

Building VET research capacity through mentoring:

one small step for new researchers, one giant leap for the VET research community.

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What we will cover....

- An introduction to the issue
- An introduction to the scheme
- Designing a learning framework for new VET researchers
- Action research methodology
- Aims and research questions
- Cycles of the programme
- Learning from the interaction
- Conclusion

Hervey Bay

– into the unknown....



The Challenge....

- A “greying” population....
- Building researcher capacity
- CoP – mentors – higher research degree support
- Unknown new researchers, process and outcomes!
- Do What? – projects – local base – publish and present

Researching researching....

- Building skills and knowledge – H Ed model
- No simple knowledge – higher order – cognitive apprenticeship
- Geographical impediments
- The knowledge of practice – support in practice – motivation
- Cooke UK : 3 levels – 6 issues
- *Levels: individual – team – network levels*
- *Skills & confidence – Close to practice – partnerships*
- *Continuous process – dissemination of findings - infrastructure*

Action Research....

- Retrospective....
- Change in Field : Understanding of it
- Participant benefit: Academic benefit
- Participatory Action Research – research fringe benefit – tracked
- Distinction between directors and learners blurred.
- Voyeurism displaced by activism
- Cycles of events recorded and enacted

Aims....

- *The aim of the VET mentoring relationship is to support communities of practice scholarship holders develop, complete and write up their VET research project.*
- What actions supported new researcher development?
- What was their impact?
- What can be learned from the activity

Action cycles....

- Initial proposal and construction
- Workshop and mentoring links
- Multiple teleconferences
- Second selection, workshops and mentor selection
- Additional workshop – includes H Degree students

Themes emerging....

- 'I just need more release time for my job to get things really progressing' – 'I'm realising that research is never undertaken in a vacuum' - Managing and balancing.
- 'Her feedback, guidance and her ability to drive me to do my best is just incredible' – 'he is excellent....and really is a fabulous source of information'. Mentoring.

Themes emerging....


- '(My) industry partner not on the same timeframe as me....'. Coordinating data collection with deadlines.
- – 'We have tried by our diaries keep missing' – mentoring relationships across distances.
- 'Seeing what others produced was an eye opener for me.' – the need to know what was at the end.....

What have we gained....

- 20/25 new VET researchers – reflective practitioners
- A culture change – pathway and mentoring skills
- Coordination within the sector
- Clear vision of relevant outcomes – 20 pages
- Not higher degree – modest local projects
- Ticks all of Cooke's boxes.....levels and principles
- Responded to the research questions – know what action, their impact and what learning.

Conclusion....

- Four key outcomes:
 - A new researcher pathway has been established
 - We have built infrastructure to generate new researchers
 - The activity has produced resources for developing new researchers
 - The scheme has produced considerable VET knowledge



AVETRA 2010 - Queensland

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