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

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ABSTRACT

The Delphi method was utilised to solicit the views of senior people responsible for policy, staff development and other significant VET commentators, about the challenges faced by VET practitioners and the associated staff development issues. The researchers found that the Delphi method appeared to offer some advantages over more common forms of research with such people. The paper presents some key findings from the research in order to illustrate points about methodology.

Introduction

This paper reports on one aspect of a larger NREC-funded project concerned with staff development in VET ("Improving the quality of VET provision: the role of staff development for teachers and trainers in VET providers"). This project is being carried out by the University of South Australia (Centre for Research in Education, Equity and Work), Charles Sturt University (Group for Research in Employment and Training) and Queensland TAFE (Centre for Advancement of Innovative Learning). As well as the element reported on in this paper, the project also includes:

➢ a study of all major current Australian staff development initiatives in the VET sector;
➢ a survey of Registered Training Organisations to establish current levels of training of VET teachers and availability of staff development, and whether these relate to modes of employment of the teachers; and
➢ case studies in 15 providers.

This paper has as its focus the way in which the project team researched the future staff development needs of teachers and trainers working for VET providers. The prime concern was to identify the significant challenges facing teachers and trainers over the next seven years and to gauge the extent to which they had the necessary knowledge, skills and other attributes to meet these challenges. The "gaps" between what is perceived to be required to meet those challenges and the current levels of knowledge, skills and other attributes of teachers and trainers is a useful indicator of staff development needs over that period. It was decided to use the Delphi method for this research.

Planning staff development in the VET sector

Staff development is a broad term, which can encompass both activities organised by the employer to ensure that staff are able to operate effectively in their present positions in a changing environment and activities selected by individuals to enhance their opportunities for advancement. This paper is mainly concerned with the first kind of staff development where an organisation is responsible for maintaining and upgrading the performance of its staff.

It is relatively easy to talk to or survey staff about the quality of staff development they have received and to identify strengths and shortcomings. However, whilst this kind of research provides useful information about the way in which such programs should be run in the future it has much less to contribute concerning the actual content of and emphasis needed in future staff development programs. Such limitations are evident in a number of recent studies (e.g. Chappell and Melville, 1995).

In the past it has also been common to obtain estimates of future staff development needs for State or national systems by getting together a small group of people for a relatively short period and pooling their thoughts. Commonly those involved in such 'think tanks' are professionals in the staff development field. The gathering and analysing of information from such groups is an ill-defined

process and the outcomes depend very much on the nature of interactions between members of the group over the period. Such interactions are influenced by the status and power of individual participants. In some cases a particular issue, concern, government policy, political imperative or recent development can dominate the deliberations. For example, a consultant engaged by a TAFE system may present a particular view of the future of VET which may affect the way in which the system plans its long-term staff development policy. Alternatively, a carefully thought out strategy may be upset by an ANTA initiative such as the introduction of Training Packages, which necessitates diverting resources to meeting an immediate need.

For these reasons the typical one-shot expert approach has had limited success in providing useful longer-term guides to staff development and it seems that another approach may be needed. Accordingly, a different approach was sought in the current project, and it was decided to use the Delphi method, a research method more common in the 1960s and 1970s but in less common use nowadays. However, the method is described in current texts on research (e.g. Gredler, 1996). It is a method for attaining group input which differs from the more commonly-used focus group or nominal group techniques.

Delphi method

The Delphi technique (named after the oracle at Delphi, and made popular by the Rand Corporation) is useful for obtaining a pooled judgement about something. It is essentially a method for aggregating the opinions of a number of individuals who are considered to be in a position to make an informed input. The technique is useful in obtaining input into an evaluation related to a current situation or a situation which is considered likely to exist in the future (Gredler, 1996). It is similar to the nominal group technique, which is often used for identification of issues and concerns (Pokorny, Lyle, Tyler and Topolski, 1988). The nominal group technique usually involves a group of seven to nine individuals who begin by developing a set of ideas in response to a stimulus question in silence. After this each person contributes an idea which is recorded. Each idea is discussed and the session ends with each person rank ordering those ideas.

