Discourse Analysis as a VET research tool: analysing the frontline management initiative.

Llandis Barratt-Pugh

School of Management Edith Cowan University

Abstract

AVETRA provides a unique national opportunity to discuss not just what VET research is producing, but how VET research is actually done. This paper explores the use of discourse analysis as an analytical tool within VET research using the evaluation of the frontline management initiative (FMI) as a basis for this discussion.

The paper begins by discussing the rationale for discourse analysis as a research approach and the applicability of such an approach within VET research. It indicates how a framework for discourse analysis was constructed and operationalised. The paper then provides an overview of the study of the VET frontline management initiative and provides examples of the subsequent conceptualisation produced by this form of analysis.

In conclusion, the paper evaluates discourse analysis as an analytical tool for VET research, indicating in the case of the FMI how discourse analysis illuminated some critical relations that have informed VET policy and practice within organisations.

Introduction – discursive warfare

This paper has been specifically constructed for the Australian Vocational education and Research Association (AVETRA) conference, as this event provides a unique national forum where vocational education and training (VET) researchers can explore not only what VET research is producing, but also how VET research is being done. This paper explores the use of discourse analysis as an analytical tool within VET research using the evaluation of the frontline management initiative as a basis for this discussion. Discourse analysis is about reading social interactions in order to understand the power relations influencing actors. Why should researchers be interested in such an analytical perspective? I will explore this question reflecting upon a recent incident that has been similarly explored exhaustively by the media.

This year, the second cricket test match between Australia and India produced two major outcomes. The result gave Australia a record equalling run of test victories and yet was overshadowed by accusations about fair play. There was an immediate investigation about what specific players said and did, which involved assessing their intentions, and the effect their words and acts had upon others. Commentators speculated about the 'unsaid' and what was motivating the parties involved. Not only was there dispute about what had been said, but there was also dispute about the meaning and intent of the words. A significant analysis was generated about what lay behind these interactions and what had influenced such behaviours. It was also noted that such utterances could not be taken at face value without understanding their context, and without tracing back in time to past interactions that underpinned these later performances. Indeed, the actors on this field

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may have been in the spotlight, but they appeared to be just a part of larger performance about historical disparities of national culture and power, now re-enacted on the field of sporting encounter.

Depending on our experiences and affiliations we will have come to very different conclusions about these events. Indeed our reactions will have ranged from intense interest to deep irritation. As researchers we can reflect upon the multiple views that flowed forth from the media and public commentary. Embittered emotions of sporting injustice were mixed with the grief of losing. Deep-seated feelings of national inequity were interwoven with tactical desires to use such events to destabilise the game's adjudicators and deflate the winner's moment of triumph.

As researchers we could gather, explore and weave these multiple narratives together in order to understand the complexity of these perceptions about this specific event. Yet we are aware that their words are formed often formed by past experiences. Players 'spit' words they regret at times of tension. They say phrases for effect, and are often fed lines by others to act out in the public arena. Their words are far more than a code of communication, they are an expression of how they see the world, what they hold to be true, and display to us what influences are generating such views. Analysing their discourse can help us map this specific political territory of their context. Such analysis can enable us to map the power relations underpinning their actions and utterances, exploring their emerging identity. Who has crafted and is pulling the strings of the puppets on the stage? Discourse analysis of such an event would produce some interesting patterns.

At one level cricketers are just playing and talking about a game, at another level, as soon as they put on with pride their team cap, they carry a national history on their shoulders and their identity is changed forever. Turning our attention to the interactions of VET, discourse analysis similarly enables us to map what is mediating the actors and the stage that we are studying, by reading the clues hidden in the research subjects' utterances.

The rationale for a discursive search for understanding

The premise of this paper is that the language collected from research subjects is not just a simple communication code indicating what they see, experience and feel, but that it carries clues to underpinning power relations within its utterances and interactions. Language is our way of continually influencing others and simultaneously re- shaping our own identity. We believe that we construct language, but it is continually constructing us, and its patterns provide valuable clues about what underpins social performances.

Discourse analysis attempts to read subject utterances as text and conversation, stripping away the masks and role-playing of subjects. From this perspective a subject's words are not just a code and not just a construction, but bear the patterns of what is constructing them, the beliefs and phrases of others, the discourses the subject is bound to, has bound themselves to and those they are resisting. The words 'discourse analysis' can be interpreted in two ways – as the analysis of conversation and as an analysis that searches

for dominant discourses. Discourse analysis is about analysing language in a social context by deconstructing text and utterances to understand the mediating discourses that are shaping both individual actors and their environment.

