

PAPER:

***THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMICS AND OTHER
PRACTITIONERS IN VET***

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Abstract:

A major issue which emerged out of the inaugural AVETRA Conference was the perceived differences and divide between academics and other practitioners in VET. This paper examines the potential links between academics and those in VET more directly involved with policy formulation, policy implementation, and curriculum development and implementation. It attempts to indicate where greater reconciliation is possible and the relationships that need to be developed between the two groups. The different roles of academics and other VET practitioners more closely involved in the day-to-day functioning of VET systems are considered. Important are differences in generality, abstractness and inclusiveness of knowledge used by academics and other VET practitioners. However, the dangers of creating a false dichotomy on levels of generality and abstractness of knowledge are acknowledged, and ways of avoiding further emergence of such a counter-productive situation discussed. Society's need to obtain feedback quickly, in order to validate newer and ongoing policies and policy implementation practices in a changing society, is seen as especially important in the relationship between academics and other VET practitioners. This is likely to lead to a more practical, symbiotic relationship between the groups. The ways in which VET potentially can benefit from experiences in school education, which has been consistently plagued by the gap between research and effective classroom practice over many years, are also explored.