The Delphi technique usually involves many more people than the nominal group technique and can be more extensive in terms of content. The members of the group do not meet but respond individually to a series of questionnaires in an iterative process which extends over a period of time (Uhl, 1990). The first questionnaire is used to set the parameters for latter questionnaires and generally consists of fairly open- ended items concerned with broad issues to which individuals respond anonymously. The responses to the first questionnaire are processed and used to construct a second questionnaire.

This second instrument serves two purposes (i) to provide feedback to participants concerning the results from first questionnaire and (ii) to allow them to respond again to the same issues in the light of this feedback. The second questionnaire generally contains relatively closed items, which accurately reflect the spectrum of opinion obtained in the first questionnaire. The items are designed in a way which gets participants to rank the relative importance of issues and the appropriateness of particular responses to those issues. Likert scaling is frequently used to obtain such rankings. Participants are also able to comment on any matter and identify new issues, concerns or responses to those issues or concerns. A summary of responses to the second questionnaire is prepared to accompany a third questionnaire, although in some cases only two are used.

This final questionnaire asks participants to consider the items in the second questionnaire, possibly in a refined form, together with any new items. It is designed to obtain a measure of the strength of agreement on the issues identified in the first and second questionnaires. In this sense the Delphi technique encourages a degree of consensus and for this reason the initial selection of participants is critical. The selection must be such that a broad range of judgements will be expressed. This enables participants to temper their judgements in the knowledge of what other informed individuals have expressed. As the process of judgement gathering takes place over a period of time individuals are able to engage in extended reflection on the central issues. This is an important attribute of the Delphi technique. It provides a very different environment from that of a focus group or think tank where individuals interact over a relatively short period and some opinions are not necessarily expressed or not taken up by the group.

Participants

Early in the design of the project it was agreed that a group of about 50 key stakeholders in the VET sector would be selected for the Delphi study. The project team decided to seek nominations the following categories:

➤ State/Territory VET executives - CEOs
➤ ACPET executives
➤ State/Territory Professional Development Managers (TAFE)
➤ National Assessors and Workplace Trainers Body
➤ DEETYA VET Division
➤ University VET academics - person in charge of teacher education
➤ VET Policy-makers
➤ VET consultants / researchers / project managers
➤ Union representatives
➤ Two overseas senior VET people (UK and USA)
➤ Other significant commentators

An initial list was drawn up and circulated to members of the project team who consulted with others they considered might make appropriate suggestions about additions and deletions. The revised lists were reviewed by the team and a final list of 56 key stakeholders was sent questionnaire one (Appendix 1). Fifteen responded by the initial due date, with twelve more responding by the extended due date following reminder phone calls, making a response rate of 48& A further four responses were received too late for the initial analysis. In some cases delays in replying were due to the fact that CEOs had passed the questionnaire to appropriate management or curriculum staff for response.

Each of the 56 key stakeholders received feedback from round one and was asked to participate in round two irrespective of whether they had responded in the first round. 30 people responded to questionnaire two (Appendix 2), a response rate of 53%, including a small number who had not participated in round one. No reminder phone calls were made for this round. This represented an excellent response rate, especially considering that this survey was conducted in December, 1998, a very busy time for most VET personnel. The same process as used in round two will be employed in the third and final round.

Reflections on the Delphi method

One challenge faced by the research team was analysing the responses to the first questionnaire, which had been devised with a large proportion of open-ended questions. The responses needed to be analysed not only to give meaningful data, but also to be fed back to the participants. The responses to the open-ended questions were categorised, firstly by a research assistant then by the researchers, and the responses printed on the second questionnaire. In addition to further questioning about Round 1 questions, in Round 2 a new section was added where interesting statements from the qualitative sections of Round 1 were listed, and participants asked to note the extent of their agreement with the statements.

