The Value and Voice of VET Research for individuals, industry, community and the nation

AVETRA 2012
15TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Thursday, 12 April – Friday, 13 April 2012
Rydges Capital Hill, Canberra

Wednesday, 11 April 2012
Pre-Conference Workshops
Welcome Reception

Final Program & Abstract Book
AVETRA is grateful to the following, who at the time of publishing this document, have given their support in many different ways:

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**SILVER SPONSOR:**

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**Group Training Australia**
The Largest Employer Network of Apprentices and Trainees

**RMIT PUBLISHING**

**NCVER**
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ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Llandis Barratt-Pugh  President of AVETRA, Associate Professor Edith Cowan University

Roslin Brennan Kemmis AM, AVETRA 2012 Conference Convenor, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Charles Sturt University

Sharon Ahern, Charles Sturt University

Sarojni Choy, School of Education and Professional Studies, Mount Gravatt Campus, Griffith University

Berwyn Clayton, Director, Work-Based Education Research Centre, Victoria University, Footscray

Barbara Cram, Project Manager Regional Programs, University of Canberra

Kevin Heys, Faculty Director, Vocational Access Faculty, TAFE NSW, South Western Sydney Institute

Martha Kinsman, VET Researcher

Damien Pearce, Associate Director, National Youth Science Forum

Sarah Sutcliffe, Industry Workforce Branch, Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education

Anita Wesney, Manager Research and Policy, Centre for Education Excellence, Canberra Institute of Technology

Astrida Upitis, Director, Department of Innovation, Industry, Science, Research & Tertiary Education

VENUES

Pre-Conference Workshops and Welcome Reception will be held at:

Canberra Institute of Technology
K Block, Reid Campus
Constitution Avenue, Reid
Canberra ACT 2600 AUSTRALIA

The AVETRA 15th Annual Conference will be held at:

Rydges Capital Hill
Corner Canberra Avenue and National Circuit Forrest ACT 2603 AUSTRALIA
Tel: +61 2 6295 3144

CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT

Cathy Wanny
AVETRA 2012 Conference Secretariat
C/ – Conference Action Pty Ltd
PO Box 576
Crows Nest NSW 1585 AUSTRALIA
Tel (Main): +61 2 9431 8699
Fax: +61 2 9431 8677
Email: avetra@conferenceaction.com.au
Floor Plan
LEVEL 2, RYDGES CAPITAL HILL
A very warm welcome to the heart of Canberra and the Rydges Capital Hill.

AVETRA convenes this conference in our capital city, a very fitting place to reflect on what VET research has produced and where our VET research should go. Use the conference as a space to meet new colleagues, a space to learn, and a space to think.

Our thanks must go to the AVETRA conference committee who has spent their precious time organising the speakers, venues and papers reviewing for this event.

Above all enjoy your time in Canberra and with your VET research colleagues.

Dr Llandis Barratt-Pugh
President, AVETRA
Registration Desk

- **Pre-Conference Workshops**
  The Registration Desk for the workshops on Wednesday, 11 April 2012 will be located at the CIT, K Block Reid Campus, Constitution Avenue, Reid, Canberra.
  Opening hours: 1330 – 1700 hours

- **Welcome Reception**
  The Registration Desk for the Welcome Reception on Wednesday, 11 April 2012 will be located at the CIT, The Dining Room, K Block, Reid Campus, Constitution Avenue, Reid, Canberra.
  Opening hours: 1800 – 2000 hours.

- **Conference**
  The Registration Desk for the AVETRA 2012 Conference will be located in the Forrest Suite Foyer on Level 2 of the Rydges Capital Hill.
  Opening hours will be as follows:
  - Thursday, 12 April 2012 0730 – 1730 hours
  - Friday, 13 April 2012 0730 – 1645 hours

Speaker Preparation Area

We hope that all speakers have uploaded their presentations via the drop box provided by our audio visual technicians. However, all speakers are asked to check their audio visual material before presenting. We ask that you check-in with the audio visual technicians at least 2 hours prior to your presentation, at which point you can provide your PowerPoint presentation if you have not sent it in advance.

A technician will be at the back of the Forrest Suite plenary room, as well as a separate speaker preparation table set up in the Forrest Suite Foyer.
ABSTRACTS
Abstracts can be found at the end of this document. Abstracts, PowerPoint presentations and/or full papers will be available on the AVETRA website after the conference (http://avetra.org.au). Delegates will be notified by email when the papers will be available.

ACCOMMODATION

• Room Account
All credit card details have been forwarded on to the hotel to secure reservations, therefore delegates are reminded to finalise their own accounts for accommodation and incidentals prior to departure.

• Check Out & Concierge
Check out is requested before 1000 hours at all venues. It is advised you check out before the conference starts on Friday, 13 April 2012 and leave your luggage at concierge at the Rydges Capital Hill as this will facilitate your departure. No bags will be kept at the Registration Desk.

DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY: The Organising Committee, including the AVETRA 2012 Conference Secretariat, will not accept liability for damages of any nature sustained by participants or loss of or damage to their personal property as a result of the conference or related events.
AUDI/O VIDEO TAPING OF SESSIONS
Audio or video taping of any of the conference sessions is strictly forbidden.

CREDIT CARDS
Credit cards accepted at the Registration Desk are MasterCard, Visa and American Express, however no transactions will be processed until after the conference. Please note that Diners cards are not accepted.

DRESS CODE
Dress code during the conference and social functions is smart casual.

EVALUATION
Your feedback on the conference and suggestions for the 2013 event will be solicited by an electronic survey shortly after the conference.

LOST & FOUND
The AVETRA 2012 Conference Secretariat is not responsible for any damaged, lost or stolen articles. Items found during the conference should be handed in to the Registration Desk where they may be claimed.

MOBILE PHONE AND PAGERS
Delegates are requested to turn off mobile phones and pagers during sessions as they may interfere with the audio visual equipment in the rooms.

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

NON SMOKING POLICY
The hotel operates a non-smoking policy in all its accommodation and conference rooms.

NOTICE BOARD
A notice board will be placed near the Registration Desk where messages received for or between delegates can be displayed. Messages regarding the conference and exhibition will also be placed here.

TRADE EXHIBITION
A trade exhibition will be held in the Forrest Suite Foyer, level 2 of the Rydges Capital Hill Hotel. Arrival tea & coffee, morning tea and afternoon tea refreshments will be served in these areas to enable you to visit the exhibitors whose support to the conference is much appreciated.
WELCOME RECEPTION

Sponsored by:

Room: The Dining Room
Venue: Canberra Institute of Technology, K Block
Reid Campus, Constitution Avenue, Reid, Canberra
Date: Wednesday, 11 April 2012
Time: 1800 – 2000 hours
Cost: Included in Full and One Day Registration Fee
Complimentary for guests

It is hoped all delegates and partners will be able to attend this evening as this is a great opportunity for networking. This evening has been kindly sponsored by the Canberra Institute of Technology.
ARRIVAL TEA/COFFEE, MORNING/AFTERNOON TEAS AND LUNCHES

Arrival tea/coffee, morning and afternoon teas will be served in the Forrest Suite Foyer, level 2 of the Rydges Capital Hill.

Sit down buffet lunches will be served in the Figtree Tree Café, level 1 of the Rydges Capital Hill.

PRE-DINNER DRINKS AND CONFERENCE DINNER

Room: The Great Hall
Venue: Australian National University
        ANU Campus, 1 Balmain Crescent, Acton
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1930 – 2300 hours
Cost: $100 per person

This year fabulous entertainment has been planned for the enjoyment of all. We hope all delegates and their guests will join us on this occasion to make it a memorable evening of the conference. Come and catch up with friends, colleagues and acquaintances and meet with new people while enjoying good food and wine. This is also an important opportunity to acknowledge our colleagues with the award presentations.

Coaches will be available from your hotel to transfer you to the ANU. See page 12 for time schedule.

Early Career Researcher Award sponsored by NCVER
Presented by Tom Karmel
Transfers

The below transfers have been organised for your convenience.

**Coach Itinerary**

**WEDNESDAY, 11 APRIL, 2012**

2015       Coach departs CIT and transfers delegates to Rydges Capital Hill
2015       Coach departs CIT and transfers delegates to Rydges Lakeside

**THURSDAY, 12 APRIL 2012**

0730       Coach departs Rydges Lakeside to go the Rydges Capital Hill
1750       Coach departs Rydges Capital Hill to transfer delegates to Rydges Lakeside
1910       Coach departs Rydges Capital Hill and Rydges Lakeside to transfer delegates to the ANU – Gala Dinner
2220       Coach departs ANU to transfer delegates to Rydges Capital Hill & Rydges Lakeside
2300       Coach departs ANU to transfer delegates to Rydges Capital Hill & Rydges Lakeside

**FRIDAY, 13 APRIL 2012**

0730       Coach departs Rydges Lakeside to go the Rydges Capital Hill
Sponsor & Exhibitor Profiles
Established in 2005, the TDC has been committed to raising the professional standing of the VET workforce through the design and delivery of high quality professional learning programs to meet the strategic needs of VET providers and the emerging practice priorities of VET professionals. The range of programs provided by the TDC address high quality initial and ongoing teacher education, development of VET specialist or non-teaching staff, and leadership and management capability. Through the development and delivery of high quality programs, the TDC targets key issues emerging as VET market dynamics change with new policy directions.

Group Training Organisations (GTOs) are Australia’s largest employer network of apprentices and trainees with over 35,000 apprentices and trainees placed with host employers in metropolitan, regional and remote areas. GTOs are active in most industries and provide monitoring and support services for both the apprentices and trainees and the employers hosting them.

Group Training Australia is the national peak body for group training, representing and leading the GTO network and making a broad contribution to the VET sector.

To contact a GTO visit: www.grouptraining.com.au.
Canberra Institute of Technology
GPO Box 826,
Canberra, ACT, 2601
Tel: 02 6207 3188
Email: infoline@cit.edu.au
Web: cit.edu.au

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) is the ACT’s premier and largest vocational education and training provider. CIT offers over 400 nationally-recognised courses ranging from statements of attainment, traineeships and apprenticeships, certificates, diplomas and degrees. CIT’s progressive and accessible education solutions utilise the latest technology to strengthen teaching with flexible and online learning options, and CIT is proud to consistently achieve excellence against national teaching and learning criteria.

NCVER
Level 11, 33 King William Street
Adelaide SA 5000
Contact: Colleen Young
Tel:  08 8230 8400
Fax:  08 8212 3436
Email: colleen.young@ncver.edu.au
Web:  www.ncver.edu.au

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) is Australia’s principal provider of research and statistics about vocational education and training (VET) in Australia.

NCVER’s website www.ncver.edu.au is a ‘one-stop-shop’, providing access to NCVER’s latest research, statistics, news and events. It offers access to NCVER’s extensive catalogue of publications, which can be downloaded free of charge and the VOCED plus database www.voced.edu.au.
Exhibitors

(COFFEE BREAK SPONSOR)

CPSISC
PO Box 151
Belconnen ACT 2616
Contact: Heidi Carmona
Tel: 02 6253 0002
Fax: 02 6253 0004
Email: heidi.carmona@cpsisc.com.au
Web: www.cpsisc.com.au

E Content Management
PO Box 1027
Maleny VIC 8006
Contact: James Davidson
Tel: 07 5435 2900
Email: j davidson@e-contentmanagement.com
Web: www.e-contentmanagement.com

EWorks
Level 5, 437 St Kilda Road
Melbourne VIC 3004
Contact: Natalie Lierse
Tel: 03 9661 8755
Email: Natalie.Lierse@eworks.edu.au
Web: www.eworks.edu.au

Group Training Australia
GPO Box 7051
Sydney NSW 2001
Contact: Leonie Stanfield
Tel: 02 9299 6099
Fax: 02 9299 6145
Email: leonie.stanfield@grouptraining.com.au
Web: www.grouptraining.com.au
Pre-Conference Workshops

Pre-Conference Workshops are being held on Wednesday, 11 April 2012 at CIT, K Block, Reid Campus, Constitution Avenue, Canberra, ACT.

Registration for the workshops will open at 1330 hours on Wednesday, 11 April 2012. The Registration Desk will be in K Block Reid Campus, Constitution Avenue, Canberra.
PREPARING COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL GRANTS

Professor Erica Smith  
University of Ballarat

Professor Stephen Billett  
Griffith University

Special Guest Speaker:  
Professor Marian Simms  
Executive Director, Social Behavioural and Economic Sciences at the Australian Research Council

This workshop is aimed at participants with existing research experience who are considering applying for nationally competitive research funding. Australian Research Council (ARC) grants are considered to be highly competitive and prestigious research grant schemes. Whilst they are only available to university researchers, partners from other institutions can be involved in projects. The ARC funds a number of schemes, including the ‘Discovery’ program and ‘Linkage’ grants, which include industry partners. Early career researcher awards are now available, for people within five years of completing their PhDs.

ARC grants are difficult to win, and people need to complete high-quality applications, which in turn depend on having built a strong research track record and on having spent a great deal of time developing the proposal.

The workshop is led by two AVETRA members who have had successes and failures in gaining ARC grants. Erica has had successes in Linkage grant applications, and Stephen has had successes in both Discovery and Linkage schemes, as well as International Linkage and Future Fellowship applications. Both are also assessors for ARC and other national and international grant schemes.

The workshop will initially provide some information about the different schemes, and an overview of the application processes and timelines. The emphasis will then move into preparing a competitive application, focusing on building and presenting details of the research team, track record and partners as well as preparing the required 10-page core section of the application. Examples of successful applications will be used to assist participants identify what constitutes such an application. Suggestions will also be generated, in discussion, about the development of
long-term strategies that build towards success in these schemes. Depending on the nature and interests of the participants, discussion of participants’ own research ideas may be included.

While the workshop is primarily aimed at those interested in applying for ARC funding, it may be of interest to others seeking more general information about how to devise a grant application and build a research track record.

We are fortunate to secure Professor Simms’ attendance, which is made easier by the fact that the ARC is based in Canberra. We will be able to hear up to date information about current and new ARC programs.
AUSTRALIAN ADULT LITERACY AND NUMERACY PROVISION: BUILDING SUSTAINABLE RESEARCH CULTURES

Dr Sue Shore
Charles Darwin University, Northern Territory

This is an interactive preconference workshop to promote debate about the role of research in building and supporting adult literacy and numeracy (ALN) provision in Australia via two related activities:

1. A discussion paper and panel session on the role of field based and university ‘knowledge work’ in building understandings of ALN provision in Australia
2. An interactive workshop that canvasses participant’s responses to historical artefacts associated with key shifts in ALN provision over the past three decades

The first activity involves responding to key issues in a paper that proposes four identifiable moments in ALN research as a way to explore the opportunities available to ALN researchers over the past 30 years and the lessons learned from those opportunities. The outcome of those discussions will contribute to further action in developing an ALN research culture that, at minimum, produces visible, public, published accounts of its activity which is therefore open to public debate; promotes research pathways and networking within and across sectors, disciplines and providers; provides advice to government and non-government agencies on ALN provision; and, accesses a range of financial and resource supports to expand understandings of ALN policy and provision through local and global networks.

The second activity is based on research in progress from South Australia that explores the opportunities for rethinking current and future practice by engaging with a range of historical artefacts assembled from more than 30 years of adult literacy research and activism. Building on collaborations with international researchers who have undertaken systematic analyses of LLN policy and research activity in the UK (Hamilton and Hillier 2006; Hillier and Jameson 2003; Hillier 2006) participants will be involved in developing shared reflections on archival materials provided for the workshop and examining ways in which other states might share in similar historically aligned memory work.
NCVER’S BUILDING RESEARCHER CAPACITY COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Berwyn Clayton  
*Director Work Based Education Research Centre, Victoria University, Footscray*

Ros Brennan Kemmis(AM)  
*Faculty of Education, Charles Sturt University*

Sarojini Choy  
*School of Education and Professional Studies, Mount Gravatt Campus, Griffith University*

This informal workshop with provide members of the NCVER’s Building Researcher Capacity Community of Practice with the opportunity to discuss their research with their mentors and facilitators. It also provides participants with the opportunity to share their ideas and research development.

