global issues of post-industrial contemporary society.

This paper opens up one possibility for alternative ways of exploring the social and cultural context of research to account for globalisation, the commodification of everyday life, the collapse of the environment, the threat of pandemic disease and entrenched global inequality

There are important questions on how VET research can be theorised and conceptualised to account for these changes in society including the shifting relationships between science and society and what constitutes "useful" skills. Instrumental and systems based notions of skills have dominated debate in VET research and these are deficient in capturing the full complexity of "everyday life" and often perpetuate outdated and redundant ideas about work, life and the environment.

The presentation will discuss the opportunities for VET research to respond to the context associated with German sociologist Ulrich Beck's notion of the "risk society" and "individualisation" (Beck 1999; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2001; Franklin 1998). Beck's theories introduce new ways of looking at how contemporary society operates to distribute what he terms "bads" rather than goods and the discussion will introduce how Beck's work might assist researchers develop a more reflexive framework for thinking about a VET research agenda. The paper will also look at how Beck-Gernsheim's (2001) concept of "a life of one own" might be applied to revitalising discussion on the nature and the VET student experience.

The paper in general proposes new ways of looking a question about VET research by applying alternative theoretical frameworks to VET research and relates to the need to recontextualise the context of VET research.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 43 - Practice

*** TWO WAY MENTORING FOR INDIGENOUS APPRENTICES AND STAFF

Tanyah Nasir
Group Training Northern Territory

The terminology *mentors* and *mentoring* is everywhere - it is used in different contexts at all levels of education and training, and across diverse sectors for a variety of purposes. The terms are laden with conflicting interpretations and expectations from all stakeholders, including in the VET system and among the workers within this sector, industry and small business and most significantly the clients, who in the case of this paper, are Indigenous apprentices.

Mentors and mentoring are also terms that promote the prospect of 'a magic wand' or a 'quick fix' for complex employment, training and learning problems as well as more deep-seated cultural negotiations.

From an Indigenous apprentice's perspective, these concepts often appear to never quite deliver the level of successful mainstream engagement as initially promised.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 29 - Practice

*** PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: WHAT CASUAL TAFE TEACHERS WANT

Susanne Francisco
Canberra Institute of Technology

This paper discusses research into what casual teachers working in one large TAFE institute want in relation to professional development. Empirical evidence gathered through sixty three questionnaires and interviews with three casual teachers will be presented. Against a background of ongoing socio-economic change, the Australian TAFE system must continue to provide quality education and training to meet the demands of a globalised economy and a changing workforce. This is taking place in the context of a TAFE teacher workforce made up of a large proportion of casual workers. At the same time as TAFE is being confronted by increased expectations in relation to teaching and learning practice (Guthrie, Perkins, & Nguyen 2006; Darwin 2004) the increasingly casual TAFE teacher workforce are less likely than permanent staff to access professional development related to VET pedagogy (Guthrie, Perkins, & Nguyen 2006). While anecdotal evidence abounds as to why casual TAFE teachers are less likely to undertake professional development in relation to their teaching role, this research seeks to provide an insight into the issue from the perspective of casual teachers.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 84 - Education

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED: A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY, DESPAIR AND DELIGHT!

Jenny McCormick and Genevieve Haskett
MBA, BEd, DipT & MEd Studs (TESOL), BEd, DipT

The Alternative Learning Options Program (ALOP) is a South Australian Government initiative funded by the Social Inclusion Unit and managed by the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST).

The program provides a range of intervention strategies for young people currently disengaged from school, with the aim of motivating them to pursue further vocational studies, gain employment or return to school.

In July 2007 TAFE SA South in partnership with five local high schools, the City of Onkaparinga, Southern Futures, Southern iCAN and the Southern Success Business Enterprise Centre was successful in winning an ALOP program for the southern metropolitan region. The program aimed to implement a range of innovative, learner-centred methodologies based on contemporary educational theory and practice.

This presentation will take participants on a journey of what happened during the implementation of the Southern ALOP program, the insights gained, the outcomes achieved (a staggering 100%) , the key success factors and the policy implications for the VET and schooling sectors.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 72 -Economic

SKILLS SHORTAGES AND FUTURE SKILLS REQUIREMENTS FOR THE LABOUR FORCE

Angel Calderon[1] and Lucy Stockdale[2]
[1]RMIT
[2]Kangan Batman TAFE

The Victorian Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE) funds research annually to inform their planning and determination of priorities for training. In 2007 a consortium of four Victorian Institutes - RMIT, Kangan Batman, Box Hill and Chisholm, was formed to undertake research for the OTTE into the skills shortages and skills requirements of the manufacturing, retail, finance services and transport, distribution and logistics industries.