What is a discourse? In this paper I am defining *discourses* as the beliefs, knowledge and relations promoted by specific groups (Mulcahy 2001). Discourses indicate how individuals should be in the world, what they should think and who they should relate to. Discourses are interrelated future orientated texts and practices that bring an'object into being' through a 'hegemonic struggle for space' (Harley and Hardy, 2004; Brown and Humphreys, 2006). They are never benign, always seeking to enrol individuals, privilege specific authors, promote consumption, produce identity, and displace competing views. They discursively represent how life should be in order to mediate organisation. Mulcahy (2001, p. 2) describes discourses as:

> A shorthand for a whole set of power/knowledge relations (Foucault 1977, p. 255), which are embedded in and circulate through working practices. Discourses provide ways of being (identities), ways of relating (relations) and ways of understanding the world (knowledges).

Discourses are hegemonic sense-making processes. They are ideological, defensive, and politically aware modes of ordering that seek social instrumentality by privileging their position, excluding alternatives, and mediating or compelling subjectivity. They seek to establish 'signification' that marginalises contesting discourses and establishes what counts as real (Mulcahy 2001). Discourses of scientific knowledge are used to propagate the ignorance of 'others', dividing the knowing from the unknowing (Hobart 1993). Social understanding is mediated by powerful discourses that seek to establish truths as:

> Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth: that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those charged with saying what counts as true.
>
> (Foucault 1980, p. 131)

Foucault (1980) asserts that, within these interactions, power and knowledge 'inhabit' each other and that investigation of discourse must be done at the level of practice. Every interpretation of reality is an assertion of power, where 'naming' is power and (symbolic) 'violence' to the subject. Power is a part of the discursive network, a chain that circulates and is never in any specific individual hands as, 'individuals are the vehicles of power not its points of application' (Foucault 1980, p. 89). Subjectivity results from such discursive positioning, although Giddens suggests that Foucault's social analysis is history with the 'agency' removed (Clegg 1989, p. 203).

So why is finding out what dominant discourse lie behind particular utterances important to us? Jacobson and Jacques (1997, p. 47) define a discourse as a 'system of signification within which bodies, power and meaning have produced a relatively internally consistent meaning.' They insist that, in order to avoid the 'truth trap' of objectifying subjective

comment, it is important to uncover the discursive structural relations that underpin perceptions. Likewise, Hicks (1990, p. 49) quotes the work of Bruner (1961) in asserting that the focal domain of inquiry in educational arenas should involve the unravelling of such 'socially situated meaning' from the discourses of practice, the 'socially situated communications' that 'sustain' actor positions within social contexts. Discourses are unwritten, but powerful, codes and rules that shape the actions and utterances of actors, underpinning meaning within organisational practice and learning practice.

The importance of discourse analysis has risen as the 'text' of our cognitive workplaces has increasingly displaced the manual and physical regulation of our previous workplaces. Prior modes of physical control, involving location and time are being replaced with textual hegemony, cognitive ordering such as instruction by memo, and dismissal by e-mail. Organisational texts are increasingly pervasive, but are neither naive nor conciliatory constructions. The battles of organisation are fought with paper, signs, print and diagrams (Latour (1986), with textual warfare determining which discourses will determine meaning. Derrida (1976, p. 139) cites Levi Strauss in noting that:

> If my hypothesis is correct the primary function of writing, as means of communication is to facilitate the enslavement of other human beings.

Language has become more than signs of meaning, it is also a tool of rapid transit, taking ideas from place to place. As Latour (1990, p. 26) indicates the goal of the game is to:

> Invent objects that have the properties of being mobile but also immutable, presentable, readable, combinable with each other.