This workshop is for members of the CoP and will be free of charge.
WORKSHOP 4

Room: C24, K Block Reid Campus, CIT
Date: Wednesday, 11 April 2012
Time: 1330 – 1700 hours

NATIONAL CONTEXTS OF AND FOR EFFECTIVE TVET PROVISIONING: NATIONAL CONTEXTS AND EFFECTIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PRACTISES RECONFIGURED

Salim Akoojee
University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority

National TVET contexts are in an ongoing state of flux. The release of the Green paper on post-school education and training in South Africa and the Chinese National Education Plan are but two examples of the rapidly changing national context. Developments in Australia also testify to this global re-orientation of TVET systems. This has been accompanied by developments on the world stage which has enabled countries to cast attention on national systems of TVET provisioning. As the latest issue of NORRAG NEWS (No. 46) boldly asserts in its introduction, “The years 2011-2012 are finally TVET’s turn.” International developments include the publication of two key documents. The first, the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) for 2012 is to be to focus on the skills development as the last of the 6 EFA Dakar Goals to be analysed in depth. The second, the launch the World TVET Report, which will be the main document at the third World Congress on TVET, scheduled for Shanghai in April 2012. By no coincidence then that the meeting of African commonwealth Ministers of Education in early 2012 focussed attention on vocational education provision systems.

This pre-conference workshop will explore the nature, context and form of the macro-structures in place for efficient and effective TVET and skills development practices. The national contexts include both public and private TVET provisioning and their systems impacts on national development imperatives and trajectories. What works and what doesn’t and in what circumstances? What needs to be learnt? What lessons are there from enabling TVET national contexts?

Key issues that will be explored include inter alia:

1. Purposes, ends and means: What considerations are paramount?
2. What national structural considerations advance effective provisioning?
3. The legislative context of TVET provisioning.
4. Funding regimes for effective practise, including funding.
5. Forms of TVET Provisioning: Public, private, formal, non-formal and Informal
6. ‘Client’ base’ of the various TVET forms. Pre-, Un and employed provisioning.
7. The relationship between TVET and other education and training forms, i.e. schooling, higher education and others.
8. The research context of provision? What is the context for TVET research? What mechanisms exist for an enabling research?
9. Stakeholders: Whose voices are heard? Purposes?
10. What are the roles and perspectives of participants, social and economic actors?
11. Qualification frameworks and TVET provisioning
12. Responding effectively to the challenges: The role of advocacy
Notes
Keynote Speakers
Robin Shreeve  
*CEO, Skills Australia*

Robin Shreeve has worked in the skills sector for more than 30 years in Australia and England. He is currently the Chief Executive of Skills Australia. Skills Australia is an independent advisory body advising the Australian Government on workforce development and workforce skill needs. Robin has been the Chief Executive of two large Tertiary Institutions – one in Australia, the North Coast Institute of TAFE and one in Westminster, Central London. For different periods between 1989 and 2005 Robin worked for the Department of Education and Training in New South Wales Australia. His final position was Deputy Director-General for Technical, Further and Community Education (TAFE). Robin has also been a Board Director for a number of organisations including the NSW Board of Studies, AeSharenet, Worldskills Australia, TAFE Global Pty Ltd, the Paddington Development Trust, the London Apprenticeship Company and the Westminster Small Minority Business Council. He currently sits on the Advisory Boards of the Critical Skills Investment Fund and the L H Martin Institute. Robin holds degrees from the Universities of York and Sheffield and has spoken and published widely on vocational education and training and marketing topics.

Dr Salim Akoojee, Research and Development Manager, Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA)

Salim Akoojee currently serves as Research and Development Manager at the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA). Research experience includes chief researcher at the Human Sciences Research Council, and as academic advisor at University of the Witwatersrand. He has published extensively. Three book monographs and more than 30 research articles in national and international peer reviewed publications attests to this. Chief research interest includes Technical and Vocational Education and Skills Development. Other areas include ‘access’ in higher education and the impact of globalisation on South African education and training system and public and private post-school education and training systems. The subject of the latter area published in African Education Review enabled inclusion into the ‘Routledge class of 2011’ as one of the most downloaded journal articles of the year.

He currently serves as a Senior Consultant Editor in ‘Africa Education Review’ and current Board Membership of the International Network of Innovative Apprenticeship (INAP). He has also worked on a range of joint research projects including UNESCO, DANIDA and DFID and has served as member of an expert panel on TVET to the European Training Foundation (ETF), Turin (Italy) (2011).
Dr Tom Karmel  
*Managing Director, National Centre for Vocational Education Research*

Dr Karmel took up the position of Managing Director, National Centre for Vocational Education Research in August 2002.

Prior to this position he held senior appointments in the Federal government areas of education, employment, labour market research and the Bureau of Statistics.

His research interests have centred on the labour market and the economics of education, focussing on empirical modelling, and he has a particular interest in performance indicators both in higher education and vocational education and training.

He has an honours degree in mathematical statistics (Flinders), and a Masters of Economics and doctorate from the Australian National University (The impact of increasing education levels on the Australian workforce).

Professor Ann-Marie Bathmaker  
*Professor of Further Education and Lifelong Learning at the University of the West of England, Bristol, UK*

Professor Ann-Marie Bathmaker started her career in secondary and post-secondary education in England, working in provision for English for Speakers of Other Languages, and in technical and vocational education. She worked as a local authority advisor for equal opportunities and technical and vocational education, before moving into higher education. Her career in higher education has involved teacher education for the post-compulsory education and training sector, teaching and managing professional doctorate programmes, and leading developments in teaching and learning. She directs the Bristol Research Centre in Lifelong Learning and Education at UWE Bristol, and is involved in a number of current research projects, which include:

- **Paired Peers**: a longitudinal study of working-class and middle-class undergraduates’ experience at Bristol’s two universities
- **Vocational schools in Austria**: a review of practice and a vision for the future
- **DISCO**: the construction of a multi-lingual vocational thesaurus to support European mobility
- **Engineer**: the development of inquiry-based learning in science and technology education

She has just completed a study of the construction of knowledge in English General Vocational Education.
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Workshop 1</th>
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<td>1430</td>
<td>Preparing Competitive Applications for</td>
<td>Australian Adult Literacy and Numeracy</td>
<td>NCVER’s Building Researcher Capacity</td>
<td>National Contexts of and for Effective TVET</td>
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<td>Australian Research Council Grants</td>
<td>Provision: Building Sustainable Research Cultures</td>
<td>Community of Practice</td>
<td>Provisioning: National Contexts and Effective</td>
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<td><em>Prof Erica Smith</em></td>
<td><em>Dr Sue Shore</em></td>
<td><em>Berwyn Clayton</em></td>
<td>Skills Development Practises Reconfigured</td>
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<td>University of Ballarat</td>
<td>Charles Darwin University, Northern Territory</td>
<td><em>Director Work Based Education Research Centre, Victoria University</em></td>
<td><em>Associate Prof Salim Akoojee</em></td>
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<td><em>Prof Stephen Billett</em></td>
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<td>Griffith University</td>
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<td>*Special Guest Speaker:</td>
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<td><em>Sarojni Choy</em></td>
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<td><em>Professor Marian Simms</em></td>
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<td>Economic Sciences at the Australian Research</td>
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<td>AFTERNOON TEA – Sponsored by CIT</td>
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<td>Workshops Continued</td>
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<td>0730</td>
<td>Registration and Arrival Tea &amp; Coffee</td>
<td>The Forrest Suite Foyer – Level 2</td>
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<td>0815 – 0830</td>
<td>Welcome to Country</td>
<td>Forrest Suite Plenary Room – Level 2</td>
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<td>0830 – 0845</td>
<td>Welcome and Conference Opening</td>
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<td>Dr Llandis Barratt-Pugh, AVETRA President</td>
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<td>0845 – 0930</td>
<td>KEYNOTE 1: Aligning Tertiary Education with the Demand for Skills and Qualifications in a Changing World</td>
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<td>Robin Shreeve, CEO, Skills Australia</td>
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<td>Chair: Llandis Barratt-Pugh</td>
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<td>0930 – 1000</td>
<td>MORNING TEA – Sponsored by CPSISC</td>
<td>The Forrest Suite Foyer – Level 2</td>
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<td>1000 – 1230</td>
<td>CONCURRENT SESSION 1</td>
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<td>Breakout A</td>
<td>The Economic and Industry Impacts of VET Research</td>
<td>Forrest Suite 1</td>
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<td>Eclectic Approaches by Worker-Learners to Authentic Work-Based Learning and Assessment</td>
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*Abstract Numbers indicate the importance of the abstracts, with higher numbers indicating more important sessions.*

*Presenters are listed for each session.*
## CONCURRENT SESSION 2

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### 1320 – 1350

**Making the Links Between Quality Training, Graduate Destinations and Building Alumni in TAFE**

**Kate Dempsey**

**Modeling of Vocational Excellence Take Two: A Global Perspective**

**Helen Smith Mohamad Ali Rahim**

**Conceiving Higher Vocational Education and Training: Fault Lines, Potential and Feminising the AQF**

**David Mclean**

**The Intercultural Approach to VET Teaching and Learning**

**Ly Thi Tran**

**Abstract 30**

**Abstract 74**

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### 1350 – 1400

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**Abstract 66**

**Abstract 19**

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**Abstract 17***

**Abstract 35***

### 1400 – 1430

**Developing Green Skills Through a Regional TAFE Institute**

**Michael Brown**

**Using Workplace Learning Theory to Understand the Experiences of Novice Teachers: A Contribution to Tertiary Sector Research**

**Steven Hodge Lauri Grace**

**This is it Folks, Over the Top! How do we Lead from the Frontline in the Changing VET Environment? What Skills and Capabilities Do Our Frontline VET Educational Leaders Require?**

**Linda Simon Annette Bonnici**

**Promises and Expectations Between Apprentices, Trainees and Their Employer**

**Ros Brennan Kemmis AM Sharon Ahern Diane Middleton**

**Skills Recognition in the Australian Rail Industry: Opportunities and Challenges**

**Anne Morrison Lisa Davies Ros Cameron Katie Maher**

**An Association for VET’s Professionals: What’s the Story?**

**Hugh Guthrie Berwyn Clayton**

### 1430 – 1440

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| 1440 – 1510 | **The Role of VET in the Employment and Mobility Trajectories of Immigrant-Born Early Childhood Education and Care Workers**  
**Alicia Boyle**  
**Kate Golebiowska** | **Abstract 71**  
Observations of the Industry-VET Relationship: From the Perspective of a New Researcher  
**Karen O'Reilly Briggs** |
| 1510 – 1520 | CHANGE ROOM                                                             | **TBA**                                                                         |
| 1520 – 1550 | **Using the 'Transition Systems' Literature to Understand the Position of VET in Australia**  
**Leesa Wheelahan**,  
**Gavin Moodle**,  
**John Buchanan** | **Abstract 34**  
TBA |
| 1550 – 1600 | CHANGE ROOM                                                             | **TBA**                                                                         |
| 1600 – 1630 | **Guaranteeing What in a Contestable Training Market?**  
**John Pardy** | **Abstract 68***  
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| 1630 – 1655 | AFTERNOON TEA                                                           | **The Forrest Suite, Level 2**                                                  |
| 1655 – 1740 | **KEYNOTE 2: Towards a Responsive TVET Research Agenda for the 21st Century: Time for Doing Different Things Differently!**  
**Salim Akoojee**  
**Hon, Associate Professor, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (South Africa)**  
**Research and Development**  
**Chair: Michele Simons**  
**Introduced by TDC** | **Forrest Suite Plenary Room – Level 2** |
| 1740 – 1820 | AVETRA AGM (Complimentary drink voucher will be provided for all who attend) | **Acacia Lounge, Level 3**                                                      |
| 1930 – 2300 | Pre-Dinner Drinks, Dinner & Awards Presentations                        | **University House, ANU**                                                       |
**DAY 2 : Friday, 13 April 2012**

Rydges Capital Hill

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<td><strong>Tom Karmel NCVER</strong> Managing Director, National Centre for Vocational Education Research</td>
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**1030 – 1040**

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| 1040 – 1110 | The Notion of Quality  
Wes Davis, Lyn Rickard  
Effects of Donor Supported Educational Reforms on the Identity of Bangladeshi TVET Teachers in Transition  
Tony Holland  
Navigating Change in a Public Agency  
Carmel Ellis-Gulli  
Rosalind Carter  
Practice Based Research and Critical Pedagogy  
– Rethinking Teacher Education for Vocational Educators  
Lisa Maurice-Takerei  
Helen Anderson  
Australian VET Teacher Training in the Current National Context: An Appraisal of its Quality?  
Peter Jansen  
Jennifer Archer  
Donald Adams |
| 1110 – 1120 | CHANGE ROOM  
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| 1120 – 1150 | An Old Chestnut Revisited: Teachers’ Opinions and Attitudes Toward Grading Within a Competency Based Training Framework  
James Richards  
The Impact of VET in Schools on Apprenticeship and Traineeship Completion  
Sinan Gemici  
Vocational Education: Standing and Clarification of Key Objectives  
Stephen Billet |
| 1150 – 1200 | CHANGE ROOM  
TBA |
| 1200 – 1230 | Student Movement: Pathways, Fields and Links to Work  
Nick Fredman  
Professional Development Using Informal Learning Networks: An Empirical Study in Australia’s Digital Content Industry  
Joe Campana  
Explicating Forms of Negotiation Through Personal Work and Learning Practice  
Raymond Smith |
| 1230 – 1345 | LUNCH  
The Figtree Café – Level 1 |
| 1345 – 1430 | KEYNOTE 4: Bringing Practice Back In: How Practice Shapes Constructions of Knowledge in Vocational Education  
Anne Marie Bathmaker  
Bristol Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning and Education, UWE Bristol, UK  
Forrest Suite Plenary Room – Level 2 |
| 1430 – 1530 | Panel Session – The Quality of VET Research in Australia  
Stephen Billet  
Griffith University, Prof Erica Smith  
University of Ballarat, Berwyn Clayton  
Victoria University, Tom Karmel  
NCVER  
Chair: Dr Llandis Barret Pugh |
| 1530 – 1545 | Conference Close  
Dr Llandis Barret Pugh  
President AVETRA  
Afternoon Tea will be available on departure |
The Value and Voice of VET Research for Individuals, Industry, Community and The Nation

1040 – 1110 The notion of Quality

Wes Davis, Lyn Rickard

Effects of donor supported educational reforms on the identity of Bangladeshi TVET Teachers in Transition

Tony Holland

Navigating change in a public agency

Carmel Ellis-Gulli

Rosalind Carter

Practice based Research and Critical Pedagogy – Rethinking Teacher Education for Vocational Educators

Lisa Maurice-Takerei

Helen Anderson

Australian TVET Teacher Training in the current national context: an appraisal of its Quality?

Peter Jansen, Jennifer Archer, Donald Adams

1110 – 1120 Change Room

Abstract 75

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Abstract 37

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Abstract 80

1120 – 1150 An old chestnut revisited: Teachers’ opinions and attitudes towards grading within a competency based training framework

James Richards

The impact of VET in schools on apprenticeship and Traineeship completion

Sinan Gemici

Vocational education: Standing and clarification of key objectives

Stephen Billet

1150 – 1200 Change Room

TBA

Abstract 58

TBA

Abstract 79

Abstract 65

TBA

1200 – 1230 Student movement: pathways, fields and links to work

Nick Fredman

Professional development using informal learning networks: an empirical study in Australia’s digital content industry

Joe Campana

Explicating forms of negotiation through personal work and learning practice

Raymond Smith

1230 – 1345 Lunch

The Figtree Café – Level 1

1345 – 1430 Keynote 4: Bringing practice back in: how practice shapes constructions of knowledge in vocational education

Anne Marie Bathmaker

Forrest Suite Plenary Room – Level 2

1430 – 1530 Panel session – The quality of VET research in Australia

Stephen Billet, Erica Smith, Berwyn Clayton, Tom Karmel

Chair: Dr Llandis Barret Pugh

1530 – 1545 Conference close

Dr Llandis Barret Pugh

President AVETRA

Afternoon tea will be available on departure.
KEYNOTE PRESENTATION 1

Thursday, 12 April 2012
0845 – 0930 hours

Aligning Tertiary Education with the Demand for Skills and Qualifications in a Changing World

Robin Shreeve
CEO, Skills Australia

Abstract not provided.
Towards a Responsive TVET Research Agenda for the 21st Century: Time for Doing Different Things Differently!

