

PAPER:

CAPABILITY AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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Abstract:

Australian public and private sector organisations are increasingly aware of the need to continually adapt in order to cope successfully with the rapidly changing and highly competitive environment that characterises the global economy. Hence there is a strong interest in what can be done to make organisations more flexible and responsive so that they can compete both nationally and internationally.

One element of individual and organisational adaptability is Capability. This can be described as: the confident and mindful application of both current and potential ability (competence and capacity), and values within varied and changing situations to formulate problems and actively work towards solutions as a self-managed learning process.

Most developmental work around the application of this concept has been undertaken in the past eight years in the United Kingdom. by the Higher Education for Capability group led by John Stephenson. In Australia, the Australian Capability Network (ACN) was formed in 1993, and has since run four national conferences and a number of workshops: the latter have focussed on how the idea of Capability can be applied in Australian workplaces. As a result of these forums it was decided to formally investigate the application of organisational Capability in the Australian context.

This research project was designed to examine the question:

What is existing best practice in the development of Capability in Australian organisations?

In particular, there was a need to:

- Further develop the concepts of organisational and individual capability
- in the context of adaptation and growth within organisations.
- Document examples of how organisational and individual capability is
- currently being developed in Australian organisations.
- Further understand how to increase workplace capability.
- Identify the implications of Capability for vocational education and
- training.