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Hypothesis

The current innovation agenda does not fully recognise the role of the VET sector because:

- the latent potential is not well understood within and beyond the sector
- the VET workforce needs to be equipped to take part in the innovation cycle, including by being able to undertake applied research
- VET is important to the Government's innovation agenda.

Applied research in VET

This project investigated whether the VET sector could have a role in fostering innovation in industry and if so, what would it take, particularly in terms of building its research and development capability. Would this in turn be one strategy for future-proofing the VET workforce?.

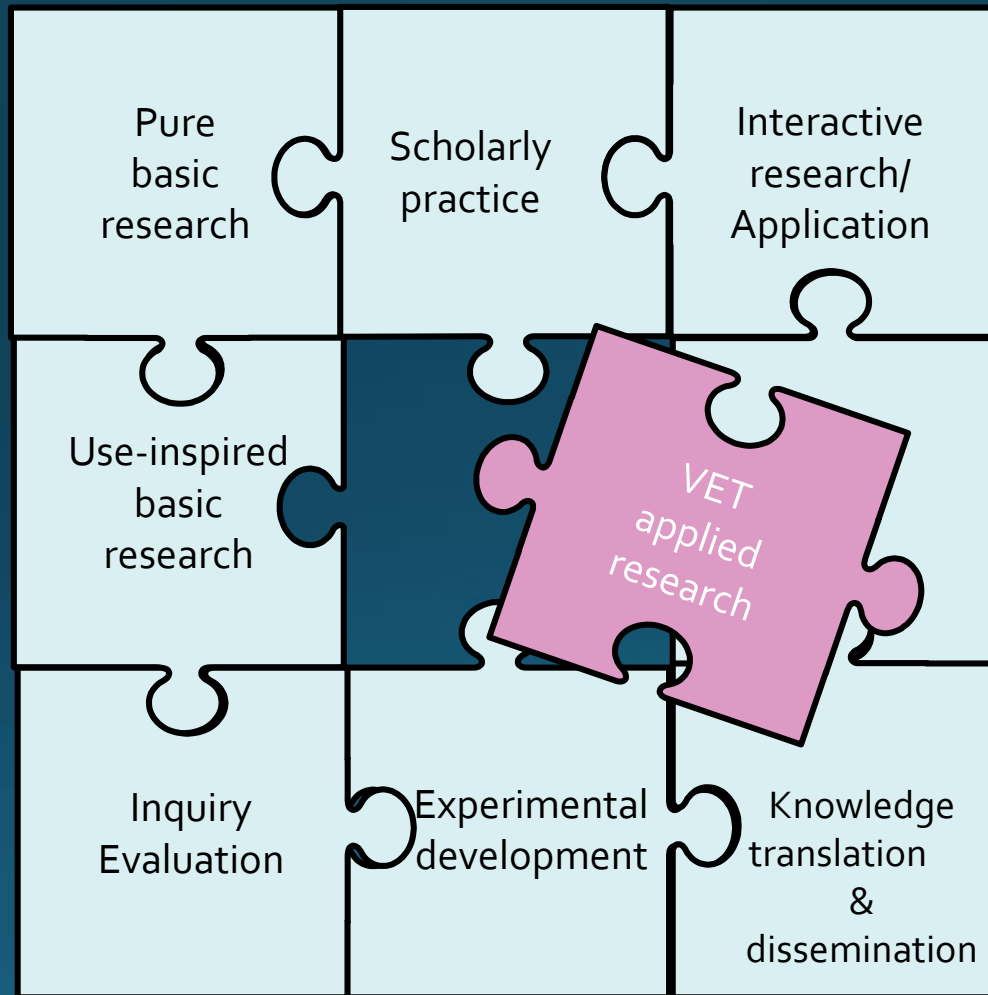
Research

We have developed:

- a business case for VET involvement in the National Innovation and Science Agenda
- a framework for the skills and capabilities required by VET educators and other professionals as well as by registered training organisations
- guidelines about next steps and identification of specific obstacles.

What is VET applied research?

Towards knowing practice



What models exist for applied research in VET?

- Canada is at the forefront
- The Germanic dual system link theory and practice
- Higher apprenticeships are being trialled in UK and Australia
- Cooperative Research Centres
- Rural R&D Corporations

What niche might an applied research capability in VET occupy?

- Does it have a distinctive educative role?
- Should it capitalise on the ability to respond quickly?
- Is it an attractive testing partner in university and/or industry research collaborations?
- Does its infrastructure offer the potential to host innovation hubs?
- Could it be a specialist in knowledge translation and dissemination and innovation in the workplace?
- Is it the tight link between investigating issues and making improvements that characterises VET research?
- Does the sector need to start 'naming and claiming' (Jonas, 2012) the inquiry, scholarship and applied research it is undertaking?