It is possible that the participants, on receiving the second questionnaire which included the responses to the first, realised that other stakeholders had taken the process extremely seriously, and this prompted the good return rate for Round 2. It was also notable that in Round 2 there were fewer sceptical or critical comments on the process and the questionnaire structure, which a few participants had included in Round 1. Critical comments in Round 1 included:

➤ This questionnaire is poorly designed if the aim is to obtain info about VET teachers that really captures their different circumstances
➤ This issue is too large for a questionnaire like this

Also a few responses to Round 1 were extremely sketchy, also perhaps implying resistance to the process, whereas Round 2 responses were more fully completed, In other words the Delphi process appears to have encouraged some participants to move from initial resistance to taking part in the process to a more positive engagement with it.

Round 1 produced a number of extremely detailed responses, to individual questions as well as in the "any other comments' suggestions. Some of these discussed not only staff development but also the VET system in general, and appeared to be a means for participants to express their dissatisfaction

with certain aspects of the system, in a forum in which they hoped their views would be heard. Round 2 responses contained fewer such responses, although space was allowed for 'other comments'.

Other participants expressed their dissatisfaction, even contempt, for certain players in the VET system by the strength of their responses. Universities that provide VET teacher training appeared to be a major target. For example a few people consistently 'voted against' the usefulness of VET teacher training at universities, one respondent even adding an extra column of 'very strongly disagree' to a question about putting professional development into the universities. Yet another respondent commented, in the 'any other comments' section:

➢ This survey seems to emphasise staff development at unis. This I do not agree with, S.D. should be at the VET institution.

In fact, universities were mentioned only twice in the questionnaire, but clearly even these instances were sufficient to upset some participants. Such responses clearly indicated deep-seated antagonism between elements in the VET field which need to be addressed.

Findings

It was of interest to note the way in which the group's responses changed from one questionnaire to the next. It seems likely that the feedback from an earlier questionnaire prompted a revised response. There may of course be other reasons for changed responses. As all questionnaires were coded it would be possible to track individual responses and examine the amount of change. This section presents the results of two of the questions and discusses the changes that appear to have taken place.

Although at the time of writing this paper, only some of the questions in Round 2 had been analysed, it can already be seen that the weight of opinion of those responding to questionnaires one and two shifted perceptibly. An example of this is the following question (Table 1) about usefulness of sources of training. This is an example of a closed question which was repeated in both rounds, with the only change being the addition of the results from Round 1.

Although there was not a huge shift in responses, there was some movement. Overall, participants had a slightly more positive view of the ability of sources of training and development to meet challenges. The only source of training which received a lower score on Round 2 than Round 1 was university teacher training. This dropped from joint first to last. 'Framing the future', the ANTA-funded program concerned with the National Training Framework, retained its position in first place, with a considerable increase in the mean.

Table 1: Responses to question 3

QUESTION 3.

How useful are the following sources of training and development in helping to deal with these challenges? Give ratings of 1-5, 1 being not useful and 5 being extremely useful.

Unbracketed responses are from Round 1; Round 2 responses are in brackets. (Round 1, n=29, Round 2, n=27)

Sources of training	1	2	3	4	5	Weighted mean
"Initial Teacher Training at University	4(4)	8(9)	5(7)	7(4)	5(3)	3.03 (2.74)
Certificate IV in Workplace Training	6(2)	8(8)	8(10)	7(6)	0(1)	2.55 (2.78)
Nationally funded training e.g. Framing the Future	4(2)	6(2)	7(11)	9(8)	3(4)	3.03 (3.66)
"In-house" formal program training	1(1)	7(6)	14(10)	6(9)	1(1)	2.96 (3.22)
Informal on-the-job training by providers	4(2)	6(6)	10(8)	7(8)	1(3)	2.72 (3.14)

Note: The weighted mean is arrived at by the following process: Responses in each round were allocated points on the basis of 1: 1 point, 2: 2 points and so on. Totals were then gained for each Source of training for each round, and the totals were divided by the total number of responses in that round.