Dr Salim Akoojee
Hon. Associate Professor, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (South Africa)
Research and Development: merSETA

TVET research needs to be, by its very nature, responsive to a range of stakeholders including individuals within it, industry, community and the nation. But in reality does it do this? Why is it that, as the conference call suggests, “as a community, we do not often stop and evaluate the effects of our work and advocacy”? If indeed we don’t (and I want to agree that we don’t!) then why has this happened? To what extent has this to do with the researchers involved, or the nature of the TVET field? Or the multiplicity of players (individuals, industry, community and nation) to whom we have to respond, often all at the same time, provide a recipe for failure?

We need to interrogate the nature of TVET research. Who and what entities do TVET research? For whom and to what end? And what are the questions being asked by the current players? The answers to these questions might lead us to hard questions about the nature of the TVET research enterprise or about the very nature of the research enterprise itself. Either way, the answer has not only has to be found, but needs to be manifested in the kinds of TVET research undertaken internationally.

This paper will do three things:

1. Explore the nature of our research practise and the role of political-economy within it;
2. Provide a possible framework by which we could interrogate our research and
3. Propose that we review our research to develop a ‘responsive’ TVET research agenda that takes as a starting point the interests of social justice to the benefit of all role players.

In responding to these issues, we engage the real issues to which TVET is faced. In these times, marked by the ongoing international economic recession, and social disharmony, the pressure on TVET to respond to the international youth crisis invokes TVET researchers to respond effectively to these imperatives by taking a long and hard at the real questions of social justice, equity, access and social transformation. A responsive TVET research agenda therefore has to actively interrogate the realities of a changing labour market, an increasingly diverse, internet savvy and globally active youth population with their associated expectations, and a global context designed for increasing marginalisation of those that, in more economically robust times, were included.
The paper calls therefore for a responsive TVET research programme that provides the basis for a progressive research agenda. Fortunately, never before has the international context for TVET research and practice been more robust, with at least two international events underpinning its importance while we gather. The stage is set. Are we ready for the challenge?
VET Research for Industry
Dr Tom Karmel
Managing Director, National Centre for Vocational Education Research

Industry is one of the key stakeholders of VET – indeed the Australian VET system is often described as being industry led. The presentation discusses industry’s role as a stakeholder and its interest in research. It then surveys recent research, concentrating on a number of areas which are of particular relevance to industry: apprenticeships; labour market matching; the value of completion; innovation and workforce development.
What is meant by knowledge in vocational education?

In England, concerns about the content and purposes of vocational education have reached a crisis point with the publication of the Wolf Review (2011). The English context reflects widespread policy rhetoric of a global knowledge-based economy, which places increasing importance on extended participation in education and training by young people, and the achievement of higher level skills and qualifications by all citizens. Vocational education and training are seen to play a major role in this context, and have been used in many countries to achieve policy goals of increasing participation and raising achievement. However, the purposes and content of vocational education are fraught with difficulty. Debates about whether vocational education represents diversity or diversion to accommodate students from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds highlight just some of the challenges involved in addressing ‘knowledge’ in this context.

This presentation takes up the idea that we need to ‘bring knowledge back in’ (Michael Young, 2008), and argues that insights from the micro level of practice must also inform our understandings of the constructions of knowledge in vocational education. Using case examples from the micro level of practice, the presentation shows that, in different ways, teachers as well as official stakeholders are active agents in shaping values and expectations about legitimate, worthwhile knowledge in vocational education. These cases suggest that if we are to re-construct knowledge in vocational education for the future, we need to build on the insights and experiences of local practices, which play a significant role in constructing the meaning of knowledge in vocational education.
PAPERS***

Papers annotated with three asterisks have been refereed to comply fully with HERDC (Higher Education Research Data Collection) verification requirements for a conference publication, full written paper refereed. An anonymous refereeing process has been used. Please note that even with papers that are peer-reviewed in this way, AVETRA can accept no responsibility for the quality or veracity of the content.

Note: All papers and PowerPoint presentations will be available on the AVETRA website after the conference (http://avetra.org.au).
ABSTRACT 1***

Theme: The Place and Role of New Researchers
Concurrent Session 1E
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1000 – 1030 hours
Room: Acacia Lounge

JUGGLING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES: PERSPECTIVES OF A DEVELOPING RESEARCHER IN A STUDY ON SESSIONAL VET PRACTITIONERS

Dr Susanne Bahn
Research Fellow, School of Management, Faculty of Business and Law, Edith Cowan University

This paper has a dual purpose. First it details key findings of a research study conducted in 2011 for the National Council for Vocational Educational Research (NCVER) Community of Practice Scholarship Program investigating the implications of the increased use of sessional workers in the VET sector. The study used narrative from a purposively selected sample of sessional VET workers in a Western Australian State Provider Registered Training Organisation. Key findings include the characteristics and capabilities of sessional VET practitioners; workforce planning and development strategies to support sessional VET practitioners; and their contributions to an academic culture. Second it discusses the sensitivities required when researchers turn the lens on their own organisations to look within and critically assess practice. This type of research needs to be conducted with a particular focus on ethical data collection as well as careful and sensitive reporting. The paper presents these issues as a first-hand reflection by the researcher who conducted the study as a novice. A significant issue included juggling the various professional identities which the researcher currently holds; ie researcher, employee, VET practitioner delivering and assessing in teaching and learning and as a Union representative.
THE ROLE OF VET AND VCAL IN THE FIELD OF MUSIC/MUSIC INDUSTRY EDUCATION

Rohan Nethsinghe
Monash University, Clayton

Applied learning is becoming increasingly popular in Victorian schools and many students who are interested in hands-on learning prefer to study Vocational Education and Training (VET) subjects and undertake the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). The author is a Casual Relief Teacher (CRT) of Music and has visited and taught in many schools located in the South Eastern suburbs of Victoria. Among these educational institutions there were a few secondary schools/colleges where VCAL/VET subjects were offered in music and music industry related studies. Although many school students understand the benefits of undertaking the VCAL/VET as a straight pathway to the work force or university via Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions and this method offer more hands-on/practical approach to learning, they avoid even discussing it as the other students who prefer the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) qualifications tend to bully them as underachievers. However in many schools that offer VCE music, the Music Industry Studies (for example Sound Production) are not incorporated and school students who are keen to undertake VET/VCAL subjects face these disadvantages including the social/peer pressure.

As Victorian educational institutions including schools struggle to provide multicultural music education the researcher suggests VET as a strategy to employ through the engagement of artists in residence. It is important for the researchers to investigate involved issues and promote such beneficial, practical/hands-on education among school students. It is essential to promote and explain the value of such education through evidence based research. These attempts may lead to the development of the VET sector contributing to the enhancement of the skilled work force in Australia.
ABSTRACT 3***

Theme: VET Research and Its Relationship to Policy Formulation

Concurrent Session 1C

Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1120 – 1150 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 3

THE NATIONAL CUSTODIAN: HOW INTEREST GROUPS AND ACADEMICS COMBINE TO RESTRICT ACCESS OF WORKING PEOPLE TO QUALIFICATIONS

Erica Smith
University of Ballarat

An Australian ‘Expert Panel on apprenticeships’ worked during 2010-11 to propose sweeping changes to the Australian apprenticeship and training system which would have removed the access of workers in large segments of the economy to publicly-funded training. One suggestion was the establishment of a ‘national custodian’ who would decide which occupations were to get funded training and which were not. The eventual policy outcomes of this attempt, by a combination of interest groups and academics, to ‘guard’ access to funded training, are not yet known. However a minor policy change has already removed employers’ incentive payments for Certificate II qualifications. A similar process has been taking place during 2011 in England, where similar alliances are opposing the expansion of the apprenticeship system to broader sections of the economy. This paper analyses policy documents, and statements by academics and people from other research institutions, to examine, and attempt to theorise, their attempts to deny funded training to workers. These arguments are tested against the broader apprenticeship literature and the implications of these seemingly elitist arguments on the policy objective of social inclusion through VET.
MAORI LEARNERS IN WORKPLACE SETTINGS – PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Jenny Connor¹, Bruce Horsley², Loretta Garrow², Martin Draper³, Nicky Murray⁴, Verna Naio⁴, Cain Kerehoma⁵, Patrick Hape⁵

¹Industry Training Federation
²Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation
³Electrotechnology Industry Training Organisation
⁴NZ Motor Industry Training Organisation
⁵Kahui Tautoko Consulting

Industry Training is an important location for Maori learners, with over 30,000 trainees identifying as Maori annually. The skills and qualifications gained through this training are important for meaningful careers, potential business ownership, and social and economic wellbeing. Despite this there has been little research exploring the experiences of Maori in workplace based industry training.

The Industry Training Federation in partnership with the NZ Motor ITO, the Electrotechnology ITO and the Building and Construction ITO have recently completed research exploring the experiences of Maori workplace learners. Kahui Tautoko Consulting, a Kaupapa Maori research firm, undertook the project in collaboration with the ITOs.

The project aimed to answer three questions:
1. What is distinctive about how Maori workers learn in workplace settings, specifically in trades industries?
2. Are there aspects of how Maori workers learn that may provide pointers to how completions can be increased?
3. How can training and career pathways be strengthened for Maori workers?

The 18 month project involved a literature review; data analysis; focus groups; and, most significantly, monthly interviews with Maori learners. During these interviews learners were able to tell us in their own words what it means to be a Maori trainee, what factors have helped with their training, and what barriers have stood in their way.

It is anticipated that the research will lead to practical recommendations concerning how ITOs and others can better serve the needs of Maori workplace learners.

This research responds to the conference themes: The “voice” of VET research: Whose and who listens? The economic and industry impacts of VET research; and The social and community impacts of VET research.
ABSTRACT 6***

Theme: The Voice of VET Research: Whose and Who Listens
Concurrent Session 1F
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1040 – 1110 hours
Room: Event Room 2

IN THE FRONTLINE – THE VOICE OF VETERAN TEACHERS

Jennifer Davids
Southbank Institute of TAFE

As we move into a period where the ramifications of having an ageing population of teachers is beginning to impact on the VET sector, the need for experienced mentors and master practitioners is becoming more apparent (Wheelahan 2011, p.12). This paper gives voice to the Lead Vocational Teachers (LVTs) of TAFE Queensland. A quantitative electronic survey was distributed in June 2011 to the total population of 738 Lead Vocational Teachers. In total 283 LVTs responded (38.3% response rate), and 245 completed the survey (33.2% completion rate). Almost three-quarters (73.8%) had been working in TAFE for more than 15 years. The question of how best to use this group of experienced teachers clearly needs to be addressed as findings indicate that overwhelmingly the majority of participants did not believe that their role is clearly defined. The research examines the role and attitudes of these LVTs in TAFE Queensland within the context of ongoing change. It addresses issues of job satisfaction and commitment. Who indeed will listen to the voices of these veteran teachers in the VET sector?
MANAGING APPRENTICES AND MANAGING PHD STUDENTS: CURRENT CONCERNS AND TRANSFERABLE TIPS

Erica Smith
University of Ballarat, Ballarat, VIC

Apprenticeships and doctoral studies share many characteristics in common, such as the length of the ‘training contract’, and there has been considerable policy attention to both forms of ‘contracted training’ recently, with similar issues raised such as completion rates, timely completion, quality and so on. Companies that manage large numbers of apprentices or trainees face similar challenges to universities that manage large numbers of PhD students. The paper analyses four in-depth interviews drawn from larger research projects – two interviews with company managers responsible for apprentices and trainees, and two with Deans of Graduate Studies at Australian universities, who oversee the management of PhD students. The key points of policy documents in both areas are used to analyse the responses. Differences and similarities in management systems are highlighted, and good practices that could be transplanted between the two environments are identified.
ABSTRACT 8***

Theme: The Impacts of VET Research on Individual Learners and Groups of Learners
Concurrent Session 1D
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1040 – 1110 hours
Room: Event Room 1

GENERIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT: DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF AN INSTRUMENT FOR APPRENTICES IN THE TRADITIONAL TRADERS

Joe Pagnoccolo
Swinburne University, Hawthorn, VIC

The Swinburne University Apprentice Skills Assessment (SUASA) is a recently developed generic skills measure using a six-factor model containing thirty seven items based on industry underpinnings. The aim of this study was to empirically validate this measure with a sample of apprentices in the traditional trades. Four hundred and fifteen males and twenty nine females completed the SUASA in a paper and pencil format. A factor analysis of the data showed only two of the original six factors (communication and teamwork) was statistically significant. Other factors (self-management, problem solving, learning, and initiative and enterprise) did not adequately represent the responses by this cohort. The potential use of the generic skills scale is discussed including redeveloping the scales that did not fit with the original design.
ABSTRACT 9***

Theme: The Economic and Industry Impacts of VET Research
Concurrent Session 1A
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1000 – 1030 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 1

PRAGMATIC LEADERSHIP: NATIONAL PRINCIPLES, LOCAL PRACTICES

Tom Short
University of South Australia, Adelaide

Building leadership capability and growing leadership talent have become well-recognised as two global training priorities and one UK report indicates that Australia is spending more money per capita on leadership training than many other developed countries. In contrast, the report also reveals that Australia lags way behind other major economies when it comes to identifying and engaging the pool of leadership talent.

This paper follows the progress of leadership development in the Australian rail industry and focuses on a major research project conducted by the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Rail Innovation between 2009 and 2011. The leadership study was aimed at creating a harmonised and relevant capability framework for future adoption across the rail industry. At the present time, rail organisations are undergoing a period of major transformation, investing in new technologies and at the same time dealing with historical differences in inter-state practices, overcoming skills shortages and managing the loss of tacit knowledge as many Baby-Boomer generation managers plan for retirement. Leadership capability is situated at the heart of these changes.

CRC research has found that an effective framework for developing rail leaders can be achieved by blending together three readily-accessible bodies of knowledge. Firstly, a portfolio of leadership capabilities is available from a wide range of existing frameworks; secondly, eleven recognised units of management training are available in the Australian Frontline Management Initiative; and finally, survey findings obtained from two hundred rail leaders highlight six themes of leadership capability which are most relevant to the current rail environment.
ABSTRACT 10***

Theme: The Economic and Industry Impacts of VET Research
Concurrent Session 1A
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1040 – 1110 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 1

FIRST YEAR APPRENTICES’ EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACE LEARNING

Selena Chan
Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology

This paper reports on a subset of the findings from an Ako Aotearoa National project conducted with first year apprentices, based in ten trades, from seven Industry Training Organisations (ITOs). The project sought to identify factors influencing apprentices’ initial decisions to enter and commit to an indenture, along with factors contributing to continuation of apprenticeship past initial entry. To identify these factors, apprentices’ perceptions of entry trajectory and initial workplace learning experiences were collected and analysed. The experiences of potential, continuing, and unsuccessful apprentices were compared.