The action research project used current debate and research findings to inform a qualitative framework aimed at gathering data from industry stakeholders about the kind of skills needed by the labour force in the selected industries.

A framework for individual work progression and work cycle patterns was developed and variables considered critical in the analysis of skills shortages and skills requirements included cohort trends, regional issues, contemporary challenges such as technology and mobility and career structures and trends.

The following four dimensions were considered within this framework for each of the targeted industries:

- What skills shortages are there due to insufficient workers being trained?
- What skills shortages are there as a result of people choosing to work in occupations other than that for which they have been trained/
- What are the current skills gaps?
- What are the future skills requirements?

One of the key aspects of the research was the recognition of the supply chain link between these industries and exploration of the areas of commonality between them.

Key findings of the project highlight the importance of well-developed common key generic employability skills with variations based on specialisation according to each industry, as well as the need for on-going renewal of individual skills

NOTES

ABSTRACT 56 - Papers

***** DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS A VET RESEARCH TOOL: ANALYSING THE FRONTLINE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE.**

Llandis Barratt-Pugh
School of Management Edith Cowan University

AVETRA provides a unique national opportunity to discuss not just what VET research is producing, but how VET research is actually done. This paper explores the use of discourse analysis as an analytical tool within VET research using the evaluation of the frontline management initiative (FMI) as a basis for this discussion.

The paper begins by discussing the rationale for discourse analysis as a research approach and the applicability of such an approach within VET research. It indicates how a framework for discourse analysis was constructed and operationalised. The paper then provides an overview of the study of the VET frontline management initiative and provides examples of the subsequent conceptualisation produced by this form of analysis.

In conclusion, the paper evaluates discourse analysis as an analytical tool for VET research, indicating in the case of the FMI how discourse analysis illuminated some critical relations that have informed VET policy and practice within organisations.

NOTES

Concurrent Sessions 6.1 – 04.04.08
15.30 to 16.15

ABSTRACT 23 - Education

HIGH LEVEL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE: THE OPERATIONALISING OF CERTAIN VOCATIONAL GRADUATE QUALIFICATIONS

Dr Elizabeth Ruinard
Southbank Institute of Technology

The paper aims to examine the industrial relevance and educational effectiveness of certain of the newly developed vocational graduate qualifications - the Vocational Graduate Certificate (VGC) in Architectural Digital Illustration, the Vocational Graduate Certificate and Diploma (VGC/D) in Culinary Arts and Kitchen Management and the Vocational Graduate Certificate in Applied Biotechnology (Pharmaceuticals and Nutraceuticals).
The research presented derives partly from a Masters of Education dissertation tracing the development of these qualifications from their initial research and concept origins, through the process of curriculum development, to the first instance in which the qualifications are taught. In so doing, it seeks to assess whether the qualifications have the capacity to achieve what they are purported to deliver (in policy and theory) - which is to provide training for the associate professional workforce, where large skills shortages have been identified. The research also aims to identify the potential strengths and limitations of the qualifications, particularly in relation to the genre in which they are written, tending as it does to privilege the performing of skills to the detriment of acquiring higher-order discipline knowledge.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 49 - Practice

*** KNOWLEDGE SHARING AS A KEY DRIVER OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR AN AGEING VET PRACTITIONER WORKFORCE AND FOR VET ORGANISATIONS

Mark Harris and Dr Terry Clark
Southbank Institute of Technology

This paper reports on one section of a larger research study conducted in 2007 in a major metropolitan TAFE Institute. The focus is the professional learning and development environment of an ageing vocational education and training (VET) practitioner workforce.

Recent literature indicates that knowledge sharing is a key driver for maintaining professional and industry currency leading to quality educational outcomes in VET. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods including focus groups, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Contributions were received from approximately 60% of the Institute's teaching staff.

Key outcomes showed willingness to share, linkage to organisational culture, values and goals, and collaborative knowledge sharing to enhance teaching and learning quality. The findings also reveal barriers to and strategies used for knowledge dissemination that underpins a strength-based approach to workforce capability building.