The following example (Table 2) shows how responses have occurred in a question which was originally open-ended and did not ask for ranking; and then requested participants to rank categories which had arisen from the first round responses. Again there was not a major shift in the challenges viewed as most important by the participants, but there were minor shifts. These could be accounted for by several reasons, such as:

➢ the ranking exercise acting as a sorting mechanism; or
➢ participants recognising and opting for challenges which they themselves had forgotten to mention earlier.

The two rounds enabled the research team to differentiate between 'major' and 'minor' challenges. There were two clear breaks in the total scores; firstly between 'operate in competitive market' and all others. This is clearly the issue which the majority of participants saw as the most important one facing VET teachers and trainers. 22 participants picked this as one of their seven choices. The second clear break was between challenges scoring 41 or more, which can be classified as 'major' challenges; and those scoring 26 or less, which can be described as 'minor' challenges. In the table (Table 2), the minor challenges have been shaded, leaving the major challenges unshaded.

Table 2: Responses to Question 1

QUESTION 1.

Nominate five critical challenges which you believe will be faced by VET teachers/trainers over the next five to seven years.

The table below indicates the categories and response numbers derived from Round 1 responses. We now ask you to select the seven most important challenges and to rank them. You have the opportunity to select one more and include it in your ranking, if you wish.

	Challenges	Number of participants in Round 1 who mentioned this challenge	Total score in Round 2 (ranking in brackets)	
1	Operate in competitive market	11	117	(1st)
2	Pace of change	10	41	(10th=)
3	Use of technology	10	51	(5th)
4	Flexible delivery	9	66	(3rd)
5	Keeping up to date/understanding changes to VET	9	68	(2nd)
6	Understand/work with training packages	8	61	(4th)
7	Globalisation of VET & the economy	7	19	(14th)
8	Maintaining their own employment/career pattern in insecure times	7	41	10th=)
9	Keeping up to date with industry trends	6	45	(8th)
10	Understanding of dilemmas in educator's role (such as industry needs vs. education)	6	50	(6th)
11	Understand changing nature of work	5	48	(7th=)
12	Competency-based assessment	5	7	(18th=)
13	Changing client groups	4	7	(18th=)
14	Changing to role of facilitator	4	48	(7th=)
15	Delivering in the workplace	4	11	(17th)
16	Balance requirements of 'real' industry with what the VET system tells them is industry requirements	3	12	(16th)
17	Greater accountability/quality issues	3	26	(12th)
18	Work intensification	2	7	(18th=)
19	Learning how to develop themselves	2	21	(13th)
20	Meeting industry needs	2	—	
21	Growing the training market	2	2	(23rd)

22	Shortage of teaching skills	2	7	(18th=)
23	Customer focus	2	13	(15th)
24	National market in VET	2	—	
25	Other – moving focus away from teaching to learning	-	7	(18th)

Note: The total score in Round 2 was arrived at by the following means: Participants were asked to select the seven most important challenges and rank them from 1 to 7. The research team then allocated points on a reverse basis (i.e. a challenge which received a ranking of 1 was allocated 7 points, a challenge receiving a ranking of 2 received 6 points, and so on). In this way the final total reflects both the number of people who selected that challenge as one of the seven most important, and the ranking which participants carried out (Gredler, 1996).

Conclusion

Use of the Delphi technique appears to have been helpful in this project in building up a reasonably clear picture of the issues that the key stakeholders feel need to be addressed in staff development programs in the VET sector. Accessing a similar number of key respondents by telephone interview would have been time-consuming and difficult to organise. A written questionnaire had the added advantage of allowing participants to reflect on their views, and the added advantage of the Delphi method is that participants were able to revisit and modify their opinions. They were made aware of the opinions of the other participants, making participation a more satisfying experience than a telephone or one-shot survey, which rarely provides feedback for participants.