Mobility takes concepts from place to place, from person to person, building and bridging discourses, and mediating subjectivity. Texts can now be reproduced immutably, without infection. Latour (1986/90, p. 23) suggests that the primary objective in organisational social systems is to gather powerful textual allies, as legitimacy of knowledge assertions is defined by the power of supporters 'if they can muster the greatest number of well aligned and faithful allies.' Accepting a research subjects words without exploring behind them may waste valuable data. Clegg (1998) suggests that organisational dialogue is essentially about power and is an instrument of the powerful. Wallace (2000 p. 42) describes the social environment as textual battleground where 'discursive practices…classify, characterise, observe, monitor, shape and control behaviour'. Burrell (1998) asserts that there is organisational health in the diverse conversations and stories that define characters, plots and scripts, and sequences of action, creating albeit conflicting perspectives and identities for individuals (Hardy et al. 1998; Martin 1992). Grant et al. (1998) underline the defining nature of discourses within organisations. Discourses seek to privilege one way of looking and being, one way of categorising relationships and one way of valuing or ordering social events to dominate meaning and direction. Discourse analysis is concerned with mapping these linguistic battlegrounds to understand what is mediating the relations of the subjects within a study. How can such a process be operationalised into a framework that VET researchers can use?

Constructing a nodal framework for discourse analysis

This section explores key figures involved in discourse analysis and traces their contribution ton the emerging framework that was used to explore the FMI data. Discourse analysis has several epistemological roots such as linguistics, sociology, psychology and anthropology all with different research agendas and therefore differing methodologies. My own exploration and emerging discourse analysis framework has been strongly influenced by two factors. The first was my *purpose* to investigate the frontline management development programme and apply such a framework to a VET field. The second was my *approach* that combined and interest in constructivist learning with the management and orchestration of such programmes. In this section I review why I find these particular authors who write about discourse analysis of particular interest and how they have contributed to the framework I developed.

Discourse analysis is a search for the meaning that lies within and between utterances.

> You see its like a portmanteau – there are two meanings packed up in one word.
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> (Carroll 1962, p. 239)

Boje and Dennehy (1993, p. 339) agree that 'stories have many interpretations' but they provide useful deconstructional clues to assist in the search for the 'other voices', the excluded, the marginalised and the 'not said'. Boje (1994), is one of the few authors to provide a guide to deconstruction and contributed to the deconstruction area of the emerging framework.

Luke (1995) is clear that such an analysis is an essential part of our social struggle for understanding and change. The study of text is important to Luke because it is emancipatory, and stimulates individuals to think for themselves rather than consuming others ideas. Luke's work was important in providing a political thrust underpinning the framework. All texts have disguised power relations, how they interconnect, construct and contest subjectivity.

> The strength of critical discourse analysis lies in its capacity to show the power relations in apparently mundane texts at work, to represent and interpret instances of everyday talk, reading, and writing….there is no space outside discourse.   (Luke 1995, p. 40)

Fairclough (1992) was instrumental in providing specific categories for the analysis, specifically those associated with relationships revealed by the text. Fairclough (1989, p. 22) states that 'language is part of society, not external to it', and that language is a social…and socially conditioned process'. It is not just that language and texts shape our social actions, but that language and texts are themselves a socially constructed phenomenon. Fairclough (1992) indicates that such an approach to understanding social performance is not just the preserve of research but a way of being, essential to prevent 'regulation' and protect and extend subjectivity (Gee & Lankshear 1996).

Janks (1997) provided the encouragement to search wider than the words by indicating how broader trans-organisational cultural patterns were often hidden within talk, text and actions. Janks indicates that 'text' should be interpreted as all utterances, dialectic and

statements, as well as the overt relationships existing from workplace observations, and the interpretations of visual relations by the researcher. Janks (1997) sees discourse analysis as a framework to read wider clues in the unpacking of 'culture'.

Gee (1996, 1997) makes a persuasive argument about the intense relationship between text and fast capitalism emphasising the organisational nature of workplace discourses. Similarly, Palmer and Hardy (1998, 2000) emphasise the strategic use of discourse within organisations and suggest several approaches for reading organisational interactions that contributed to the emerging framework. The iterative framework of discourse analysis that was used in the FMI study was principally informed by the fore-mentioned authors. It had seven main categories and thirteen sub categories and consisted of tree nodes branching from **prosody, lexicalisation, cohesion, structuring, voice positioning, themes, and deconstruction,** as detailed below.