Apprentices’ perceptions of their initial experiences in their first year of work are crucial to the formation of a sense of belongingness and engagement with workplace and occupational identity. As such, an understanding of apprentices’ initial experiences is important towards ensuring continual participation and completion of apprenticeship. The findings from this project have been used to prepare a brochure for prospective apprentices, to better inform potential apprentices of their career choice, their responsibilities as apprentices and their employers’ commitments to provide training opportunities and support.
ABSTRACT 14***

Theme: VET Research and Its Relationship to Policy Formulation
Concurrent Session 3A
Time: 1000 – 1030 hours
Date: Friday, 13 April 2012
Room: Event Room 1

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING: LEARNING PREFERENCES OF WORKER-LEARNERS TO REMAIN COMPETENT IN THEIR CURRENT JOBS

S Choy, S Billett, A Kelly
Griffith University, Brisbane

Workers, world-wide, increasingly need to engage in continuing education and training to respond to changing workplace requirements, maintain and increase productivity, remain workplace competent (employable), and participate in longer work lives. Australian workers are no exception here. Yet, given that most of the current Australian tertiary education and training provisions largely focus on initial occupational preparation (i.e. entry-level training), these provisions may not adequately meet the kinds of learning needs of existing workers who need to build upon their initial occupational education and training, or transfer what they know to a new occupation. Therefore, the current focus may need broadening or transformation to better meet the learning needs of Australian workers who face continual change in the requirements for performance in their lengthening working lives.

A team of researchers from Griffith University is conducting a three year project, funded by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, to review and appraise current provisions of tertiary education and training and to identify models of tertiary education and training provisions and related pedagogic practices that will be effective in responding to the growing educational project that comprises continuing education and training. This paper reports how some worker-learners from the aged care industry prefer these provisions to be organised for their work and workplaces. As an example of a much larger corpus of data, it specifically draws on recently gathered data from semi-structured interviews and written responses from twenty-nine such workers in South East Queensland.

The tentative findings advanced here indicate a high preference for everyday learning through work individually, and assisted by other experienced workers and mentors or supervisors in the workplace. These early findings point to demands for a larger component of courses offered by tertiary education and training providers to be delivered at the work site, and for increased levels of on-site support for learning. The findings have implications for changes to policies and provisions for models of continuing education and training.
TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Financial implications for the sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Impact on teaching methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Impact on individual teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings indicate significant implications for teachers, students, VET institutions and the government at a time of rapid economic, political, cultural and educational change. They contribute evidence for ongoing review and development of student enrollment and teacher employment in the culturally diverse VET sector, and thus further goals of educational equity and quality learning experiences and outcomes.
ABSTRACT 16

Theme: The Social and Community Impacts of VET Research
Concurrent Session 1B

Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1040 – 1110 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 2

AFRICAN REFUGEES: IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES THROUGH TRAINING AND WORK PLACEMENTS
Ibrahim Diab
Victoria University & NCVER

Refugees face various barriers in attaining employment. There are a number of models that aim to overcome these and facilitate processes of achieving employment through training and work placement. Many refugees undertake training courses and work placements but do not necessarily attain employment. What this research investigates is what is required to improve employment outcomes through work placements.

The research is based on a literature review of world ‘best’ practices in assisting refugees to attain employment. Additionally semi structured interviews conducted with training providers and employers provide data about improving employment outcomes through work placements.

The research findings indicate that optimal employment outcomes requires a number of structured supports including i) initial counselling, orientation and assessment of the client; ii) assigning a workplace buddy or mentor; and iii) advocacy placements with employers who have genuine prospects of employment at the end of the work placement an ethic of social responsibility.

This research has practical applications for training and employment organisations that work with refugees (and other disadvantaged groups). It provides a framework improves the prospects of their clients attaining employment.
ABSTRACT 17***

Theme: The Economic and Industry Impacts of VET Research
Concurrent Session 2E
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1400 – 1430 hours
Room: Acacia Lounge

SKILLS RECOGNITION IN THE AUSTRALIAN RAIL INDUSTRY: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES
Dr Anne Morrison¹, Dr Lisa Davies, Dr Ros Cameron², Katie Maher¹
¹ University of South Australia
² Central Queensland University

Skills Recognition processes, including (but not limited to) RPL and RCC, are not currently used to their full potential in the Australian rail industry. This is not necessarily due to a lack of will—many rail organisations see merit in recognising the prior skills, knowledge and experience of their employees and recruits. There are, however, several perceived or actual challenges to Skills Recognition in rail. In this paper, we report on some of the findings of a qualitative research project funded by the CRC for Rail Innovation as part of the Workforce Development strand. Researchers from the University of South Australia and Central Queensland University are developing strategies to assist the Australian rail industry to adopt a more unified and effective approach to Skills Recognition. This paper draws on national and international VET literature, industry documentation, and interviews conducted as part of the research. 58 semi-structured interviews were held with human resource managers, learning and development managers, employees, trainers and assessors from 16 organisations across Australia. Interviews were conducted with private and public rail companies, small, medium and large organisations, passenger and freight services, rail contractors, industry experts and Registered Training Organisations. The research highlights certain challenges for skills recognition in the context of rail. Across Australia, each state and territory has its own rail regulators, operating systems and codes of practice. Equity is also an issue within the culturally diverse rail workforce. Being a safety critical industry, there are particular concerns around risk factors in the recognition of skills. These factors must be taken into account when developing leading practice SR guidelines which meet industry needs. Nevertheless, our research has identified practical strategies for maximising the potential of skills recognition in the industry. We highlight the positive role skills recognition can play across Human Resource Development functions, demonstrating both the importance of embedding skills recognition strategies in workforce development, and the inherent advantages for rail industry employees and employers.
ABSTRACT 18***

Theme: The Economic and Industry Impacts of VET Research
Concurrent Session 1A
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1200 – 1230 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 1

CUTTING CORNERS: HOW PRE-SITE CONSTRUCTION INDUCTION TRAINING IMPROVES WORK SAFETY BUT ILLUMINATES THE ISSUES OF ONLINE CERTIFICATION
Dr Llandis Barratt-Pugh, Dr Susanne Bahn
Centre for Innovative Practice, School of Management, Edith Cowan University

Introducing practices to reduce the work-related injuries in the construction industry is a continual challenge, specifically in WA where the industry is experiencing a second development boom. In 2006, Worksafe WA responded by introducing pre-site mandatory certification in safety awareness training for all construction employees. This paper reviews the impact of this training on the housing and civil sectors of the industry. It is a mixed mode study presenting the lost time injury/disease statistics, perceptions of the stakeholders from survey responses, and from subsequent interviews. The findings indicate a positive cultural change within the industry but an increasing scepticism about online assessment and certification procedures with evidence that some cut corners rather than engage in learning. The final research report from this study has confirmed the value this training initiative has for the industry. The voice of the discussion now focuses upon how to protect the validity of the training and certification processes.
ABSTRACT 19

Theme: VET Research and Its relationship to Policy Formulation
Concurrent Session 2C
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1400 – 1430 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 3

THIS IS IT FOLKS, OVER THE TOP! HOW DO WE LEAD FROM THE FRONTLINE IN THE CHANGING VET ENVIRONMENT? WHAT SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES DO OUR FRONTLINE VET EDUCATIONAL LEADERS REQUIRE?

Linda Simon1, Annette Bonnici2
1VET Consultant NSW
2TAFE NSW Northern Sydney Institute

Our 2011 research ‘Paths to Promotion’ found that Head Teachers in TAFE NSW valued their positions which mixed teaching and leadership. They said that the most important aspects of their role were educational leadership, section management, increasing quality in teaching, working with industry and other providers, and supporting innovative teaching and learning practices. They valued the tertiary education qualifications they held. However, they also said they needed to further develop their skills and capabilities so that they could be part of the future direction of TAFE. They needed to develop their financial management skills, technological skills, entrepreneurial skills and leadership skills.

Given the current focus on professional development of VET practitioners/professionals and the consideration of a national VET professional association, the time is right to find out what is happening in the rest of the country. This research paper (in progress) will tap into similar positions in TAFE Institutes in the other states and territories, to find out their views. How do they manage educational, management and leadership roles? What qualifications do they have? What skills and capabilities do they think they need for their roles in a changing VET sector? What qualifications do they believe they need to effectively undertake their jobs in the future, and how can they gain such qualifications? This research has the opportunity to impact on current policy development around capabilities of the VET sector, and to influence funding allocation for professional educational leadership skills development.
Embedded in much Vocational Education and Training discourse and research is the notion of ‘pathways’ between education/training and employment. The use of this term has become so common place and its relevance so deeply assumed, that the meanings and manifestations of such ‘pathways’ are rarely unpacked in policy statements and research recommendations. The importance of ‘pathways’ has become an inarguable and necessary condition of effective Vocational Education and Training (VET) initiatives. Congruent with this, the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP) partnership developed an agenda which identified a need to develop a systemic understanding of ‘pathways’ between education, employment and enterprise for Aboriginal people in remote regions of Australia. As a component of the CRC-REP “Investing in People Program” a “Pathways to Employment” research strand has recently been initiated.

Rather than a focus on research findings, this paper is a preliminary discussion on the possible directions the “Pathways to Employment” project could take. It aims to explore assumptions behind the notion of a pathway between education/training and employment/enterprise as well as expectations associated with economic participation. By raising questions about the common place and assumed relevance of ‘pathways’ and certain forms of economic participation this paper proposes an alternative research agenda. One which recognises the existence of potentially different ontologies, epistemologies and axiologies shaping Aboriginal aspirations for vocation and work in remote community contexts and subsequently influencing how pathways can be meaningfully conceptualised.
ABSTRACT 21

Theme: The Impacts of VET Research on Individual Learners and Groups of Learners
Concurrent Session 2D
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1520 – 1550 hours
Room: Event Room 1

LEARNER PATHWAYS: MEETING THE HIGHER SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS
Allison Miller
Higher Qualification Pathways Business Manager, National VET E-learning Strategy, Adelaide, SA

Traditional learner pathways have been considered to be linear in nature and have led to the gradual increase in the number of working aged Australians who hold a post-secondary qualification (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, ND-b). More recent Australian Commonwealth Government targets for both the Australian vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE) sectors aim to increase these numbers significantly to ensure Australia meets its future skills requirements and remains as a global leader (Bradley, 2008; Council of Australian Governments, 2009).

The new Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2011) together with a more open and competitive formal adult education market place (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009; Government of South Australia, 2011; Ross, 2011; Victorian Government, 2008) has seen the emergence of a ‘new tertiary sector’ in Australia. This new tertiary sector is seeing HE providers targeting traditional VET students and VET providers are offering HE qualifications (Bennett, 2011; L. M. Wheelahan, G, 2011). The Diploma level qualification has been identified as the main transition qualification between VET and HE, and it has also been acknowledged that getting individuals into Diploma level qualifications in the first place is as important as encouraging them to articulate to Degree courses (L. Wheelahan, 2010).

In order for VET and HE providers to achieve this higher skills and qualification agenda in the new Australian tertiary sector it will need to be recognised at an individual, organisational and sector level that learner pathways are tumultuous in nature and better reflect ‘crazy paving’ than smooth, linear pathways (Harris, 2006). These providers will also need to provide effective support systems together with transparent recognition and articulation mechanisms to enable effective transition points between the two sectors (Miller, 2010; D. Paez, Byrnes, J, Blacker, J, Jackson, A, & Dwyer, C.,, 2011)

Projects supporting higher skills and qualification pathways which utilise innovative technology-based programs are being supported by the National VET E-learning Strategy (Flexible Learning Advisory Group, 2011a). These projects will provide delivery and support models which will enable learners to gain a Diploma level or higher qualification or skills set. At the same time, VET and HE providers and industry stakeholders will be able to investigate and determine the key principles for developing a culture of ongoing development that supports the irregular transition points of adult education and provides explicit transition mechanisms.
IN SEARCH OF THE MISSING LINK IN VET DELIVERY

Homi Azemikhah

University of Adelaide

In 2008, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) argued that, globally, VET systems are still at a moot point and it is not clear as to whether or not they have delivered sustainable employment to their participants, even if they have undergone a period of continuous reform. The question is why, after continuous reforming of the VET systems, around the world, for the last decade or so, VET systems are still unable to deliver competencies that lead to sustainable employment for their learners? One can propose the key question: “What is the missing link?” This paper attempts to investigate the intricacies of the key question by examining the interplay of various policies and research projects that were undertaken across Europe and Australia in the delivery of vocational education and training, in search of the answer.
ABSTRACT 24***

Theme: The Impacts of VET Research on Individual Learners and Groups of Learners
Concurrent Session 1D
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1000 – 1030 hours
Room: Event Room 1

ECLECTIC APPROACHES BY WORKER-LEARNERS TO AUTHENTIC WORK-BASED LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Hilary Timma
Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga

Current literature on workplace learning focuses, in part, on the impacts of individual agency, the socio-cultural contributions of the group to learning and the ways in which these facets of learning can and do inter-relate. Less is known about socially-generated work-based learning activities/interactions with work-based others, who contribute to an individual’s learning in some way. These interactions might include another person (or persons) in the workplace whose experience and/or intuition indicate that it is time to say or do something to assist, encourage or comment on what is taking place. Equally, interactions may be initiated by worker-learners, who identify a work colleague or a learning opportunity from which they could benefit in some way.

This paper reports on a qualitative research study, currently in progress, which is investigating how authentic work-based learning experiences might contribute to better practice. A small group of 13 mature-aged learners from a variety of workplaces, who have completed VET-based studies by distance education, demonstrate an eclectic approach to managing their learning, as well as to the ways in which they identify learning opportunities and engage with others to enhance their learning. By examining how these people learn (and are assessed), this study seeks to contribute to understanding about how working knowledge is developed through work-based social and individual contexts.
ABSTRACT 25***

Theme: VET Research and Its relationship to Policy Formulation
Concurrent Session 3C
Date: Friday, 13 April 2012
Time: 1000 – 1030 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 3

DO NOT PASS GO, DO NOT COLLECT $200 – THE PRIORITY GIVEN TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING RESEARCH AND POLICY

Don Zoellner
Charles Darwin University, NT

In order to understand how Vocational Education and Training (VET) research may be used in the policy making process of state and territory governments in Australia, it is necessary to examine the competing priorities that demand the attention of the decision makers. While the public VET system has a long record of skills development for individuals who are deemed to be disadvantaged, there are other institutions and organisations that have an emerging interest in the same groups. The provocative analysis provided by Wacquant on the notion of ‘prisonfare’ proposes that justice systems have been given a new role in economic society – to control those people that inhabit the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. This paper will analyse one Australian jurisdiction’s relative priority given to the resource allocation made to justice initiatives compared with VET over time in order to see which of these two policy areas has assumed dominance in government decision making. This can then serve as a guide to VET researchers as to the types of knowledge required to best position VET in the arena of competing policy interests.
ABSTRACT 26***

Theme: VET Research and Its relationship to Policy Formulation
Concurrent Session 3C
Date: Friday, 13 April 2012
Time: 1040 – 1110 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 3

NAVIGATING CHANGE IN A PUBLIC AGENCY
Carmel Ellis-Gulli, Rosalind Carter
NSW Adult Migrant English Service, Sydney, NSW

This case study looks at the experiences of a number of senior managers in managing a significant change in a government agency in the context of significant departmental influences. The study takes as its main concerns, the events which impacted on a change management plan and the simultaneous development and implementation of a new business and operations model. The study is guided by principles of change management which largely assume smooth change continuums. In this case study we uncover some realities in actual change management processes and how decisions made at higher levels in the department impacted on the change management and redevelopment plan. We find that decisions made within the wider departmental authorising environment of the agency significantly delayed, disrupted or set up some unrealistic expectations for processes at different stages in the agency’s change management and redevelopment plans.
ABSTRACT 27***

Theme: The Impacts of VET Research on Individual Learners and Groups of Learners
Concurrent Session 3D
Date: Friday, 13 April 2012
Time: 1040 – 1110 hours
Room: Event Room 1

PRACTICE BASED RESEARCH AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY — RETHINKING TEACHER EDUCATION FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATORS
Helen Anderson, Lisa Maurice-Takerei
Manukau Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand

This paper considers the unique features and contexts of vocational teaching and how these influence and shape vocational teacher education. A study of the use of videoing as a learning and practice based strategy is presented as a prompt to rethinking the roles of the vocational educator. A conceptualisation of the work of the vocational educator which reframes the role and counters a view of vocational education as a transmission of skills within a fixed curriculum is considered. An investigation into the use of video in a teacher education course is described to demonstrate the tensions between a critical and a technicist view of vocational education and the results of the investigation are explored in terms of the roles of vocational educators.
ABSTRACT 28***

Theme: The Voice of Vet Research: Whose and Who Listens
Concurrent Session 2F
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1440 – 1510 hours
Room: Event Room 2

IF YOU WANT TO DO THIS JOB, YOU DO IT THE SAME AS THEM”: RECOGNITION OF THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE OF CULTURALLY DIVERSE WORKERS IN THE AUSTRALIAN RAIL INDUSTRY

Katie Maher
University of South Australia

This paper enquires into recognition of the skills, knowledge and experience of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) employees in the Australian rail industry. Through a CRC funded research project on Skills Recognition, over fifty semi-structured interviews were held with employers and employees, and policy documents collected from rail organisations across Australia. The paper analyses employee and employer attitudes to equity and diversity in skills recognition and examines some ways in which current workforce development strategies enable and obstruct equitable skills recognition. Ironically, the study found that a number of employers did not see equity as an issue in their organisation because they employed few or no ATSI and CALD workers. Recruitment, training and human resource development strategies used by rail organisations that were more successful in overcoming inequity in skills recognition are outlined.
EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PLUMBING AND GAS-FITTING PRE-TRADE PROGRAMMES IN NEW ZEALAND

Anthony Wareham
Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand

Emerging technologies and high specialisation has transformed plumbing and gasfitting into complex trades requiring apprentices with increasing levels of academic ability. This coupled with low pass rates of apprentices in trade examinations, has led to a number of pre-trade programmes being established in New Zealand in order to allow students to be introduced to the trades before they leave school. However the utility and success of these programmes has gone largely unexplored. This research examined three pre-trade programmes and evaluated their effectiveness in enabling school leavers to successfully integrate into the plumbing and gasfitting trades. The participants were the managers of the three pre-trade programmes, a thirty-nine strong apprentice group, and three local employers. A qualitative methodology was selected to explore the experiences, perceptions and opinions of the three participant groups. A case study evaluation utilised three data gathering methods, namely questionnaires, single semi-structured interviews, and focus groups, The research revealed that there are significant differences within the three pre-trade programmes. It identifies key advantages and disadvantages of pre-trade training in relation to both the students and employers.
ABSTRACT 30

Theme: The Economic and Industry Impacts of VET Research
Concurrent Session 2A
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1320 – 1350 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 1

MAKING THE LINKS BETWEEN QUALITY TRAINING, GRADUATE DESTINATIONS AND BUILDING ALUMNI IN TAFE
Kate Dempsey
Victorian TAFE International

TAFE Institutes routinely claim their education and training offerings are high quality. But how do we really know and measure this? Clearly surveys are undertaken: Most TAFEs undertake student satisfaction surveys and there is the NCVER Student Outcomes Survey for domestic students. In addition, State jurisdictions require detailed reports of student numbers and contact hours. But what of graduate destinations? In particular for international students?

Research has shown (Cuthbert, Smith & Boey, 2008; Banks & Olsen 2008) that almost nothing is known of the outcomes of a TAFE course for international students. Do they go home after their training? Does their course allow them to work in their chosen field? Do they maintain contact with students or staff they met during their studies in Australia?

This presentation will report on research undertaken by Victorian TAFE International (VTI) on graduate destinations and alumni relations. In 2011, VTI undertook a scan of all member TAFEs in Victoria (13 TAFEs and 3 dual sector universities) to determine what activities they undertake in relation to measuring quality of outcome for international students. The research found that many TAFEs and dual sector universities were engaged in significant surveying, follow up of international students and alumni building activities. These activities are shared as good practice in our research report and will be highlighted in the presentation. Equally, the research found that some TAFEs were not engaged in significant activity researching graduate destinations for international graduates and also that the approach to graduation destination research for international students is ad hoc across the Victorian TAFE system. Our research report offers suggestions for improvement of the situation in order to adequately support claims of quality education and training in the TAFE system.
ABSTRACT 31

Theme: VET Research and Its Relationship to Policy Formulation
Concurrent Session 2C
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1600 – 1630 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 3

CONNECTING EDUCATION AND WORK: VOCATIONAL STREAMS AND THE CAPABILITIES APPROACH
Mary Leahy
L H Martin Institute, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, VIC

In this paper I explore the relationship between the concepts of vocations, vocational streams and the capabilities approach and briefly consider the implications for policy. This paper is based on a conceptual analysis. It is part of the development of a theoretical framework for the NCVER project ‘Vocations: the link between post-compulsory education and the labour market’.

One of the findings of the Vocations project is that the links within education and between education and employment are weak. This challenges key assumptions underpinning current Australian tertiary education policy. Well-established pathways through education and then on into employment are considered to provide individuals with opportunities to continually upgrade their knowledge and skills. Federal and state governments are seeking to raise the qualification levels of the Australian population to develop a more innovative and productive workforce and foster social inclusion.

Wheelahan, Moodie and Buchanan (forthcoming paper produced for the Vocations project) argue that the links and flows envisaged by governments cannot occur within the existing institutional structures in education and employment. Instead greater coherence between tertiary education qualifications may be achieved if there is a shared understanding of the person as a learner, employee and citizen. Instead of focussing on the job or the occupation, we start with the idea of vocational streams, which link related occupations with common understandings and practices (e.g care work). The concepts of vocational streams and vocations are underpinned by the capabilities approach established by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. This conceptual framework shifts attention to the development of a person’s attributes, knowledge and skills starting with the individual rather than a specific set of job tasks and roles. It also requires identification of the economic and social resources that are needed to support the development of capability within vocational streams.
ABSTRACT 33***

Theme: The Impacts of VET Research on Individual Learners and Groups of Learners
Concurrent Session 1D
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1120 – 1150 hours
Room: Event Room 1

APPRENTICESHIP PEDAGOGIES IN A TASMANIAN REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATION: WHAT DO TEACHERS SAY?

Rod Mason
Skills Institute, Hobart, TAS

The apprenticeship model is a time honoured way of training people, particularly in the United Kingdom where it has existed since medieval times. However, there has been little research published in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) literature on the specific pedagogies used by trainers of traditional trade apprentices currently. This paper reports on part of an exploratory study that has recently been completed to investigate the teaching strategies used by trainers of traditional trade apprentices in a Tasmanian Registered Training Organisation (TRTO). Two questions were posed: What teaching strategies are used by apprentice trainers? Why are these strategies favoured by these trainers? The research employed a mixed methods design whereby both quantitative and qualitative data were collected across 11 Industry Skills Groups (ISGs) using an on-line survey, and semi-structured interviews with one participant from each ISG. The study found that trainers continue to use the more traditional forms of teaching, although in some cases more innovative strategies are also being used. A number of key findings emerged from this research including the identification of two factors that are likely to influence the strategies that teachers ultimately use. The research data also provoked new questions in relation to ‘lock-step’ approaches to teaching and the use of self-paced workbooks. It is hoped that this paper will provide a basis for further studies that will lead to the prescription of new pedagogies to enhance pedagogical practice in the TRTO and other providers of apprenticeship training.
ABSTRACT 34

Theme: The Economic and industry impacts of VET research
Concurrent Session 2A

Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1520 – 1550 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 1

USING THE ‘TRANSITION SYSTEMS’ LITERATURE TO UNDERSTAND THE POSITION OF VET IN AUSTRALIA

Leesa Wheelahan¹, Gavin Moodie², John Buchanan³
¹LH Martin Institute, University of Melbourne
²RMIT
³Workplace Research Centre, University of Sydney

This paper uses two different but complementary ‘transition literatures’ to understand the relation between vocational education and training (VET) and employment, VET and education, and the low status of VET in Australia. The first is from literature on educational ‘transitions systems’ (Raffe 2008), and the second is from literature on ‘transitional labour markets’ (Schmid and Schömann 2003). The paper is drawn from the National Centre for Vocational Education funded project Vocations: the link between post-compulsory education and the labour market.

Raffe (2008: 278) defines an educational transition system as those enduring institutional and structural arrangements that shape young people’s transitions from education to employment and their outcomes. In contrast, the literature on transitional labour markets theorises the nature of working life so that it overcomes limitations of linear models that posit unproblematic life transitions from youth to adulthood (and family) and education to employment. These literatures provide insight into the structural and institutional relationships that shape VET. Bosch and Charest (2008: 445) argue that ‘developments in vocational training cannot be understood solely by examining the inner dynamics of education and training systems’. The structure of the economy and labour market and social institutions are fundamental in shaping VET and this means that policy that focuses only on VET will not be successful in achieving lasting change. However, a problem with the transition systems literature is that it overly-homogenises nations and is not able to account for diversity in regions or between industry sectors within countries. The skills ecosystems literature provides an additional conceptual tool to account for change and development within countries (Buchanan 2006), and the reasons why VET has stronger relationships with some industries (such as in the trades) and weaker relationships in others (as in many unregulated occupations). Taken together, these literatures provide insight into the weak relation between VET and employment and the low status of VET. They also provide some indications for policy to improve these links.
AN ASSOCIATION FOR VET’S PROFESSIONALS: WHAT’S THE STORY?
Hugh Guthrie, Berwyn Clayton
Victoria University

When the Reframing the Future program was closed governments agreed that responsibility for VET workforce development rested with the states and territories and with individual providers. There has been no national and broad-based approach to VET workforce development since 2008.

In a recent paper Skills Australia proposed the development of a national VET workforce development strategy (Skills Australia 2011). The Productivity Commission (2011) proposed increasing attention on Continuing Professional Development (CPD). In an extension of the discussions of CPD, Skills Australia (Skills Australia 2010) suggested that a professional body to support the development of VET professional practice might be considered. Wheelahan and Moodie (2011) found strong support for establishing such a body with a national focus in their research on the quality of VET teaching. They recommended that further work be undertaken to examine the viability this idea.

Victoria’s TDC commissioned a scoping study of the feasibility of establishing a national association for VET professionals early in 2011. This mixed-method study involved a review of relevant literature on professionals and professionalism, analysis of organisational documentation to help establish the key essence, features and possible models for such an association and the production of a discussion paper (Clayton and Guthrie 2011). An on-line survey was also developed and consultation sessions held with a number of individuals and key bodies and in several jurisdictions. In addition, the idea was picked up as a discussion theme on the Australian VET leader’s forum on Linked-In.

This paper will present the preliminary findings of this scoping study. These ‘work-in-progress’ findings will be put in context and the range of complementary and competing factors likely to affect the establishment and viability of such an association will be discussed. The survey findings so far show strong support for establishing a professional association in some form, but both survey respondents and consultation participants have a range of qualifications and concerns.
ABSTRACT 37

Theme: The Impacts of VET Research on Individual Learners and Groups of Learners
Concurrent Session 3D
Date: Friday, 13 April 2012
Time: 1120 – 1150 hours
Room: Event Room 1

THE IMPACT OF VET IN SCHOOLS ON APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINEESHIP COMPLETION
Sinan Gemici
National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)

The impact of VET in Schools on transition outcomes is currently receiving considerable policy attention in Australia. Almost 50% of Australian senior secondary students participate in VET in Schools, either by taking VET subjects, engaging in structured workplace training, or enrolling in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. The latter are of particular interest because they provide students with the highest intensity of workplace exposure and are meant to lead to recognised AQF qualifications. What has remained unclear is whether school-based apprenticeships and traineeships have a positive effect on completion rates when compared to their post-school equivalents. This paper uses data from the Apprentice and Trainee Destinations Survey to examine whether students who commence a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship exhibit higher completion rates when compared to young people who undertake their training after leaving school.
DEVELOPING SCHOLARLY PRACTICE AMONG VET PRACTITIONERS: THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE MODEL

Bridget Wibrow, Georgina Atkinson
National Centre for Vocational Education Research

The increasing interaction and blurring between the two tertiary education sectors is creating new pressures on VET providers and practitioners, as they are increasingly required to engage with cultures and expectations associated with higher education, including adopting more scholarly practices.

NCVER’s Community of Practice scholarship is one model to help the initial development of scholarly practice among VET practitioners. The genesis for this program was the paucity of research proposals received by NCVER from VET practitioners. The scholarship program aims to encourage a culture of research in VET organisations by providing novice researchers, without any formal post-graduate research qualifications, the opportunity to do a 12-month work-based research project. The Community of Practice introduces participants and their employer organisations to the value of using research and data to make evidence-based decisions and solve real work problems. Around 40 novice VET researchers have participated in the program since it began in 2008. This presentation will provide an overview of the Community of Practice scholarship program, its aims, approach and achievements so far, as well as its potential broader applicability beyond the VET sector. The presentation is aimed at those who want to learn about programs that build research capacity and scholarly practice.
ABSTRACT 39

Theme: VET Research and Its Relationship to Policy Formulation
Concurrent Session 1C
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1200 – 1230 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 3

LIFTING THE LID ON COMPLETION RATES

Alice Bednarz
National Centre for Vocational Education Research

With the recent policy focus on completions in the VET sector, completion rates are under the spotlight. Demand for completion rates data has grown over recent years, and to this end NCVER has released several publications about completion rates, both for VET students and for apprentices and trainees. This paper draws these earlier publications together.

This paper aims to ‘lift the lid’ on completion rates, explaining how they are defined and how they are calculated. Beyond this, the paper considers the value of completing a VET qualification, revealing that the pay-off varies for different groups of learners.
A CASE STUDY EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE IN THEIR TEACHING SKILLS AND THE ROLE THAT CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HAS PLAYED IN THE ACQUISITION OF THIS CONFIDENCE. WHAT HAS WORKED FOR THEM AND WHY?

Jennifer Aitken
Advance TAFE, East Gippsland, VIC

Australia is looking for a model of Vocational Education and Training (VET) teacher development which ensures that there are sufficient people with a sound industry background willing to teach in the VET sector, who can deliver professional teaching to a large variety of students. The problem arises around how we can ensure that VET teachers develop their skills and knowledge further in order to be able to take on more responsibilities and develop their professionalism. In Australia the provision of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to VET sector teachers has never been addressed in a cohesive manner.

A Case Study approach was used to examine how VET teachers have developed their confidence in their professional teaching skills, how they have felt about this development pathway and whether the available professional development options have been adequate.

This study focussed on teachers in rural areas. This group are particularly disadvantaged in terms of access to any type of higher level teacher training or informal CPD. It considers how these teachers felt about their initial qualification and the reasons for further formal study or continuing to develop their teaching through ongoing professional development.

Findings:

- VET teachers at a Victorian rural campus of TAFE found Cert IV to be suitable beginning level qualification; however the delivery of that qualification by the TAFE sector was inadequate to fully prepare teachers for the start of their teaching career.
- Delivery of this qualification should be improved and a mentoring system for beginning teachers implemented.
- CPD which is structured to build teacher skills and workforce capability and is recognised as building professionalism may create incentive and guidance for teachers to build their skills and confidence.
• The VET workforce’s capability would be continually enhanced if such a career structure could be provided as it would contribute to supporting the growth of the sector and provide a career structure which recognises the professionalism of Vet teachers. This recognition would in turn encourage recruitment of teachers from industry.
ABSTRACT 42

Theme: The Voice of Vet Research: Whose and Who Listens
Concurrent Session 1F
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1120 – 1150 hours
Room: Event Room 2

YOU’RE THE VOICE: MAKE IT CLEAR, MAKE IT UNDERSTOOD
Anna Payton
National Centre for Vocational Education Research

The true measure of research must be its impact: after all why do we do it, if not to influence or change behaviours. Reflecting on this position, this presentation explores getting the message of your research out through the media – the national and capital city papers, the airwaves and the ether (online). By drawing on real examples, it considers audience, tailoring your message to journalists’ needs to help you ‘cut through’, and the importance of timing. This presentation is aimed at those who are thinking of using the media to communicate their research but have with little to no experience of working with the media.
TOWARDS A CULTURE OF SCHOLARLY PRACTICE IN MIXED SECTOR INSTITUTIONS
Melanie Williams¹, Fleur Goulding², Terri Seddon³
¹timeFUTURE Consulting
²Holmesglen
³Monash University

The nature of ‘scholarship’ has emerged as a ‘hot spot’ in VET institutions that have extended their programming to include higher education provision (mixed sector institutions). This is both a consequence and an expression of the institutionalised ‘sectoral distinctions and cultural hierarchies’ in higher and vocational education (Wheelahan et al 2012, p. 33). These divisions are evident across mixed sector institutions but are reported to be less significant in private mixed sector providers (Moodie 2010; Wheelahan et al 2012).