A further advantage of the Delphi method seemed to be that the participants were able to shape the final representation of the data more fully than if one-shot interviews had been conducted with the researchers performing the entire synthesis. It seemed to the researchers that the Delphi method was more able to represent the true voice of the participants.

At this stage it is uncertain whether a third stage will be carried out for this survey. One suggestion, however, made by a participant, was that the questionnaire should be administered to a sample of VET practitioners. This would be a sensible way of ascertaining how closely the views of practitioners about their staff development needs reflects the views of the key people responsible for staff development policy. While the views of practitioners will be sought elsewhere in the project, a direct comparison using the Delphi instrument will be helpful.

REFERENCES

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Acknowledgments

APPENDIX 1

Professional Development of VET Teachers and Trainers Survey of Key Stakeholders

Invitation to potential participants - the 50 Key Stakeholders

A national research project is being conducted by the Centre for Research in Education, Equity and Work, at the University of South Australia, the Group for Research in Employment and Training at Charles Sturt University and the TAFE Queensland Centre for Advancement of Innovative Learning. The project is funded by the ANTA National Research and Evaluation Committee. The project is entitled "Improving the Quality of VET Provision: The Role of Staff Development for Teachers and Trainers in VET Providers". An important focus for the project is identifying the kinds of challenges which VET teachers/trainers have faced or will face and the kind of staff development which has helped or will help them. A short survey has been developed to obtain some of this information.

We would be grateful if you would participate in our survey as a key figure in the VET Sector. The initial survey will require about 15 minutes for you to complete. The project team has elected to use a modified Delphi technique which provides an opportunity to comment on the outcomes. Thus the results of the initial survey will be analysed and sent back to you for some further comment about a month later. Those who respond to both surveys will receive a copy of the final results.

The enclosed stamped-addressed envelope should be returned by Tuesday 9th November. Responses could also be faxed to 02 6933 2888.

COMMENTS

Please give your own opinions which may differ from those of your organisation. Your individual responses will be confidential and comments in the feedback from the survey will not be attributed to particular respondents.

Thank you for considering this request. We hope you decide to help. Remember to return the survey questionnaire by Tuesday 9th November.

Erica Smith
Doug Hill
for the Project Team.

Reference No:

Delphi Survey of Key Stakeholders

1.   Nominate five critical challenges which you believe will be faced by VET teachers/trainers over the next five to seven years.

   (i)

   (ii)

   (iii)

   (iv)

   (v)

2.   How well prepared currently are VET teachers/trainers to face these challenges? Use the scale

      1 = on the whole not prepared.
      2 = only a minority prepared.
      3 = some well prepared.
      4 = majority well prepared.
      5 = on the whole very well prepared.

      (i)

      (ii)

      (iii)

      (iv)

      (v)

3.   How useful are the following sources of training and development in helping to deal with these challenges? Rate each source from 1-5 where 1 = not useful and 5 = extremely useful. (Please tick appropriate rating)

      Rating

Sources of training to be considered	1	2	3	4	5
Initial" Teacher Training at university					
Certificate IV in Workplace Training					
Nationally funded training eg Framing the Future, CBT in Action					
"In-house" formal program training					
Informal on-the-job training by providers					

4.   What do you consider are the essential attributes, skills and knowledge currently needed by VET teachers/trainers? Answer in terms of 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 or in an holistic manner under 4.4.

4.1   Attributes (eg attitudes and personal characteristics)

4.2   Skills (eg ability to provide on-line support and assess in the workplace)

4.3   Knowledge (eg detailed knowledge of relevant National Competency Standards)

4.4   What do you consider are the essential competencies and capabilities currently needed by VET teacher/trainers.

4.5   For each of the characteristics you have given, indicate whether you believe that most VET teachers/trainers currently possess that characteristic. Use 1 = no, 2 = possibly and 3 = yes. Place your rating next to the appropriate characteristic.

