

PAPER:

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROVISIONS FOR TEACHERS/
TRAINERS IN THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND
TRAINING SECTOR: AN OVERVIEW**

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Abstract:

Professional development is a broad concept that encompasses a range of activities relating to personal as well as career activities. Bambrough (1994:1) for example provides a generic definition:

The acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes which enables people to achieve their current and future individual and corporate objects.

This definition incorporates lifelong learning as a key to personal and workplace performances. In Dayís (1993) view support for lifelong personal and professional development needs of teachers has been neglected for some time.

The vocational education and training (VET) provisions in Australia has undergone several reforms in recent years, for example Implementing CBT, CBT in Action, AVTS, Modern Australian Apprenticeship and Traineeship Scheme (MAATS) and the New Apprenticeship Scheme. Indeed, reforms in VET is seen as an on-going activity to support the skilling of the Australian workforce in order to sustain global competitions. VET reforms have also initiated professional development of staff in this sector, enabling them to implement such reforms. Literature about studies on the provision, costs and effect of professional development in the VET sector is scarce. Evaluations of early staff development initiatives that apparently focused largely on awareness raising and skill development, indicated that such programs were too generic and had limited impact (Simons, 1997). Australian literature on professional development for VET staff argued for the improvement of teaching quality in order to support the reforms in VET (e.g. Holland, 1992).

Recent evaluations of professional development for VET teachers (e.g. by Harris, 1993; Radcliffe, 1994; Australian Competency Research Centre & Barton Institute of TAFE, 1995; and Keller & Murray, 1996) have supported the urgent need for a reform in vocational teacher training. This paper examines the range of professional development programs available for teachers, tutors and trainers (collectively described as delivery staff) in the VET sector. (All delivery staff are referred to as teachers in this paper). An analysis of programs that were available to delivery staff in the recent past, the current programs on offer as well as those planned for the future is presented. Both, programs at the macro (national) and micro (State/Regional) levels are analysed. This paper presents an overview of current arrangements for initial teacher training; train the trainer programs; and on-going staff development programs available to VET delivery staff across Australia.