Current Applied Research in VET

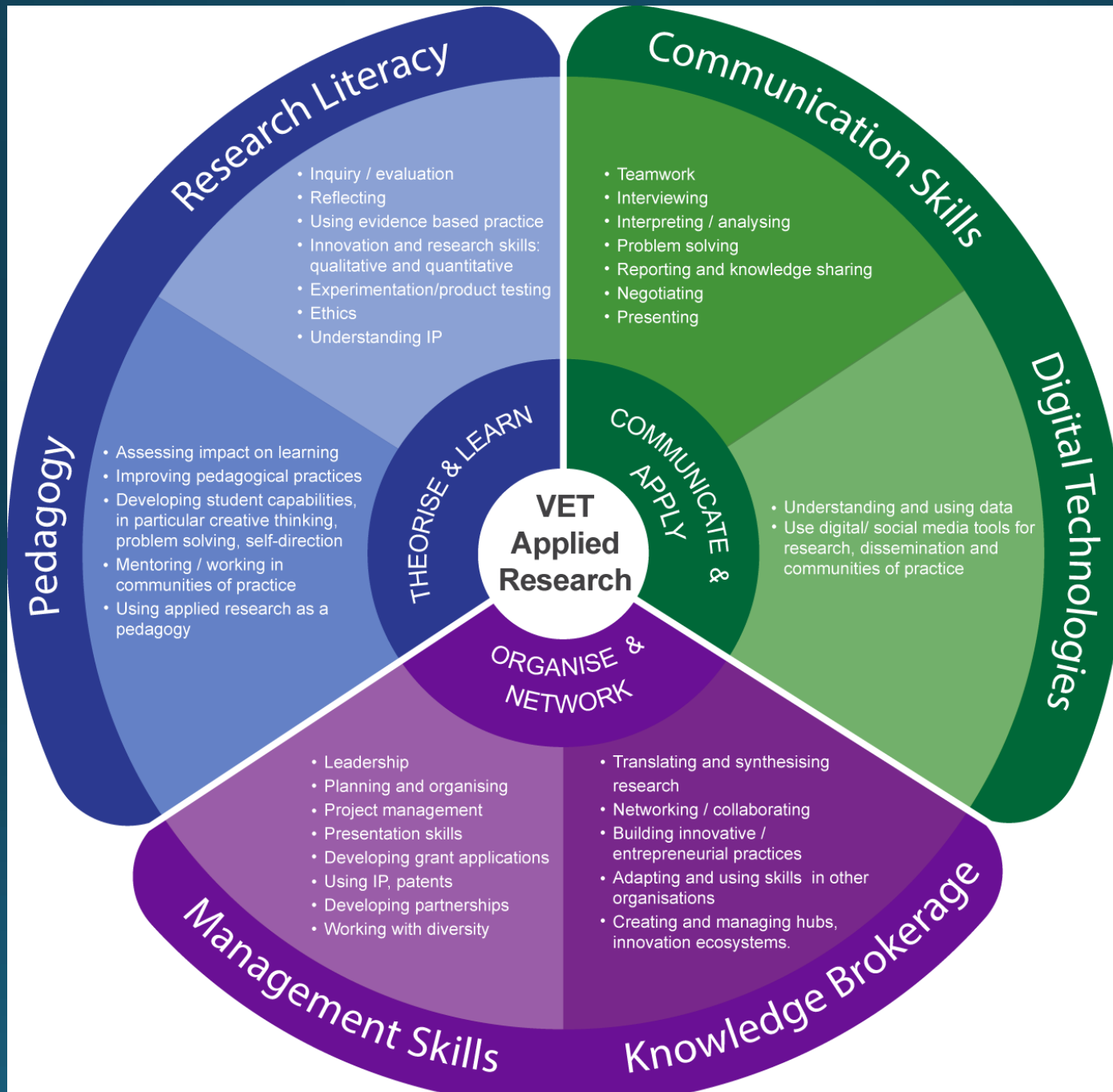
- Solving specific, practical problems in a systemic way
- Original work that generates new knowledge and understanding with a specific practical application
- Communicating the solutions obtained through applied research to others

Applied research in VET

Applied research in an educational setting is not only about producing an outcome or extending understanding or solving problems in industry. It might also contribute to pedagogy and to involving students in research activity, thereby extending their skills and producing the sort of creative workers the innovation system needs.

Involving the VET workforce

- What are the incentives for the VET workforce to become involved in applied research?
- The development of capabilities need to align with current thinking about, and progress towards more fully acknowledged, professional standards in the sector and capability frameworks
- Not all educators will wish or need to formally develop all skills and capabilities. The skills may be gained through a project team-based approach, a partnership with higher education, or a networking/community of practice approach



Building RTO capacity

- A research culture
- RTO setting clear goals for applied research and innovation
- Allocation of sufficient resources
- Embedding applied research throughout education and training programs
- Becoming part of the way the RTO did things, not just a special project for a few experts

Questions for you

- Do you agree with our hypothesis that VET is important to the Government's innovation agenda?
- Are you aware of other models of VET engaging in Applied Research?
- Do VET educators and other professionals require different and specialist capabilities to engage in Applied Research?
- If so, do you agree with our proposed framework? What might you add?
- How are these capabilities developed? Through initial teacher education and professional development?