5.   What additional attributes, skills and knowledge do you think will be required over the next five to seven years?

5.1   For each characteristic you have listed above, indicate whether you believe teachers/trainers currently possess that characteristic. Use 1 = no, 2 = possibly and 3 = yes. Place your rating next to the appropriate characteristic.

6.   What do you consider are the main barriers to the development of the attributes, skills and knowledge currently needed by VET teachers/trainers? Please list up to three barriers)

      (i)

      (ii)

      (iii)

7.   Name and briefly describe an example of a professional development program which you believe has contributed to the development of improved practice by VET teachers/trainers.(If you do not know of any, write "Don't know any"; if you believe no programs have had such an outcome, write "None".)

7.1   If you named an example: What made this program effective?

7.2   What are the contact details for the program? (in case we need to find out more about the program)

8.   Thinking about quality of VET provision: what do you think will contribute most to the improvement of the quality of VET provision over the next five to seven years?

9.   Other comments

APPENDIX 2

Delphi Survey of Key Stakeholders Round 2

Ref. no . . .

Question 1:   Nominate five critical challenges which you believe will be faced by VET teachers/trainers over the next five to seven years.

The table below indicates the categories and response numbers derived from Round 1 responses. We now ask you to select the seven most important challenges and to rank them. You have the opportunity to select one more and include it in your ranking, if you wish.

CHALLENGES	Number of responses from survey no. 1	Tick the seven most important, in your view	Rank your chosen seven from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important)
Operate in competitive market	11		
Pace of change	10		
Use of technology	10		
Flexible delivery	9		
Keeping up to date/understanding changes to VET	9		
Understand/work with training packages	8		
Globalisation of VET & the economy	7		
Maintaining their own employment/career pattern in insecure times	7		
Keeping up to date with industry trends	6		
Understanding of dilemmas in educator's role (such as industry needs vs. education)	6		
Understanding changing nature of work	5		
Competency-based assessment	5		
Changing client groups	4		
Changing to role of facilitator	4		
Delivering training in the workplace	4		
Balancing 'real' requirements of industry with what the VET system tells teachers are industry's requirements	3		
Greater accountability/quality issues	3		
Work intensification	2		
Learning how to develop themselves	2		
Meeting industry needs	2		
'Growing' the training market, ie increasing demand for VET	2		
Shortage of teaching skills	2		
Customer focus	2		
National market in VET	2		
Other (please specify)			

Question 2:   How well prepared currently are VET teachers/trainers to face these challenges?

In their responses, participants in the first round generally indicated their belief that only a minority of VET teachers/trainers was well prepared to meet the challenges identified in question 1. Responses varied slightly between different challenges.

We now ask you to rate teachers'/trainers' preparedness for the seven challenges you have chosen.

Note: You don't need to write the challenges in; just use the seven you picked as most important, in the ranking you chose. (So, for example, if you chose 'work intensification' as your first-ranked challenge, put your rating of teachers' preparedness for work intensification opposite number 1.)
Rating scale :

1   On the whole not prepared.
2   Only a minority prepared.
3   Some well prepared.
4   Majority well prepared.
5   On the whole very well prepared.

Challenge (your choice of the 7 most important, from Question 1)	Rating of VET teachers'/trainers' preparedness
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Question 3:   How useful are the following sources of training and development in helping to deal with these challenges?

The responses to this question from Round 1 are given below. Please give your rating, which you may or may not wish to revise from your previous response. We also give you the opportunity to add, and rate, up to two new sources of training/staff development. **Give ratings of 1-5, 1 being not useful and 5 being extremely useful.**

Rating Sources of training	1	2	3	4	5	Your rating
'Initial' Teacher Training at University	4	8	5	7	5	
Certificate IV in Workplace Training	6	8	8	7	0	
Nationally funded training e.g. Framing the Future	4	6	7	9	3	
"In-house" formal program training	1	7	14	6	1	
Informal on-the-job training by providers	4	6	10	7	1	
Other (please specify)						
Other (please specify						

Question 4:   What do you consider are the essential attributes, skills and knowledge currently needed by VET teachers/trainers?