The findings confirm critical elements of success in contemporary best practice models for knowledge sharing and transfer in knowledge based and service industries. They also indicate options for VET organisations responding to the multiple challenges of an ageing workforce operating in a competitive and dynamic environment.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 73 - Practice

***** PROBLEM BASED LEARNING AND INTERNSHIP: MOVING FROM INDUSTRY TO SCHOOL**

Annette Green
Charles Sturt University

Professional experience during any form of teacher preparation is essential. Professional experience provides the opportunity for pre-service teachers in schools, TAFE colleges and other training organisations to gain invaluable contextual and cultural knowledge in the new workplace. This knowledge facilitates the successful transition from the culture and context of their previous careers to a school or other educational setting. This paper reflects on a model of professional experience in a program for students who have been recruited for their industry experience and expertise in food, agriculture, computing, engineering and other industries to become VET in Schools and technology teachers within a secondary school system. In terms of VET in Schools, the currency and vocational knowledge and experience these pre-service teachers bring to schools can provide a valuable asset within the school curriculum. At the same time, these student teachers may struggle with other aspects of their roles as new practitioners in a very different work context from the ones to which they have been socialised and acculturated. The students from the eighteen month intensive Accelerated Teacher Training Program (ATTP), central to this discussion spend a third of their teacher preparation program in schools, completing a problem based learning project which is followed by a ten week internship as a teacher in their new industry, education. A longitudinal research study into the experiences of twelve of these teachers during their first three years of teaching in regional and rural contexts provides some insights into the key issues of this shift in context from a trades and industry background to a school teaching career. This presentation will explore the data from this study in terms of the model of teacher preparation, which includes extended in-school professional experience incorporating curriculum studies and teaching, to examine some of the results of these practices in the field.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 30 - Practice

RPL POLICY TO PRACTICE: WHY THE RETICENCE OF PRACTITIONERS TO ENGAGE?

Janet Hewson
TAFE NSW International Centre for VET Teaching and Learning

Despite more than a decade of policy initiatives and encouragement to embrace RPL there has been an apparent reluctance, born out in national statistics, to take up RPL. In 1992 the National Training Board issued the National competency standards wherein policy and guidelines identified Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as an important element in Competency Based Training. Supporting this stance in 1993 the Federal and State Ministers of Education declared the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT), committing educational institutions, at all levels, to provide recognition for the existing skills and knowledge of students regardless of how, when or where they were acquired.
Fourteen years on the continuing reform agenda maintains the principles of RPL and a concern about its uptake. Recent responses to this concern include the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreement to fund RTO's to establish or improve recognition services and processes, and the Australian Quality Training Framework 2007 that positions RPL as an essential element of quality training and assessment.

Through an interpretive research process 100 teachers and educational leaders shared dialogue expressing their views on the practice of RPL and impediments to its broader embedding in practice. The findings suggest that for many practitioners there are poor understandings across a range of issues and not limited to the prevalent view that tools and frameworks are the critical element, but also about competency units, the nature of evidence and its collection for assessment and a fear of making invalid professional judgements. This lack of individual confidence results in a reticence to provide recognition services. The data suggests that making clear the nature of evidence and its method of collection within the context of RPL may begin to redress the reticence of VET practitioners to engage in recognition practice.

NOTES

ABSTRACT 57 - Practice

PERCEPTION OF CHANGE IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NSW POLICE SERVICE, POST THE WOOD ROYAL COMMISSION

Don Gillies
University of Technology, Sydney

This study examined the perception held by members of the NSW Police Service as to the effectiveness of changes made to education, training and development; post the implementation of changes recommended in the Wood Royal Commission report of 1997.

The study basically adopted an empirical, quantitative research methodology, supplemented by qualitative statements made by participants during discussion sessions. Two separate questionnaires were developed: one for respondents in the broader NSW Police Service (one city and one rural region), and the other for teaching staff at the NSW Police Academy. The Service questionnaire addressed participant perception of the effectiveness or otherwise, of changes made in relevant aspects of individual, team and organisational learning. The Academy questionnaire addressed the perceptions held about the effectiveness or otherwise, of changes made in general learning issues, curriculum development, course delivery and the evaluation of training. An analysis of responses based upon a range of demographic characteristics was also made.