Prosody : delivery **-** how it is said ? What is the pitch, loudness, stress and length of utterances, including the uses and the hesitations? Delivery may give clues to conviction, ownership, expectations, specific rules and even links to other texts.
Lexicalisation : valued words and repetition**.** What do the words value? Utterances give signals about how the world should be constructed. Key words and metaphors may be predictive of actions, beliefs, and identity, displaying a specific world-view and also what it opposes.
Cohesion : the sentence glue, how and why words are connected. What kind of turn taking is occurring there? Who speaks, who initiates, and what are the connections?
Structuring : the subsections and argument construction. What is the mood and style of text, and the force and aim behind the words? Is it active or passive, questioning or declarative? What is the genre, and how is it positioned relative to other texts?
Voice Positioning: the hierarchy and specificity of subjects. Who is positioned, and how are they positioned? Who has agency and who is included? What is the author's role?
Themes : the images, the focus, repeated constructs and contrasts. What links and goals exist here? What inter-textual collusions are there? What are the focus and the goals?
Deconstruction **:** the socio-economic political paradigm of the author. What exceptions are there? Who are the missing/silent voices? What are alternate plots or frameworks?

Operationalising discourse analysis – a case study

Having reviewed the use of discourse analysis and an emerging framework for such analysis, the paper now provides an overview of the context for a case study of discourse analysis.

More than ten years ago the Australian Industry Taskforce on Leadership and Management Skills launched 23 national research projects and produced the so-called 'Karpin Report' (1995). The report emphasised the inadequacy of managing practice and development, expressing the need to re-author managing identity in a relational mode, from 'cops to coaches'. The sole enduring heir of the report is recommendation eleven that proposed a national Frontline Management Initiative (FMI), which is the empirical focus of this paper. The initiative targeted 100,000 untrained frontline managers (FLMs)

through a workplace and competency based portfolio approach. FLMs would engage with FMI technology to work on their self. Following exhaustive and highly contested consultative process to form national competencies, nine 'Trojan Horse' pilot organisations pioneered actively orchestrated, complex routines of workplace based, partnered, pedagogic relations, centred on the participant actors, that welded manager development to organizational learning. The guidelines for activating the FMI were enshrined within a compendium of booklets outlining how the scheme could be managed, how participants could learn and be assessed and how organisations could partner to develop their learning capabilities. Since the 1998 launch over 90,000 managers have participated in producing their self-authored account of managing practice, legitimised by assessment. The rhetoric of the framework heralded a second generation competency based approach in Australia, rejecting prescribed curriculum, and privileging individual programmes, workplace evidence collection, mentoring and coaching (ANTA, 1998). This unique opportunity to investigate the discursive practices and productions of such a technology within organisation, and the paradox of constructivist intentions located within a reductionist framework.

Our nominalist approach was based upon an inductive, naturalistic, heuristic, critical constructivist framework. The study was ideographic, searching for emerging social processes and valuing the voluntarism of researcher-practice dialogue. Our strategy involved multiple methods of data gathering within case studies, with an increasingly ethnographic approach. We were sensitised by both practitioner interaction and prior work with organizational pedagogic theory. The fieldwork began with formal and informal practitioner interactions conceptually mapping the emerging relations of practice, guiding, but not prescribing, the investigation.

The research into this technology had two linked phases. A national evaluative study (1998 to 2002) was undertaken, funded by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), that involved twelve multidisciplinary researchers from six Universities focused on the technology's impact on individuals, organisations and businesses. Funnelled down through focus groups, broad surveys, and telephone interviews to twenty-three case studies, from which content analysis tabulated statistics were obtained to a produce a functional assessment of the initiative (Barratt-Pugh and Soutar, 2002).

Concurrently, a more ethnographic study of practices at specific case study sites continued until 2004 that focused on the discourses associated with the technology and the social patterns that were generated. This phase explored how the technology was discursively constituted, what learning was produced and how practice was mediated. Resources were focused on longitudinal relations within three specific sites where structured interviews, unstructured conversations, discussions, observations, record scanning, pictures and video were gathered. The complete NVivo data sets consisted of more than one thousand events from more than four years of field-work which included 140 interviews.

The analysis phase involved several different and complementary forms of analysis to build up a conceptual map of the territory. The decision was made to use discourse analysis to specifically explore how organisational decisions mediated the final learning productions. The data were coded in NVivo using the nodal framework that has already been reviewed in the previous section. Our intention was to explore how actors draw on the discursive resources of such a management development technology, shape discursive mechanisms, and author managing identities (Brown, 2006).

The products of analysis

In this section the paper attempts to provide a reduced overview of what was produced by the discourse analysis by focussing on four categories, and then provides examples of the subsequent conceptualisation produced by the analysis.

