

**Perceptions of vocational education and learning in Japan and  
Australia:  
a comparative study**

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This session presents an overview of a study which compared the similarities and differences between the VET systems in Japan and Australia. Key national policies in both countries are articulated; a comparison of the similarities and differences between the two systems undertaken; and the perceptions of policymakers and students about their experience of VET illustrated. The education system in Japan has adopted a policy of lifelong learning.

The results point to the need to undertake a long-term approach to establish strategies which will be of benefit to the VET systems in both countries. Viable opportunities for linkage, exchange and joint projects which will enhance vocational learning and vocational competence for Japanese and Australian students and key stakeholders are explored. Traditional and contemporary conceptions of work, labour and competence are discussed. Strategies are suggested to generate inclusive practices from a global perspective. Strategies for collaborative research and practice between the VET systems in Japan and Australia are explored, and new research directions are identified.