

Competency Based Assessment – One minute wonder or here to stay? Practitioners' Attitudes to Assessment in 2000

Robin Booth
Vocational Education and Assessment Centre

Competency based training and assessment was introduced to Australia in the early 1990s through the push to restructure Australian industry and the National Training Reform Agenda. Industry determined competency based standards became a central feature of the National Framework for the Recognition of Training and the competency based education juggernaut was launched.

Vocational education providers developed competency based curriculum and teachers were trained in the concepts of the collection of evidence to make this assessment. With the introduction of Training Packages, the emphasis on the collection of evidence to assess a candidate's capacity to meet industry standards has taken even more prominence. But how successful has the movement to implement this form of assessment been in industry and among what are now known as Registered Training Organisations?

There have been various stocktakes and surveys of the progress of the implementation of CBT since its inception. The Vocational Education and Assessment Centre (VEAC) part of TAEF NSW, has conducted research and workshop dissemination activities over the past year which have canvassed industry and institutional assessors' attitudes to assessment practices.

This paper draws on the results of two VEAC projects which examined current attitudes and practices of industry representatives and practitioners both nationally and in NSW specifically. In both of these projects respondents were particularly concerned about quality of assessment and the issue of consistency in assessment judgements. Both projects also reported great concern over the issue of grading and the desire for a return of educational policies which support grading of assessment decisions. The experience of VEAC has been that there is still confusion amongst practitioners about the key features of the implementation of competency based assessment.

The paper raises questions as a result of this analysis about where and whether we need to focus in continuing to implement competency based assessment in Australia.

Contact details:

Vocational Education and Assessment Centre
Crows Nest Campus, Rodborough Avenue
Crows Nest NSW 2065

Ph: 02 94484558 Fax: 02 94484560