

***WHEN ONE SURVEY IS NOT ENOUGH:
THE USE OF THE DELPHI APPROACH IN VET RESEARCH***

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Abstract:

Researchers have to make difficult decisions about the way in which they gather their data. The data gathering approach must match not only the kind of information required but also meet the expectations of the target group in terms of an appropriate length of time investment and suitable format. This dilemma was faced recently in a research project concerned with the role of staff development for teachers and trainers in VET providers in improving the quality of training delivery. It was considered that to gain an overview of staff developments over the next seven years it would be appropriate to canvass the opinions of 50 key stakeholders in the VET sector across Australia. The potential stakeholders are people with limited time available. The initial survey instrument thus needed to be open ended to match the information needs and short to match the time available. The research team adopted a modified Delphi approach which initially sought answers to a limited number of questions. These responses were analysed and a summary fed back to the stakeholders for further comment and refinement of issues and concerns. The second instrument also sought to determine the relative priorities of the latter. The paper discusses some of the preliminary results of this research.