Prosody

Discourse prosody, the patterns of speech delivery, provides strong visible and audible cues to intensely held values and the FMI interaction generates considerable heat. There is a strong response from senior figures to conceptually disassociate the FMI from the Management Charter Initiative (MCI), with great pride displayed in the robust nature of the competencies produced, which are 'big value', establishing a curriculum free framework, and assaulting the existing system where 'the peak bodies were scandalised' with the move to local agency. Practitioners are vocal about 'anal-retentive' approaches to CBT and their own active management, as 'one size does not fit all.' Participant actors describe the FMI as 'a fantastic programme…been very, very successful', 'this has been life-changing experience for me!' This holistic experience challenges actors with conflicting work productions where, 'I haven't time to read my f…ing e-mail!'

Lexicalisation values

Lexicalisation, the words that are valued by specific discourses can be subdivided into experience, relational and belief values, indicating what is being experienced and valued by particular groups. In terms of experience values, key figures indicated that public service 'procrastination' with previous management inquiries instigated an agenda of 'leadership' for the subsequent taskforce. Great emphasis was placed on the comprehensive and inclusive nature of the competency formation process, with 'two thousand enterprises involved…consulted', constructing the FMI as 'a major paradigm shift.' The participant experience is often confusing, local agency is slow to develop with 'part of me is in denial - I am at the searching for meaning bit', while FMI processes are 'breaking down the institutional barriers.' Partnership relationships are valued as 'negotiation develops a strategic view at the beginning'. FMI managers value 'interactive internal networks,' 'developing cells...self-governing groups.' These networks of learning may migrate to managing networks, as they 'recognise each others skills as a network', or cascade to the team, 'involving all staff to work through (issues)'. In terms of belief, the taskforce drove a focus on 'a great drought in Australia of middle managers,' privileging performance that does not 'rely on the authority of the position.' There was a growing consensus that 'you can't go down that path with the old autocratic way of management style' and this extends to FLMs, who are 'crying out for it.'

Cohesion

Cohesion focuses on textual cues and concerns searching for the 'turn taking' between voices that bind the text. It is the competencies and partnerships of the FMI that are a reoccurring theme, linking various actor groups to gain the 'value of using a team approach and forming alliances.' The developmentally orientated primary case study sites were proactive in establishing research engagement that was 'gratefully and greedily received' to support their activity. Relationships of mutual support underlie more successful FMI enactments, where 'it was almost like I was learning as I was telling people.' The FMI technology was cast as a mechanism for manager learning 'whose time has come,' 'switching the mindset from an academic base to a competency base.' FLMs are the prime identity searchers 'exploring role boundaries and constructing'.

Deconstruction

The exceptions, missing voices and alternative frames within the texts and interactions provide cues about the 'other' silent voices and plots of actors not engaged by the FMI network. There is a lack of FMI understanding that, 'to the uninitiated sounds like training gobbledegook.' Senior managers reject the FMI because they 'don't have the resources to do that.' Smaller organisations without infrastructure are excluded as it is 'very time intensive, big commitment.' Delivery of the programmes is often frustrated by a funding model based on 'courses' where 'there's got to be x amount of hours to make a qualification'. 'A lot of training providers in the TAFE system…are trying to convert it into another training course', and distance learning versions are 'really missing the whole point.'

The discourse analysis formed the basis of significant modelling that is the subject of other reports and papers (Barratt-Pugh 2002). While the thematic analysis provided a platform for mapping the phenomena it was the discourse analysis that provided the clues for key relations between them. Such an analysis provided evidence of what discourses were shaping the FMI production and of the multiple faces of performances that were taken from the same script. The analysis made a significant contribution to the rich case study narratives and subsequent theoretical modelling. What was learned from this analysis? Primarily that management continually mediated the many shapes of the scheme. It was like a litmus test for their understanding of what learning was and should be, in terms of organisational needs. Those with understanding that learning should be continuous, integrated and the life-blood of change developed rich enactments of the FMI, with considerable local agency. As Latour (1990 & 1991) indicates, no knowledge is any more valid than any other, but as management 'can muster the greatest number of well aligned and faithful allies' and determine what is perceived to be 'right' learning within organisations. Positioned in this context, the FMI is a 'mobile' textual tool, woven within and between related management discourses, to contest and shape organisational meaning. For frontline managers learning becomes just another production. They are engaged in a process of self-production, mediated by management's interpretation of the texts of the FMI, as these discourses seep through the workplace into their social interactions (Grant et al. 1998).