A consortium led by The TAFE Development Centre has been successful in obtaining NCVER funding for a research project exploring how scholarship is understood and practised across the Australian tertiary sector (higher education, mixed sector and VET) as a means of better understanding and supporting scholarly practice in mixed sector institutions.

This paper proposes a definitional framework for ‘scholarship’ that takes account of the distinctive character of mixed sector provision and reports on the preliminary findings of a textual analysis of three cases of scholarly practice (one from each location in the tertiary sector) commissioned as part of the project. The analysis uses selected literature to tease out the features of quality scholarly practice in Australian tertiary education.

The paper concludes with some observations about the nature of quality scholarly practice arising from the analysis of the cases and raises questions about the implications for scholarly practice in mixed sector institutions.
OBSERVATIONS OF THE INDUSTRY-VET RELATIONSHIP: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A NEW RESEARCHER
Karen O’Reilly-Briggs
La Trobe University

In 2010, as a vocational trade teacher and new researcher I was honoured to receive the NCVER Community of Practice scholarship award to undertake research on the topic of the concept and viability of introducing a master level qualifications program for tradespeople in the vocational education sector. This topic was investigated both through literature including Apprenticeships for the 21st century (McDowell et al. 2011), Review of higher education (Bradley 2008) and Higher education in TAFE (Moodie et al. 2009), and through the conduct of two focus groups: one with senior industry representatives of traditional trades; and one with senior educators of the VET sector. New researchers, especially those working within the vocational education sector are in a unique position to observe big pictures with fresh eyes. Armed with naïve vigour, they possess the ability to shine a light on some potentially difficult truths.

This paper will report firstly on the broader project as the context and then move on to focus on a number of the interesting and unexpected tensions between the traditional trade industry representatives and the participants in the project from the vocational education sector. The research question that frames the second part of the paper is: Given that VET purports to exist for the purpose of benefiting industry, why did the industry participants so openly appear dissatisfied with the vocational sectors trade training framework?

In the process of gathering data for the broader project the research inadvertently revealed a great deal of frustration and dissatisfaction from industry representatives regarding aspects of the Australian Qualifications Framework, and highlighted consequences that have impacted on their industries as a result of the AQF’s implementation. Dissatisfactions expressed by industry participants included: the removal of the declaration of trades from legislation, the absence of trade credentials such as trade papers, and most importantly the deterioration of professional identity as a result of a blurring of the boundaries between skilled trades and other certificate III level qualifications.

The unintended results of this research have revealed an incongruence between vocational education and professional trade industries suggesting that the sector may not indeed be aligned adequately with the needs and expectations of industry.
ABSTRACT 46***

Theme: The Social and Community Impacts of VET Research
Concurrent Session 1B
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1000 – 1030 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 2

HARNESSING COMMUNITY VOICES TO CREATE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY
Barbara Cram¹, Leanne Atkinson², Rachel Jones³, Anthony Mayne³
¹University of Canberra, Canberra, ACT
²Merge Consulting, Tathra, NSW
³South Coast Workplace Learning, Bega and Moruya, NSW

The Australian Government is committed to raising educational achievement and outcomes for people experiencing disadvantage including those living in rural and regional communities. National strategies involve the establishment of attainment targets for different demographic groups, more stringent quality standards and the inclusion of voices from business, industry and educational institutions in curriculum design. Additional funding has also been made available for programs that address skills shortages, youth unemployment and low attainment rates for Indigenous and low socioeconomic groups.

Educational ‘pathways’ are relevant to a number of education and training contexts. The design of ‘seamless’ pathways based on credit arrangements between the vocational and higher education sectors has received significant attention, widespread adoption and relative success, although student patterns of movement often differ from those anticipated (Harris et al. 2006). The effectiveness of pathways between school-based and post-school vocational programs, on the other hand, has attracted concern from employers and industry groups (Service Skills Australia, 2010) but has largely escaped scrutiny.

This research investigates vocational education and training pathways in the Health Services and Tourism sectors in two regional shires. A range of stakeholder perspectives has been gathered through a Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) methodology that both values community assets and community voice and draws on principles of critical enquiry and community empowerment. Key stakeholders in neighbouring coastal shires of Eurobodalla and Bega Valley (South East NSW) have provided insight into the drivers and practices of educational program choice and student progression in each region. Contradictions occurring between the need to address local skills shortages and the diseconomies of ‘thin’ educational markets (Bradley et al, 2008) have provided a rich source of voices, values and possibilities that inform this research.

The authors suggest that student transition between school-based vocational programs and further education and work is capricious, with little connection between the theoretical pathways described in handbooks and actual pathways, which tend to offer narrow opportunities for progression and limited credit. The authors argue that participatory design of pathways between education and work can produce better outcomes for students, industry and the community compared with existing supply-driven approaches.
A QUALITY VET TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Ruth Walker
Cooperative Learning Ltd, NSW

In VET our trainers and assessors are our most valuable asset and arguably our least cared for resource. Convention in planning training tells us there should be detailed course planning, careful attention to RTO compliance and quality data, careful selection of materials and validation of assessment, but in the end the quality of the service we provide to our learners in entirely dependent on the quality and performance of the trainer.

How do we ensure this quality and support professional development? A Community College Quality VET Teaching and Learning Framework would provide guidance to managers in performance management and help them to support of their most valuable asset. Such a framework could also provide a pathway for trainers and assessors to further develop of their skills.

Recent research has focused on the quality of VET trainer qualifications (Clayton 2009, 2010), the need for continuing professional development and exploration of VET pedagogies (Wheelahan 2010, Mitchell & Ward 2010, Productivity Commission 2011) and the possibility of a VET professional association (Clayton & Guthrie 2011). IBSA has commissioned a report into the development of a VET Capability Framework which has reviewed capability frameworks from a number of industry areas and carefully analysed the perceived professional development needs of VET trainers and assessors from the point of view of the RTO.

The Community College Quality VET Teaching and Learning Framework research will give a voice to the trainers and assessors themselves by exploring their experiences regarding professional development and performance management. It will also allow a comparison of their voice with the voice of managers in community colleges in NSW.

The research will be conducted in 3 phases:

Phase 1: Conduct a literature review covering: existing teaching and learning frameworks from other education sectors; best practice in performance management; recommendations regarding professional development models for teachers; Continuing professional development schemes for trainers; recommendations from Skills Australia and SNR requirements; IBSA VET Capability Framework recommendations.
Phase 2: Investigate the perspective of trainers and assessors by surveying their experiences of current practices in performance management and perceived needs in professional development. Investigate current practices in professional development and performance management via individual interviews with college managers.

Phase 3: Develop a draft Community College Quality Teaching and Learning Framework OR recommend adoption of an existing framework, possibly with modifications – as per findings of research.
ABSTRACT 48***

Theme: VET Research and Its Relationship to Policy Formulation
Concurrent Session 1C
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1000 – 1030 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 3

SKILLS SHORTAGES AND INDUSTRY RENEWAL: RETHINKING WORK AND OCCUPATIONAL KNOWLEDGE WHEN RECOGNISING PRIOR LEARNING
Sue Shore¹, Victoria Whittington², Carol Thompson²
¹Charles Darwin University, Darwin, NT
²University of South Australia, Adelaide, SA

Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning (RPL) are related policy strategies that aim to improve pathways to learning and employment. This paper illustrates via a case study of a higher education RPL initiative, how university academics and practitioners built rich understandings of ‘work’, and so also the occupational knowledge accumulated by practitioners, sometimes over many decades. Located in the early childhood education (ECE) field, the study was prompted by recent policy changes to meet quality assurance requirements of early childhood provision (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). The initiative used a multidisciplinary approach to occupational knowledge and skills drawing on feminist sociology (Smith 2005), professional and work-related learning (Seddon 2008; Felstead et al 2009; Allen and Lewis 2009) and early childcare theories of provision (Sylva 2010; Kelley and Camill 2007). A higher education ‘foundation course’ was used to identify and accredit prior learning. Examination of data collected from students undertaking the course indicates first, that participants had often accumulated extensive informal professional experience yet were often unable to articulate this experience in relation to formal learning outcomes or broader notions of occupational knowledge and second, they experienced substantial challenges to their occupational identities as competent professionals as they shifted between being competent professionals and university learners. The findings have implications for contemporary workforces as occupational knowledge requirements are continuously upgraded and older workers are encouraged to remain in the workforce. They also signal important lessons for university academics and education practitioners as they navigate the pressure to align complex occupational knowledges with formal structures present in university upgrade programs.
ABSTRACT 50***

Theme: VET Research and Its Relationship to Policy Formulation
Concurrent Session 2C
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1320 – 1350 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 3

CONCEIVING HIGHER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: FAULT LINES, POTENTIAL AND FEMINISING THE AQF

David McLean
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Melbourne, VIC

Research in this paper explores how symbols, imagery and language are constructing the concept of a new ‘shared’ space in Australian tertiary education. Tertiary education in Australia is mainly comprised of two large but different sectors responsible for developing the skills capability and knowledge competence of its workers, citizens and guests. Vocational education and training is one component of the tertiary sector that has a broad educational base delivering to individuals with little or no educational achievements through to existing workers seeking paraprofessional or graduate qualifications. Higher education is the second tertiary component that also covers a breadth of capability in developing conceptual and applied skills in individuals with existing educational achievements into Bachelor and post-graduate qualifications through to research centred doctoral degrees.
The influential Review of Australian Higher Education (Commonwealth of Australia 2008), known as the Bradley Review, suggested significant changes to how the two components of the tertiary sector relate to each other. However discussions around potentialising the relationship of both components of the tertiary sector mainly focus on how pathways for transiting students between the sectors are negotiated and managed. The abutment of vocational education and training and higher education provides both the topology and opportunity to prise apart the two sectors and create new ground developed and occupied by educators from both vocational education and training and higher education. It is the potential new ground equally occupied by both that may be truly tertiary and offer something more than simply defining the mechanics of credit transfers. However discussion and conceptual development of what that space could be is quiet and, for the most part, unexplored.

It is quiet as disquiet that inspires the research in this paper, in that post Bradley, the reengineering of a tertiary space can offer much more than pathways for students to transit between sectoral components. A symbolically redesigned Australian Qualifications Framework suggests that the vocational education and training sector has not fully asserted its capability to develop the potential of a new tertiary space, but in Associate Degrees has the qualifications to do just that.
NEW HSC SPAWNS NEW VET: TRUE OR FALSE?

Paul Rodney

University of Melbourne

The New HSC introduced into NSW schools in 2000 offered a change in direction with enhanced opportunities for senior school students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET). The changes recommended by the Government of the day were documented in the white paper Securing Their Future (Aquilina 1997) which was based on the research and the recommendations of Professor Barry McGaw as presented in the papers Their Future (McGaw 1996) and Shaping Their Future (McGaw 1997).

A decade on, it is possible to evaluate if McGaw’s recommendations and the Government’s plan for “enhancing the quality of vocational studies” (Aquilina 1997) have delivered on their intent and provided improved VET outcomes and opportunity for the youth of NSW. This paper interprets the intent for VET as a consequence of the introduction of the New HSC and makes judgement as to whether the recommendations of Government have been implemented and what difference they may have made for VET students in NSW schools. The paper investigates with reliance on an analysis of retention, curriculum availability and access, achievement, transition and satisfaction.

In addressing this enquiry through an ‘equity lens’, the paper relies in part on quantitative data for student participation and outcomes in the Catholic sector linked to social demographic data as contained in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census collection district data. The research approach also includes the analysis of qualitative research data collected through phone survey.

The research finds that the introduction of the New HSC has been successful in delivering a broader range of VET courses but failed to promote VET into the ‘mainstream’ despite greater than 30 percent participation. It finds that VET in NSW schools is shallow in its engagement and overly influenced by non-VET regulation.
ABSTRACT 52***

Theme: The Economic and Industry Impacts of VET research
Concurrent Session 2A
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1400 – 1430 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 1

DEVELOPING GREEN SKILLS THROUGH A REGIONAL TAFE INSTITUTE
Mike Brown
LaTrobe University, Melbourne, VIC

This paper looks at the development of green skills in a Regional TAFE Institute. The study follows the implementation of the Green Skills Agreement and explores the perceptions of stakeholders and participants about how jobs are changing, the demand for green skills along with possible future directions, inclusion of learning about sustainability and green skills within VET programs, and access to appropriately aligned professional development for TAFE teachers and managers. The paper reports on data collected through interviews with four TAFE managers, five TAFE teachers, seven TAFE students, and four industry and/or community representatives. Stakeholders in green industries are reporting that their economic viability tends to be closely tied to government subsidies, and some are expressing some frustration at the promises of businesses and government to develop a large scale solar industry. However, the domestic solar industry continues to grow. TAFE managers and teachers report seeing more sustainability-orientated content being included in their courses. TAFE staff also report positively on receiving access to associated professional development as the senior management at this Institute appear to be supporting the development of TAFE staff to teach green skills. The students interviewed for this research were studying Electrotechnology and Land and Conservation Management. Both groups reported seeing changes being implemented in their workplaces, their courses of study and the community. The students interviewed tended to be very knowledgeable and interested in the changes they were seeing.
Over the past decades the VET (Vocational Education and Training) sector has experienced significant changes. These changes have occurred in technology advancement, industry needs and moves towards workplace based training and VET in Schools. These changes have been influenced by global and national competitiveness. Significant changes have also occurred in national requirements for VET teacher/trainer educational qualifications. The future sustainability of individual countries relies on the skills, knowledge and expertise of the workforce. This can be achieved to a significant degree by an effective VET system.

Workforce expertise relies on the educational processes used to train the workforce. This is affected by the quality of the curriculum and the quality of the trainers/teachers/lecturers who deliver the curriculum. In the Australian context education standards must be established in schools, the VET sector and higher education. National frameworks of standards have been introduced by the Australia Qualifications Training Framework (AQTF) in conjunction with the National Quality Council, the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC). The recent establishment of Australian Quality Skills Authority (AQSA) serves to enhance the quality of education.

Despite such frameworks and interventions it can be argued that the educational requirements and standards for VET teachers and trainers in Australia have diminished. Significant differences exist in the qualification standards required by teachers in schools and those employed in the VET sector. There is some evidence although largely anecdotal that current VET teacher training is inadequate. However there is a lack of research in the area to confirm this anecdotal evidence.