In each section of question 4 we present the categories which arose from Round 1 of the survey. We ask you to tick the seven most important, in your view, and to rank them from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important). We also give you the opportunity, in each case, to add an extra category if you wish.

For each section of question 4, we ask you to say how far you think VET teachers/trainers, in general, currently possess the attributes/skills/knowledge/capabilities you have identified as the 7 most important.

4.1: Attributes

Attribute	Tick the seven most important, in your view	Rank your chosen seven from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important)
Accept/cope with/predict change		
Flexibility/adaptability		
Tolerance/sensitivity to student needs		
Professionalism (includes taking responsibility for updating knowledge)		
Problem solving/lateral thinking		
Passion for teaching		
Entrepreneurial		
Commitment to equity and social justice		
Willingness to work with others		
Customer focus		

Reflective		
Leader/facilitator		
Able to take initiative		
Critical attitude to government policy		
Explore/be curious		
Creative		
Other (please specify)		

Question 4.1a: Do VET teachers, in general, currently possess that characteristic?

Rating scale :
No
Possibly
Yes

Characteristic (your choice of the 7 most important, from Question 4.1)	Rating
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

4.2: Skills

Skill	Tick the seven most important, in your view	Rank your chosen seven from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important)
Delivery/teaching		
Technology		
Develop customised programs for industry		
Assessment		
Industry/subject expertise		
Operate confidently in workplace setting		
Facilitation		
Organisational/managerial		
Marketing		
Flexible delivery		
Negotiation		
Searching/research skills		
Other (please specify)		

Question 4.2a: Do VET teachers, in general, currently possess that characteristic?

Rating scale :
No
Possibly
Yes

Characteristic (your choice of the 7 most important, from Question 4.2)	Rating
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

4.3: Knowledge

Knowledge	Tick the seven most important, in your view	Rank your chosen seven from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important)

Learning principles/learning styles		
Industry knowledge		
National Training Framework/Training Packages		
Competency standards		
Political/economic factors that could impact on VET (bigger picture)		
Labour market and where it links to VET		
Lifelong learning		
Knowledge of educational theory in order to evaluate policy changes		
Other (please specify)		

Question 4.3a: Do VET teachers, in general, currently possess that characteristic?

Rating scale :
No
Possibly
Yes

Characteristic (your choice of the 7 most important, from Question 4.3)	Rating
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Question 4.4: What do you consider are the essential competencies and capabilities currently needed by VET teachers/trainers?

This question gave respondents the opportunity to answer questions 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 in an holistic manner instead of answering each of questions 4.1 to 4.3. Some participants chose to answer 4.4 in addition to 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. We are aware that there is some overlap between the four parts of question 4, but nevertheless hope you will answer all parts, as there do seem to be differences in the categories.

Competencies and capabilities	Tick the seven most important, in your view	Rank your chosen seven from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important)
Industry experience/knowledge		
Teaching/delivery skills (including flexible delivery)		
Deal with students as individuals		
Analytical/critical/lateral thinking		
Change management		
Self-management skills		
Flexibility		
Management/leadership skills		
Higher industrial qualifications		
Provide support to students i.e. listening, counselling, mentoring		
Learn in an ongoing way		
Communication skills		
Teaching embedded generic skills		
"Dual professionalism" (content area and teaching)		
Other (please specify)		

Question 4.4a: Do VET teachers currently possess that characteristic?

Rating scale :
No
Possibly
Yes

Characteristic (your choice of the 7 most important, from Question 4.4)	Rating
1	

2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Question 5:   What additional attributes, skills and knowledge do you think will be required over the next five to seven years?

