Addressing the challenge of scholarship and industry currency in vocational education: A pilot.

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Scholarship and Industry Currency

Maintaining industry currency is essential to how a VE teacher designs curriculum and ensures relevant, valid and authentic assessment.
Scholarship and Industry Currency

This paper & presentation explores a pilot project where VE teachers trialled a scholarship framework by undertaking a small ethnographic inquiry into what is occurring in their respective industries.
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The framework defined a method for engaging with industry and connected to VE teacher capability development.

The scholarship framework draws on research undertaken by Williams, Goulding, and Seddon (2013).
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Current industry skills are the knowledge, skills and experience required by VET trainers and assessors and those who provide training and assessment under supervision to ensure that their training and assessment is based on current industry practices and meets the needs of industry (Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, 2015, p. 7).
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Staff with responsibilities for academic oversight and those with teaching and supervisory roles in courses or units of study are equipped for their roles, including having:

a. knowledge of contemporary developments in the discipline or field, which is informed by continuing scholarship or research or advances in practice (Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 2015, p. 8)
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Currency and teaching capability, need not be mutually exclusive.

With an appropriate considered design solution an inquiry into current industry practice can be crafted as a scholarship of teaching and learning.
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The indicators are:

• clear goals
• adequate preparation
• appropriate methods
• significant results
• collaboration
• critical analysis and synthesis making
• knowledge public
• reflective critique.
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Case Study 1
The Project
Mechanics of Practice

5 practices
Documented through a series of short films
Contextualised as industry currency

“When approaching industry the response was very positive... Therefore to contextualise a project that can be of benefit to the future of the industry was seen as important, and was seen as something the industry needed to contribute to.”
Contextualised as Scholarship

“The enquiry was shaped and supported by the framework...It allowed for the project to be contextualised as scholarship, and was presented as a step by step template which developed and shaped the body of work.”
The shift in critical thinking

“the shift in critical thinking and the need for an independent approach to learning, for both teachers and students at Associate Degree level, is significant in comparison to the Diploma and Certificate IV level of study.”
how scholarship could look in the VE landscape

“The project has been invaluable as an idea of how scholarship could look in the VE landscape...In order to maintain and develop a currency of scholarship in line with industry practice, a space for research is vital.”
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Case Study 2
Design industry + Teaching Design


In many of our studio classes we teach design process

Many students were struggling with their design process.
"The Framework for quality scholarly practice" template provided a scaffolded approach to research in this area.
Main challenge: too much data.
I tried various systems to manage the transcribed data.

Summary with key points and findings from data presented at staff meeting. The findings have helped us:

- Refine assessment task requirements as necessary
- Provide anecdotes that are valid and current
- Develop content that is valid and current
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Findings
The framework provided an excellent guide and clear goals for the success of the project.

Support from the institute was also essential for its success.

Peer support and ongoing communications ensured the project maintained momentum.
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Findings

A reliance on ad-hoc methods for maintaining currency and ensuring that vocational education teachers can keep their curriculum up to date is unlikely. A structured model coupled with investment and mentoring produces real results where new knowledge gained can be applied directly into the work of curriculum development and team based teaching.