This paper examines teacher training in the VET sector. It argues for further research into the adequacy of the current VET teacher / trainer qualifications.
ABSTRACT 56***

Theme: VET Research and Its Relationship to Policy Formulation
Concurrent Session 2E
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1440 – 1510 hours
Room: Acacia Lounge

UNDERSTANDINGS OF LEADERSHIP IN AUSTRALIAN PRIVATE VET: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP – MISSING IN ACTION OR JUST HIDING?
Roger Harris, Michele Simons
University of South Australia, Adelaide

The leadership and management culture within Vocational Education and Training (VET) organisations has undergone dramatic change in the last fifteen years in Australia. This has led to a shift in the relationship between educational leadership and bottom-line management responsibilities. Leaders are being challenged to strike some form of balance between business and educational imperatives for their organisations. The tensions inherent in these dual roles are an increasingly pressing problem that requires richer understanding, particularly in the process of becoming a more ‘interconnected’ tertiary education system. Drawing on Australian research, this paper examines understandings of leadership within the private VET sector. In-depth interviews were held with 34 personnel in 16 (commercial, enterprise and industry) private RTOs across three Australian States. The paper argues that a richer understanding of the nature of educational leadership is needed in order for VET systems to be able to realise policy outcomes desired by governments.
ABSTRACT 58***

Theme: VET Research and Its Relationship to Policy Formulation
Concurrent Session 3B
Date: Friday, 13 April 2012
Time: 1200 – 1230 hours
Room: Suite 2

STUDENT MOVEMENT: PATHWAYS, FIELDS AND LINKS TO WORK
Nick Fredman
LH Martin Institute, University of Melbourne

There are a number of indications that there is a lack of coherence between education, training and work in Australia. These indications include the low proportions of VET graduates who work in occupations related to their qualification and research findings showing the dissatisfaction that results from mismatches between qualification, skills and work. In this paper I discuss how student flows through tertiary education can further illustrate this lack of coherence, using data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ Survey of Education and Training. The research is drawn from the National Centre for Vocational Education funded project Vocations: the link between post-compulsory education and the labour market. The paper will examine the increase in the level of qualifications in the workforce and the extent of student movement within and between tertiary sectors (VET and higher education) and within and between fields of education. The way sectoral movement has changed over time will be discussed overall in detail for several selected fields of education. These findings will be related to economic and labour market changes in related occupational areas. It will be argued that links within tertiary education are generally quite weak and have not improved in recent years, although these findings vary markedly by field. It is further argued that the long-standing policy focus on improving tertiary pathways has not proved adequate and that better ways to link education, training and work need to be found.
CAN M – AND E-LEARNING SUPPORT PATHWAYS FOR MEANINGFUL VOCATION IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES?

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The work reported in this paper is supported by funding from the Australian Government Cooperative Research Centres Program through the CRC for Remote Economic Participation. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the CRC for remote Economic Participation or its Participants.

This paper, based on an upcoming CRC for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP) research project—‘Pathways to Employment’—will canvas the proposition that mobile technology can be used as an effective vehicle for vocational learning in remote communities. This proposition in itself is not new and indeed there are a number of examples in the literature that demonstrate the possibilities of mobile and emerging digital technologies in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia and indigenous communities elsewhere in the world. However, the application of technologies in vocational learning is often applied to the delivery of mainstream training packages for mainstream employment outcomes.

The ‘Pathways to Employment’ research project will consider pathways from a different starting point than many other research projects, which take as a given, the traditional notion of pathways to employment—typically linear, mainstream oriented and driven—with all the mainstream assumptions that go along with this notion of ‘pathway’. This paper foregrounds the research with a consideration of the literature on effective application of digital technologies in vocational learning and the intersection between these technologies, vocational learning and their fit within a pathway. The philosophical underpinnings behind the pathways construct are examined and questioned as to their fit within a remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context. The paper suggests that the reason the apparently successful applications of digital technologies in remote VET programs work is because of their fit with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ontologies, epistemologies and axiologies.
The data collection phase of the research project will commence later in 2012. However, ahead of the research itself, this paper poses several questions that will form the basis of one part of the ‘Pathways’ project. These will include questions about the scope of using technology for ‘Aboriginally’ constructed vocational training products and processes that fit the breadth of livelihood aspirations in remote communities.
ABSTRACT 61***

Theme: The Impacts of VET Research on Individual Learners and Groups of Learners
Concurrent Session 2D
Date: Thursday 12 April 2012
Time: 1400 – 1430 hours
Room: Event Room 1

PROMISES AND EXPECTATIONS BETWEEN APPRENTICES, TRAINEES AND THEIR EMPLOYERS.
Ros Brennan Kemmis AM, Sharon Ahern, Diane Middleton
Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW

This paper is based on a recent comprehensive NCVER study. This study highlighted the importance of the promises and expectations between apprentices and trainees, and their employers in Australia. It will therefore address conference theme number four: the impacts of VET research on individual learners and groups of learners.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to provide the perspectives of employers, trainees and apprentices at a national and/or high-level policy and practice level. Data were collected in six different ways. These methods of data collection were: interviews with twelve stakeholders; four surveys that included random samples from apprentices, trainees and employers from State Training Authority databases, apprentices and trainees employed by GTOs and GTOs as employers from Group Training Victoria and Group Training Queensland & Northern Territory; and nine case studies that were conducted in Western Australia, Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland and New South Wales. There were 665 responses from the surveys.

The study found that apprentices, trainees and employers all make promises and have expectations when undertaking a new contract at the beginning of the ‘cycle’ of an apprenticeship or traineeship. There are three dimensions to this relationship: training and learning, employment conditions and the emotional and interpersonal aspects of work. During the period of the contract these dimensions transform for all parties. In addition expectations differ between the types of employer while outside influences on apprentices and trainees also affect this relationship.

This paper is based on three case studies from the broader research program and reports on a number of instances when the expectations and promises were different for apprentices and trainees and their employers, and provides possible explanations for these differences. In particular the paper explores the practices of ‘communication and reinforcement’ within traineeships and apprenticeships as these are critical to the fulfilment of the psychological contract and, by definition, critical to the retention of apprentices and trainees. These findings are then located within the broader theoretical framework of ‘practice architectures’ (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008). Apprentices, trainees and employers come to the practice setting where
the practices are always already prefigured (Schatzki, 2002) by ways of saying and thinking (in the cultural-discursive dimension; in the social medium of language); ways of doing things (in the material-economic dimension; in the social medium of work); and ways of relating among the different kinds of participants in these settings (in the social-political dimension; in the social medium of power).
ABSTRACT 62

Theme: The Economic and Industry Impacts of VET Research

Concurrent Session 1A

Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1120 – 1150 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 1

DEVELOPING GREEN SKILLS THROUGH TAFE ACROSS VICTORIA

Mike Brown
LaTrobe University, Melbourne, VIC

This paper presents the initial findings of a study that looks at the development of green skills within five different TAFE Institutes across Victoria. The implementation of the Green Skills Agreement provides the policy context for this study. This research explores perceptions about how jobs are changing, the demand for green skills, inclusion of learning about sustainability and green skills within VET programs, and access to professional development. The paper reports on interviews with nineteen TAFE managers, twenty-two TAFE teachers, nineteen TAFE students and twenty industry and/or community representatives, (n=80). The findings from the interviews with TAFE students, teachers and managers can stand alongside the previous findings of Dusseldorp Skills Forum (2008 & 2011) and that of Sack (forthcoming). The study builds on the work of Hatfield-Dodds, Turner, Schandl & Doss (2008) and Rafferty & Yu (2009) as it looks at demand for jobs and identifies what constitutes green skills across a range of different occupations and fields of study. Some areas like Electrotechnology, Plumbing, Engineering and Land and Conservation Management are needing to adapt immediately to include new and emerging demands, while fields like Hairdressing, Performing Arts, Automotive, Fashion and Textiles and Commercial Cookery are able to explore what committing to being more sustainable and green means for them. Representatives from industry and the community report that they are being motivated to go green for a range of different reasons. These include, because it makes good business sense; for health and well being reasons; environmental beliefs about saving the finite resources of the planet; and as a reaction to rising costs. TAFE managers and teachers report seeing more sustainability orientated content being included into their courses through updates, inclusions and revisions to Training Packages. Support for teachers to instigate any initiatives to improve sustainability varied, and perceptions around access to professional development around teaching green skills and sustainability also varied considerably across departments and institutes. Some of the TAFE students interviewed were very knowledgeable in this area with some reported seeing considerable changes being implemented into both their work roles and their courses of study.

Conference themes being addressed:
1. The economic and industry impacts of VET research
2. The social and community impacts of VET research
IDENTIFYING VET TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AT HIGHER AQF LEVELS

Steven Hodge¹, Roslin Brennan Kemmis², Jillian Downing³, Michele Simons⁴

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The quality of VET teaching, the nature of VET teacher and trainer capabilities and how they can be developed are enduring issues for Australian vocational education. These issues have recently been subject to renewed interest as witnessed by the release of major reports and proposals, including the Productivity Commission’s VET Workforce Research Report (2011), IBSA’s Pathways for VET Educators (2011) and Wheelahan and Moodie’s The Quality of Teaching in VET (2011). A shared concern in these publications is the quality and appropriateness of the entry-level Certificate IV qualification to reliably produce trainers of the quality needed for the diverse contexts in which VET teachers and trainers operate.

One group that has a long-standing interest in this area of VET teacher and trainer capabilities is made up of those universities that offer qualifications to VET teachers and trainers at degree and post graduate levels. These universities have recently come together under the aegis of the Australian Council of Deans of Education, to undertake research to document and analyze the body of knowledge and skills (BoKS) underpinning the courses they offer people working across the VET sector. This presentation reports on this research which involves analyzing and comparing curricula of 27 qualifications spanning AQF levels 6 to 9. The initial mapping of the BoKS that defines 10 components developed through the qualifications is described. The next steps in refining the BoKS are discussed which include an evaluation of existing frameworks that have been proposed for articulating the complex work of VET professionals.

What is emerging from this process is a unique view of VET teacher and trainer capabilities. It is suggested that the BoKS will contribute to the debate about the quality of VET teaching in Australia and inform discussions about capability frameworks and professional development in the sector. By making the BoKS explicit, it will also be easier for VET teachers and trainers to plan their professional learning through to more sophisticated levels.
ABSTRACT 65***

Theme: The Impacts of VET Research on Individual Learners and Groups of Learners
Concurrent Session 3E
Date: Friday, 13 April 2012
Time: 1200 – 1230 hours
Room: Acacia Lounge

EXPLICATING FORMS OF NEGOTIATION THROUGH PERSONAL WORK AND LEARNING PRACTICE

Raymond Smith
Griffith University

This paper outlines a means of making more explicit some of the often taken for granted meanings and understandings of the concept of ‘negotiation’. Negotiation is often used in constructivist adult learning theory to describe and explain the nature of learning through the activities of engaging in work and vocational training. Too often, in work and learning research literature, the concept of negotiation remains generic and under specified and so fails to sufficiently account for how workers and learners engage in the interactions and outcomes that constitute their learning practices. Drawing on ethnographic research undertaken with twelve workers from four different work places, this paper proposes that overcoming some of this lack of explication can be achieved by viewing negotiation as comprising four forms of joint activity that workers are engaged in through the enactment of their work and learning. These forms are realised, discovered, concealed and protracted negotiations. The research focused on workers’ self description and explanation of the particular ways they went about their work and the purposes and outcomes accomplished through their personal practice. With this strong focus on the personal enactment and accounting of work practice, the findings indicate that workers can be viewed as negotiating their participation in work. Further, negotiation can be used to conceptualise personal learning practices as social processes of engagement in joint activity when the four forms of negotiation are used to analyse and categorise workers’ personal practices. In this way, the value of research to make explicit what is often taken for granted, that is, workers’ active participation in vocational practice, and the voice of workers as those who enact work and learning practices are brought together as the evidence of how research impacts individual workers and learners to understand more fully the nature of their personal work and learning practices. Such understanding can be the basis of improving work and learning performance by developing individuals’ awareness of personal practice and its relational qualities as always negotiated accomplishment.

and content of vocational education are fraught with difficulty. Debates about whether vocational education represents diversity or diversion to accommodate students from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds highlight just some of the challenges involved in addressing ‘knowledge’ in this context.
This presentation takes up the idea that we need to ‘bring knowledge back in’ (Michael Young, 2008), and argues that insights from the micro level of practice must also inform our understandings of the constructions of knowledge in vocational education. Using case examples from the micro level of practice, the presentation shows that, in different ways, teachers as well as official stakeholders are active agents in shaping values and expectations about legitimate, worthwhile knowledge in vocational education. These cases suggest that if we are to re-construct knowledge in vocational education for the future, we need to build on the insights and experiences of local practices, which play a significant role in constructing the meaning of knowledge in vocational education.
ABSTRACT 66

Theme: The Voice of Vet Research: Whose and Who Listens
Concurrent Session 3F
Date: Friday, 13 April 2012
Time: 1040 – 1110 hours
Room: Event Room 2

USING WORKPLACE LEARNING THEORY TO UNDERSTAND THE EXPERIENCES OF NOVICE TEACHERS: A CONTRIBUTION TO TERTIARY SECTOR RESEARCH

Steven Hodge, Lauri Grace
Deakin University, Geelong, VIC

Workplace learning research and theory has evolved largely in the context of VET-oriented problems and methodologies. The relationship is quite a natural one given the intrinsically ‘vocational’ nature of much workplace learning, and the types of questions that have been pursued by workplace learning researchers which generally focus on occupational knowledge and its development in novice and more experienced workers (Billett 2011, Eraut 2010, Hagar 2011). One occupational area that has not been subject to much attention from workplace learning researchers is school teaching. Although schools are clearly workplaces, teachers, workers, and pre-service teacher education courses vocational programs, there has been some reluctance on the part of both VET and higher education researchers to explore the workplace learning of teachers. For example, higher education researchers have tended to focus on the problems of application of pre-service learning to the classroom (e.g. Darling-Hammond 2006), or the effects of enculturation (e.g. Feiman-Nemser 2003) or of socialisation (e.g. Zeichner 2005) on teachers.

Over the last decade a small number of projects have started to explore the promise of applying a workplace learning lens to the experiences of novice teachers. For example, Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004) and Fox, Wilson and Deane (2010) have conducted research in the UK which demonstrates that the concepts of workplace learning theory generate fresh perspectives on the work of teachers. Their work has drawn on situated learning and communities of practice theory to investigate the nature of the school as a workplace and the strategies adopted by teachers as they negotiate the complexities of the workplace. The research presented here builds on Billett’s (2010, 2011) more recent work on subjectivity and workplace learning to examine novice teacher workplace practices, and the interaction between participative and personal dimensions of this practice. The research has implications for understanding workplace learning more generally, especially where workers alternate between individual and group tasks. The research also has implications for pre-service teacher education by identifying aspects of the workplace which mediate the application of professional knowledge. And because it is research that cuts across VET and higher education sector problems and methodologies, it contributes to the new field of tertiary sector research.
ABSTRACT 67

Theme: VET Research and Its Relationship to Policy Formulation
Concurrent Session 3B
Date: Friday, 13 April 2012
Time: 1040 – 1110 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 2

EFFECTS OF DONOR SUPPORTED EDUCATIONAL REFORMS ON THE IDENTITY OF BANGLADESHI TVET TEACHERS IN TRANSITION
Tony Holland
Senior Lecturer, UTS

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has long been seen as a means of poverty alleviation through income generation. TVET in Bangladesh is going through a series of reforms, implemented by the Government of Bangladesh and supported by its development partners, namely European Commission (EC), International Labour Organization (ILO), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and The World Bank.

Remittances being the largest contributor to the country’s GDP, the proposed reforms in Bangladesh aims at developing a job ready workforce that will meet the industry demand at local and international levels. These proposed reforms to the TVET system are based upon the principles of new vocationalism and human capital theory and learn from the best practices from countries around the world. Australian Vocational education and training (VET) system has been established and recognized as one of the best and most productive in the world. The proposed reforms in Bangladesh draw its framework from the Australian system including a National Technical Vocational Qualification Framework, a quality assurance system and the model of competency based training and assessment (CBT&A).

Effective implementation of a reformed education system is contingent upon the quality of the instructors. 22 in – service teachers, across 12 occupations are being trained to implement the pilot program, emulating the reformed system. As the piloting draws closer, TVET teachers are learning to learn and teach using the principles and practices of Competency based training and assessment (CBT&A). This research makes an attempt to monitor their journey and identify how the formal and informal (on-the-job) learning resulting from policy reforms affect the identity of TVET teachers, thus giving a voice to the crucial yet neglected change agents in transition.
GUARANTEEING WHAT IN A CONTESTABLE TRAINING MARKET?