Evaluating the use of discourse analysis

Discourse analysis was in conjunction with two other forms of analysis in this study. A grounded theory approach was also used, as were comparisons with the frameworks of Learning Network theory and Structuration theory. It is not possible to attribute specific insight to each mode of analysis. Perhaps the first conclusion is to suggest that a complementary approach using discourse analysis appears a preferable approach where resources enable more than one analytical frame. In the case of FLM development, discourse analysis illuminated some critical relations in this workplace-learning programme that have informed VET policy and practice within organisations. It was specifically instrumental in mapping the jousting at a national level for power, influence and the battlefield for what was created and named as the national management development tool. Similarly, it was useful in modelling the power of management to interpret the same set of words into such diversified performances.

Discourse analysis can be used to understand the contested terrain of VET learning. Yet, perhaps there is a danger in such an approach. As researchers we are dedicated to accurately reproducing the stories of others. However, are we in this case placing more weight upon what was not said, what was intended, and upon those voices not recorded in the field when we use a technique that privileges the power behind the throne above the voices of the subjects? There are dangers in overlaying researcher interpretations on what has been actually said by research informants instead of viewing these statements as "social facts" per se. Understanding the forces constructing learning stages does not only generate deeper understanding of the context but it also enables us to visualise how positive changes may be effected within the existing power relations.

Conclusion
In text saturated organisations how do we trace what is making the research subjects act out their learning in the ways that they do? This paper has reviewed why discourse analysis is a useful tool for VET researchers, and what kind of frameworks for coding can be produced. A detailed account has been given of what such an analysis produced and an evaluation has highlighted specific issues for researchers. In the case of FLM development, discourse analysis was a complementary framework that illuminated some critical relations in this workplace-learning programme that have informed VET policy and practice within organisations. VET researchers need tools that enable them to look beyond and behind what is said and done in the complexity of the workplace and learning spaces. Discourse analysis provides such a tool and enables specific frameworks to be built and adapted to specific inquiries.

One dilemma continues to exist. As researchers we are schooled to be rigorous in differentiating between what our subjects say and our interpretations. In many analytical frameworks the words of the subjects are sacrosanct and are scanned, weighed, and tabulated to form patterns. In discourse analysis the words are a starting point where interpretation becomes all.

Discourse analysis takes a Foucautian perspective, positioning us as subjects of powerful discourses, able only to choose who may speak through us to the world. Discourses

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construct us, even if we would like to believe we have agency to change the world as it is. It is ironic that we continually believe that we are the constructors of our own pattern of words and often ignore how much they are continually constructing us. Humpty Dumpty understood this some while ago.

> 'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone. 'It means just what I choose it to mean- neither more nor less.'
> 'The question is 'said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things,'
> 'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master-that's all'.
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> <div align="right">Carroll 1962, p. 150</div>

Perhaps as researchers we should recognise the usefulness of discourse analysis as a tool for our exploration and yet use it alongside more traditional methods that let the agency expressed by our subjects hold centre stage in the resulting narrative?

Word count – 4717

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Dr Llandis Barratt-Pugh, School of Management, Faculty of Business and Law Edith Cowan University Western Australia

PhD. UWA, M. Bus. Curtin, Dip Bus. Ad. Bradfd, Grad. Cert Teaching ECU, B.Tech. Bradfd

Llandis Barratt-Pugh has been a manager, consultant, lecturer and researcher in the VET sector in both the UK and WA for more than 30 years. Currently a senior lecturer involved in VET, HRD and Leadership for over thirteen years at ECU, he has won a number of teaching awards including the inaugural Vice Chancellors award for teaching excellence. He has managed and been a team member of several NCVER and ARC projects establishing strong field linkages with notable industry research partners. His specific research focus is to explore, develop understanding, and conceptualise, the orchestration and management of workplace learning, with specific emphasis upon manager learning. He currently has eleven higher degree research students engaged in diverse projects. He led the evaluation of the Frontline Management Initiative producing the NCVER reports 'Paradise nearly Gained' that have been downloaded over 12,000 times and is currently an executive member of AVETRA.

Llandis Barratt-Pugh
Senior Lecturer
School of Management
Faculty of Business and Public Management
Edith Cowan University
Churchlands Campus
Pearson Street
Churchlands
WA 6018

Tel - 011 61 (0)8 9273 8775
Fax - 015 61 (0)8 9273 8754
Home - 011 61 (0) 93833009
                    92863426
E mail - l.barratt_pugh@cowan.edu.au

Home Page - http://www-business.cowan.edu.au/users/llandis/