The findings indicated that respondents perceived some improvement in the effectiveness of education, training and development Post the Royal Commission. These findings have possible implications for practice and further research in the NSW Police Force and other police jurisdictions.

NOTES

Concurrent Sessions 6.2 – 04.04.08
16.15 to 17.00

ABSTRACT 44

THE ART OF MAKING: TOWARDS DESCRIPTIONS OF BEING AND DOING

Glenn P. Costin
Tafe NSW Riverina Institute, PhD B.Ed BA TC(C&J)
With Charles Sluga

…because you can argue with a philosopher, you can't argue with a good song…

Yusuf Islam 2008

This session will explore avenues of presenting research that has as its heart the question of skilful practice and its description across multiple areas (and cultures) of human endeavour including the trades, arts, and sciences. Presenting a small part of what is intended as a larger work constituting a book of both academic and fictional elements, the session explores the presentation of two very different fields of human endeavour, a canoe maker in Papua New Guinea and an Australian water colour artist.

Whilst the larger work is to some extent a gathering of practical wisdoms, and an attempt at making these wisdoms accessible to a wider audience, this presentation attempts to encapsulate both these goals, and the projects theoretical undertone: the perceived urgent need for paths in VET beyond competence. Thus is established a dialogue between multiple vocational and academic practices and the theories of authors from diverse perspectives such as Kincheloe, Levi Strauss and Denzin & Lincoln.

Hesitantly he writes, words, ideas, something to kick around. That… …that this is the case, that that. A string of point form notes from which perhaps paragraphs will stem… …perhaps not… …but it gets rid of the blank page. No music tonight, just his thoughts. Later perhaps he'll put something on, something that links and drives the consciousness forward, not radio, never radio: a favoured album, one in which the songs have a sense of connectedness, power, emotion., set on repeat. He hesitates again, stop, start, ideas, then back and work it over again, till the art within the task rises and he can begin to see the form beneath the text…

…now Joe sings, and he listens, and a connection forms…
"…Hold it up to the mirror,
won't you tell me what you see,
something might look familiar to you,
but it's a bad likeness of me…"

(Camilleri & Smith, 1991)

NOTES

Symposium – 04.04.08
15.30 to 17.00

ABSTRACT 60

*** LITERACY AND LIFESKILLS IN AUSTRALIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY ACTIVISM

This Symposium will be tackled in two parts, starting with a brief overview of IALS and ALL and then moving quickly to the recent release of Australian ALL findings.

David Tout
Multifangled and Centre for Adult Education

While literacy skills have been acknowledged and shown to contribute to adults' ability to effectively function in modern society, adults' numeracy skill development has been a neglected domain of knowledge, especially in terms of research. In the home, workplace, or community, adults often need to manage various types of quantitative situations or interpret information that may involve numbers, measurements, probabilities, shapes, statistical information, or quantitative arguments. Numeracy skills help adults to keep up with a rapidly changing world, underlie independent functioning and action as a parent, citizen or worker, are a gatekeeper for entrance into further education in many technical and other occupational areas, and critically affect employability and career options. Given that the ALL survey is the first (inter)national survey of adults' numeracy ability, this presentation will include information on the construct behind the numeracy component of the ALL survey as well as reporting on the initial data from Australia and overseas participating countries.

Sue Shore[1] and Jean Searle[2]
[1]*University of South Australia*
[2]*Griffith University*

This paper explores data collected for the *Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey* (ALLS) – the Australian component of which was released in late 2007. Our interest is in exploring the opportunities for policy and practice that arise as a result of comparing two substantial data sets spanning the decade 1996–2007. We begin by (briefly) outlining the background to the larger survey project coordinated by the OECD/Statistics Canada, which provided the framework and verification processes for Australian data collection. Then we provide some analysis of Australian data with the intention of relating literacy and numeracy to a range of demographic and socio-economic variables. Rather than a description of what was measured and what was found, our primary focus is to engage in critical dialogue with aspects of the findings and lay a framework for some comparative exercises. We hope this will provide VET practitioners and researchers with a preliminary framework for making better use of the findings within organisations, professional and political networks and local communities.

NOTES

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(As at time of printing)

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BAKER, Jeremy	Industry Training Federation
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BENFATTO, John	Canberra Institute of Technology
BENNETT, Peter	ACT Dept of Education & Training
BLACK, Stephen	Northern Sydney Institute
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