John Pardy
Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Monash University

The Victorian Government introduced the Victorian Training Guarantee (VTG) as a key policy reform to reorganize VET provision in 2008. Since then the evolution of a training market has been shaped by the shift from a ‘purchaser-provider’ arrangement to a fully ‘contestable’ open market regime. These changes are having far reaching impacts on VET in terms of provision and student experiences. These changes have brought a shift in emphasis with students positioned as consumers and with providers (public and or private) being treated uniformly as market entities.

This paper draws upon submissions to the recent (2011) Essential Services Commission, VET Fee and Funding Review to consider the impact of market approaches to the Victorian VET sector. Many of the submissions made to the review highlighted the costs of a fully ‘contestable training market’. Of the sixty-three submissions to the review, Registered Training Organisations and their representative bodies made thirty-five. In these submissions it was consistently maintained that the VTG represented a significant disadvantage to current and prospective students. Submissions by students poignantly illustrated and provided examples of the nature and character of the unintended inequities in this brave new market context.

This paper argues that consumer protections are urgently needed to ensure more equitable approaches to VET provision. In order to achieve improved consumer protections, the paper will argue that cooperation as a core principle is important. For a training market to imply guarantees and be premised upon a robust assurance of quality education this will only occur when a contestable market is arranged through a principle of cooperation.
EXPLORING CULTURAL-HISTORICAL ACTIVITY THEORY (CHAT) AS A TOOL FOR INVESTIGATING WORKERS’ LITERACY AND NUMERACY PRACTICES

Stephen Black, Tony Brown, Keiko Yasukawa

University of Technology, Sydney, NSW

Public policy discourses suggest that there is a ‘crisis’ in the literacy and numeracy levels of the Australian workforce. In this paper, we propose a methodology for examining this ‘crisis’ from a critical perspective. We draw on the literature review that we have undertaken to inform the way we conduct our current NCVER funded project which investigates production workers’ literacy and numeracy in lean manufacturing firms. We focus on how language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) practices are embedded in production work, and investigate various perspectives, including those of management, trainers and workers, on any LLN problems and issues. We adopt a critical perspective that analyses the way work, learning in work, and literacy and numeracy in the workplace are shaped and reshaped by social relations and culture, values and the histories of the industry and the local workplaces. Much of the literature on workplace literacy and numeracy research that is aligned with this perspective examines literacy and numeracy as social practices, as we will do. In this paper, we propose that cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) offers useful theoretical concepts and tools for analysing the multiple literacy and numeracy practices used by workers.
THE ROLE OF VET IN THE EMPLOYMENT AND MOBILITY TRAJECTORIES OF IMMIGRANT-BORN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE WORKERS

Alicia Boyle1, Kate Golebiowska2

1Faculty of Law, Education, Business and Arts and the Social Partnerships in Lifelong Learning Research Centre, Charles Darwin University, Darwin, NT
2The Northern Institute, Charles Darwin University, Darwin, NT

The Productivity Commission’s 2011 research report into the “Early Childhood Development Workforce” presents a range of recommendations that impact on the VET sector and its role in the ongoing training and development of this workforce. Greater professionalisation of the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) workforce (including compulsory qualifications for selected occupations), the introduction of a new National Quality Framework and a growth in its size, are part of the Australian Government agenda for reform. In the Northern Territory (NT), implementation of the national agenda is complemented by the NT Government’s own “Northern Territory Early Childhood Workforce Plan 2011-2021”.

The NT has a diverse population and this is reflected in its workforce. At the 2006 Census immigrant-born represented 14% of the NT population. Recent research reveals that immigrant-born in the NT have higher employment rates than Australian-born but they are also likely to work in positions below their formal skill level. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the ECEC workforce in the NT is made up of a high number of immigrant-born educators and carers. But little appears to be known about the match of their skills to their level of employment, job satisfaction, further education and training, professional development expectations and mobility trajectories.

This presentation will report on the initial findings of a pilot study analysing a range of demographic and economic characteristics of the immigrant and Australian-born ECEC workforce in the NT and Australia. This study will fill an obvious knowledge gap and provide advice to training providers about the characteristics and needs of immigrant-born early childhood education and care students who may be upgrading their qualifications; it will advance our understanding of the characteristics of immigrant-born early childhood educators and carers and provide research-based evidence, which may be used by the NT Government to inform its strategies for the development of its ECEC workforce.
THE INTERCULTURAL APPROACH TO VET TEACHING AND LEARNING

Ly Thi Tran
School of Education, RMIT University, Melbourne, VIC

The latest figure of the Australian Education International (AEI, 2011) indicates that there were 155,675 international student enrolments in the Australian VET sector in September 2011. Students from the Asian region constitute 85% of international VET students. The presence of international students in VET classrooms has placed teachers in the position to adapt their pedagogical practices in order to cater more effectively for this student cohort. This paper explores how VET teachers are engaged with the intercultural approach to teaching international students and VET students in general. It draws on a study which involves in-depth interviews with fifty teachers from VET institutes in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. One of the key features of the intercultural pedagogy adopted by teachers in this study is linked to their attempt to enhancing awareness and knowledge of international students’ educational backgrounds, their cultural learning characteristics and their home countries’ vocational practices. The intercultural approach also involves the design and implementation of activities for learners to share, build on and validate their prior professional and cultural experiences during the learning process. Drawing on the intercultural approach to address the learning needs and characteristics of international students is thus intimately associated with the process of broadening teachers’ professional horizons and enriching their own intercultural experiences. Importantly in adopting the intercultural pedagogic approach, teachers position international students not only as valued members in the class but also as global mobile citizens who are trained and empowered to be capable to work across national borders.
INVESTING IN WORKER LEARNING: THE FACILITATIVE LEARNING ROLE OF A LINE MANAGER

Rosalind Carter
University of Technology, Sydney, NSW

The skills, experience and existing knowledge of managers are vital resources for public organisations managing rapid change in organisations. Change in business and industry technologies, customer demands and new government initiatives, requires rapid responses and management of staff capabilities to meet the demands of these environments. The current imperative for workers to work productively and efficiently to keep up with the pace of work related change, has brought forward the need for organisations to better understand how worker capabilities are developed on-the-job to meet these new work related demands. This study looks specifically at what it is that managers actually do to assist informal worker learning and the types of issues which influence their strategies to develop worker capabilities.

The study argues that while managers are often vested with responsibilities of develop staff capabilities, their roles are not well understood in organisations. The study reinforces discussion in recent literature which suggests manager involvement in worker learning is an issue of growing importance in organisations but one which is not yet well understood. This study brings to light the types of strategies deployed and skills applied by a group of managers to facilitate the ongoing, informal learning of workers and how the organisation supports managers in this role. The study finds that managers deploy a range of strategies to facilitate informal worker learning to address organisational objectives to work productively and to build worker capabilities. To do this, they apply skills which focus primarily on establishing contexts in the workplace which support adaptive and collaborative practices among workers. The study also uncovers a surprising lack of acknowledgement and support from for the facilitative learning role of managers by the organisation’s senior managers.

The study is informed by a case study conducted in the context of a large vocational education and training organisation in NSW and looks specifically at the role of an Operations Manager managing large teams of administrative and technical support staff.
MODELING OF VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE TAKE TWO: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE
Helen Smith1, Mohammad Ali Rahimi2
1RMIT, Melbourne, VIC
2Deakin University, Melbourne, VIC

In 2011 we reported on the Finnish and Australian findings from an international project called Modeling of Vocational Excellence (MoVE). The MoVE research project, which was initiated by the University of Tampere in Finland, set out to identify the characteristics of vocational excellence, using a multidimensional theoretical framework derived from research into the processes of and influences on cognitive and social development, goal orientation and adaptive learning. Data was collected from Finnish WorldSkills competitors in the 2005 and 2007 international WorldSkills competitions. When WorldSkills Australia and RMIT University joined the project the research focus was extended to include consideration of the experience of young people aspiring to vocational excellence. UK Skills and Oxford University have also joined the project to explore the role of employers in the development of vocational excellence.

In 2011 the international MoVE project research team from the University of Tampere, RMIT and Oxford University, with support from their national WorldSkills organisations, received funding from the WorldSkills Foundation to extend the MoVE research to the global level by collecting data from WorldSkills member organisations competing at WorldSkills London in October 2011 and competitors and WorldSkills Experts from 40 of the 57 member organisations completed the survey. This is the first global collection of data on the characteristics of vocational excellence and the WorldSkills experience.

This paper provides an overview of the findings of the survey which have been cross-referenced to the outcomes of the WorldSkills competition to provide a relationship between the characteristics and experiential data and global judgments on vocational expertise and excellence. The paper also explores the narrative data provided by the Australian WorldSkills competitors and experts to provide an update on the findings reported in 2011.
ABSTRACT 75***

Theme: VET Research and Its Relationship to Policy Formulation
Concurrent Session 3A
Date: Friday, 13 April 2012
Time: 1120 – 1150 hours
Room: Forrest Suite 1

AN OLD CHESTNUT REVISITED: TEACHERS’ OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD GRADING WITHIN A COMPETENCY BASED TRAINING FRAMEWORK
James Richards
William Angliss Institute

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers’ opinions with regard to the value and process of grading within a competency based training (CBT) framework, following the introduction of a formalised grading system at a Melbourne TAFE institution. The data was gathered using a 16 item Likert-style survey that allowed for comments. Basic descriptive statistics were used for the analysis. The results indicated that for this sample, teachers were evenly divided as to their perceived value of grading and the processes by which grading should be done. Even though teachers had undergone some training in the writing of rubrics, uncertainty and doubt still existed with regard to grading.
Real user choice in Vocational Education and Training (VET) is now a reality rather than a challenge of the future. Competition amongst VET providers is a development in line with general societal trends where increasingly, users want to make choices based on perceived benefits to their particular circumstances rather than conform to a one size fits all model.

In such a “user choice” environment, the user will want to make a choice of provider on the basis of “perceived value” to their circumstances just like any customer who purchases any good or service. However, what may be viewed as “quality” by a provider, a user may disregard as of little value and conversely what a user may value, providers may not value highly.

The notion of “quality” versus “value” is a complex circumstance to assess but it is pertinent given the context of a competitive market. For example, public providers have traditionally placed emphases on underpinning knowledge and learning support as a mechanism to build confidence for learning and indeed, further learning. This is placing an equal emphasis on the learning experience with that of demonstration of skills/competence.

On the other hand, some VET providers focus on demonstration of skills as their underpinning philosophy of learning and this approach seems to be valued by those seeking qualifications rather than seeking the traditional learning experience. And who are we to say that they should not do so?

It is in these types of variances between what providers may think is important in terms of quality and what the user may think is of value in terms of their expectations that demands some investigation and critical thinking.

Research into what teachers and managers in a regional RTO think of as important in “quality” were compared to attributes that students’ value. The results are intriguing, and challenging, in terms of policy formulation.
ABSTRACT 78***

Theme: The Voice of VET Research; Whose and Who Listens
Concurrent Session 1F
Date: Thursday, 12 April 2012
Time: 1200 – 1230 hours
Room: Event Room 2

LEARNER VOICE IN VET & ACE: WHAT DO STAKEHOLDERS SAY?
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Involving learner voice and learner input in the promotion of students’ own learning has the potential to empower learners and transform their learning experience. A greater emphasis on genuine engagement of students could also potentially transform Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Adult Community Education (ACE) systems, and, in turn, workplaces and communities. This paper presents initial findings from research conducted in a range of VET (vocational education and training) and ACE (adult and community education) organisations in three Australian states and the Northern Territory with a view to identifying the mechanisms and systems used to capture learner voice. The paper also draws upon recent research in the UK and Europe that has provided critical insights into the benefits to learners’ experiences and successes that result from taking learner voice seriously in the Further Education setting. The paper concludes that learner voice is not being seriously considered in VET in Australia, and that authentic approaches to capturing and responding to learner voice might lead to better outcomes for students.
ABSTRACT 79

Theme: The Impacts of VET Research on Individual Learners and Groups of Learners
Concurrent Session 3D
Date: Friday, 13 April 2012
Time: 1200 – 1230 hours
Room: Event Room 1

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT USING INFORMAL LEARNING NETWORKS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN AUSTRALIA’S DIGITAL CONTENT INDUSTRY
Joe Campana
Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

Informal learning networks play a key role in the skill and professional development of professionals working in micro-businesses within Australia’s digital content industry as they do not necessarily have access to a learning and development or a human resources section that can assist in mapping their learning pathway. Professionals working in this environment would typically adopt an informal learning approach to their skill and professional development by utilising their social and business networks.

The overall aim of this PhD research project is to study how these professionals manage their skill and professional development, and to explore what role informal learning networks play in this professional learning context. This paper will describe the theme of the research project and how it fits with previous research and other relevant studies. Secondly, it will present the study’s research focus, and the research questions. It will also present relevant theories and perspectives, and the methods for empirical data collection. Data collection will be through three distinct phases using a mixed methods research design: an online survey, interviews, and case studies. It should be noted the findings presented in this paper offer some early results of the research project.
ABSTRACT 80

Theme: The Voice of VET Research: Whose and Who Listens

Concurrent Session 3F
Date: Friday, 13 April 2012
Time: 1120 – 1150 hours
Room: Event Room 2

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: STANDING AND CLARIFICATION OF KEY OBJECTIVES

Stephen Billett
Griffith University, Australia

This presentation addresses two interrelated foundational issues for vocational education: i) the source of its standing and ii) its key objects (i.e. occupations and vocations). The source and enduring bases of vocational education’s relative low standing and consequences for its conceptions, policies and practices sector globally are discussed first. From earlier times and continuing to the present, two erroneous sentiments have profoundly shaped the character and provision of vocational education. These are, i) the lowly standing of the occupations that vocational education serves and ii) unfounded assumptions about the capacities of those who work in and learn these occupations. The former leads to views that the educational provisions for these occupations can be easy, not requiring the development of higher order capacities. Hence, they can be accounted for through behavioural measures, for instance. The later has led to views about the qualities of those who do that work and, therefore, learn occupational practice. These misapprehensions have been exercised across vocational education provisions because they have nearly always been made by powerful others who are remote from practice and yet subscribe to these sentiments. The list of these elites extends from aristocrats, theocrats through to bureaucrats and, currently national and global bureaucracies. Rather than engaging with those who practice, it has been the voices of others (e.g. employers, professional bodies, unions) who speak on behalf of those whom practice these occupations and thereby shape the nature, goal, processes and means by which vocational education has come to be enacted and is judged.

In exercising these considerations, the second part of the presentation seeks to distinguish between the two fundamental objects of vocational education: occupations and vocations. The distinction is made between them is that the former is a product of culture and society, whereas the latter resides within the personal, albeit as a social product. From such distinctions, it is possible to propose that the purposes, forms and practices of vocational education might have other and distinct forms in many countries, because of the negotiations between these two objects. These two issues arise from the research undertaken for a recent publication that aimed to address a range of foundational issues for vocational education that have not been otherwise presented in a single text (Billett 2011). These particular issues have been selected to promote discussion about education for occupations, albeit labelled as trades, paraprofessional or professional occupations.

PANEL GROUP DISCUSSION – ABSTRACT

Theme: The Quality of VET Research in Australia
Date: Friday 13 April 2012
Time: 1430 – 1530 hours
Room: Forrest Suite Plenary Room

Berwyn Clayton, Erica Smith, Stephen Billett and Tom Karmel are amongst some of the most influential and scholarly members of the Australian VET community.

These participants will be leading a discussion about the ‘Value of VET research’. This will be both an informative and, at times controversial session.

Members of the audience will have the opportunity to respond to the presentations from this Expert Panel which will be chaired Llandis Barratt-Pugh.”
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