This question was designed to get at respondents' views about the new and developing competencies and capabilities that VET teachers and trainers might need in the near future. As you see, a number of slightly different categories emerged in this question. We now ask you to choose the 7 most important, rank them, and then, in question 5a, to say whether you believe VET teachers/trainers currently possess each of those characteristics.

Attributes/skills/knowledges for the future	Tick the seven most important, in your view	Rank your chosen seven from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important)
Technological knowledge		
Adaptability		
Project management		
Working in partnership with industry		
Marketing		
Creativity/imagination		
Responsiveness to individual students' needs		
Tenacity		
Access & manage information		
Brokerage		
Range of delivery methods		
Communication skills		
Other (please specify)		

Question 5a: Do VET teachers currently possess that characteristic?

Rating scale :
No
Possibly
Yes

Characteristic (your choice of the 7 most important, from Question 5)	Rating
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Question 6:   What do you consider are the main barriers to the development of the attributes, skills and knowledge currently needed by VET teacher/trainers?

In this question, we ask you to choose and rank the seven most important barriers from the categories proposed by respondents in Round 1.

Barriers	Tick the seven most important, in your view	Rank your chosen seven from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important)
Lack of time		
Funding for staff development		
Lack of management support or expertise		
Aging VET workforce/resistance to change		
Teachers' problems with working with CBT and training reform		
Lack of funding (general)		
National or organisational lack of vision		
VET workforce casualisation/contracts		

Organisational culture does not facilitate staff development		
Constant change		
Lack of incentive/career structure		
Lack of access to staff development		
Lack of access to technology		
Lack of national/State staff development		
Lack of encouragement/incentive for university teaching qualification		
Other (please specify)		

Question 6a: (New question) Do you have any views about how any of these barriers (choose up to 3) might be overcome?

Question 8:   Thinking about the quality of VET provision, what do you think will contribute most to the improvement of the quality of VET provision over the next five to seven years?

As with previous questions, we would like you to choose and rank the seven you regard as most important. The categories are those identified by respondents in Round 1.

Categories	Tick the seven most important, in your view	Rank your chosen seven from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important)
Support for staff development/training		
More general funding		
Better management practices		
Management/team vision		
Better qualified VET teachers		
Research		
Recognition of importance of teaching skills		
Quality of teachers		
Funding for staff development/training		
Better wages/conditions		
Training packages		
Increase in status of VET		
Better links between VET & industry		
Quality endorsement		
Clear policy directions		
Rethink relative status of industry/community/individuals as VET clients		
Accountability based on outcomes		
Availability of new technology		
Other (please specify)		

Question 9:   Any further comments

A number of respondents supplied extra comments in this section, some quite detailed. The following statements were drawn mainly from responses to Question 9, but also from responses to other questions. We would like you to say the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements.

SA- strongly agree
A – agree
U- undecided
D – disagree
SD - strongly disagree

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
The diversity of VET teachers means it makes no sense to aggregate VET teachers in a survey of this nature					
VET teachers need to develop a 'dual professionalism' - industry and education					
Centres for Teaching and Learning should be established in VET providers					
We need to maximise and build on teachers' personal strengths					
Professional development should be put into the universities because VET					

teachers should be allowed to stand back from the tensions and confusions of the workplace					
Teachers need to be good 'bullshit detectors' to see behind the policy rhetoric					
Teachers are having to develop their own human capital through professional development, especially casual staff					
Teachers have to balance their own local industry's needs and wants with curriculum derived from ITABs, which don't represent 'real industry'					
Many PD programs are about getting teachers to toe the policy line					
Few people have any conception of what VET will be like in the future - even the short-term future with RTOs and Training Packages					
There will be a move from teaching to assessment					
We need more opportunity for teachers to share their practice with each other					

10: Would you be willing to participate in a third round of this survey? Yes/No

Name..

11. Any other comments

Please add any other comments you wish relating to VET teachers/trainers and their development.