

What is good teaching in VET? Comparing the perspectives of VET stakeholders, staff and students

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Capability frameworks

- ▶ England – standards, FE teaching (ETF 2014)
- ▶ NZ – graduate profiles?
- ▶ Australia:
 - for school teaching (AITSL 2014)
 - for VET teaching – examples:
 - IBSA
 - Chisholm Institute
 - Queensland College of Teachers
 - LH Martin Institute

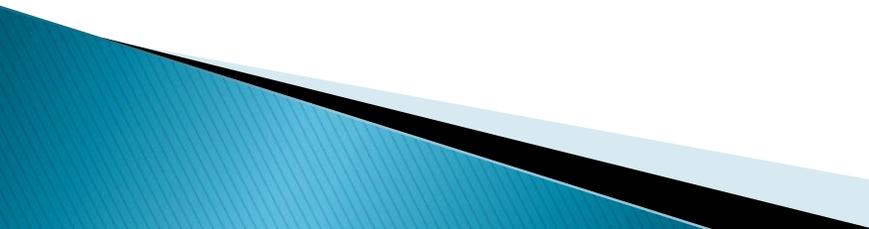
This presentation

We are going to address the question in our title – “ Good teaching” – filtered through typical teacher capability frameworks for VET teachers and trainers

This presentation

- ▶ Part of an ARC Linkage, funded by the Australian Research Council
 - ▶ Full project – investigating whether a more highly qualified VET workforce would improve the quality of the VET system, and thus the skills and capabilities of Australian workers
 - ▶ This part – analysing data gathered by two of the four researchers
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Approach and data sources

- ▶ Q: What makes a good VET teacher?
 - ▶ Interviews with 5 key stakeholders in Victoria and Queensland
 - ▶ 2 focus groups with 12 teachers
 - ▶ 2 focus groups with 8 students
 - ▶ Sites: 2 public providers (one metro, one regional) in SA and Victoria
 - ▶ Informants: a variety of disciplines
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Capability frameworks in brief

- ▶ Typical domains include:
 - Professional knowledge
 - Professional practice
 - Professional engagement or learning
 - ▶ Then each domain has a set of capability descriptors covering the various component aspects of each of the domains so that capability can be 'assessed'
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So what did the interviews with stakeholders and focus groups with teachers and students tell us about the key capabilities and characteristics of good VET teachers?



Stakeholder views

▶ Capabilities

- Well prepared and organised
- Communicate effectively, calmly and clearly so that students understand what and why they are learning
- Ability to transfer knowledge and experience – good teaching skills
- Ability to deal with and harness diversity
- Maintain industry currency and links with industry
- Assess effectively and holistically using a range of approaches

▶ Characteristics

- Passionate
- Pride
- Reflective
- Willing to learn
- Self-motivated
- Enthusiastic
- Inspiring
- Motivated and motivating
- Engaged and engaging

A strong emphasis on ongoing professional development, and being reflective on practice

Teacher views

▶ Capabilities

- Well prepared and organised
- Sound industry knowledge, and vocational currency
- Ability to understand the learner cohort and deal with learner diversity
- Good teaching practice and having a wide range of teaching skills
- Being an effective communicator
- Counselling and supporting learners
- Providing regular and effective assessment and feedback

▶ Characteristics

- Adaptable
- Flexible
- Passionate
- Approachable
- Motivated
- Enthusiastic
- Committed
- Inclusive
- Engaged and engaging

Being involved in continually improving through professional development and prepared to invest personal time

Student views

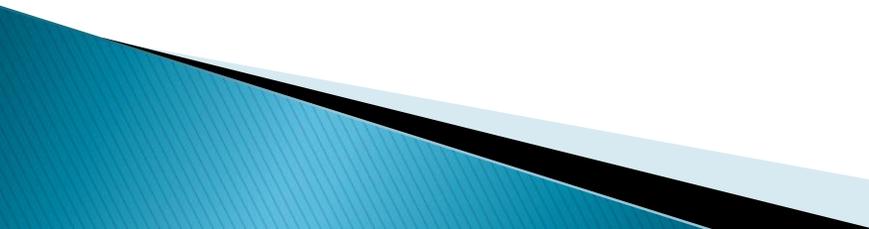
▶ Capabilities

- Strong industry background and knowledge
- Communication skills
- Making learning enjoyable and interesting
- Being organised
- Having authority and maintaining discipline and focus in the learning environment
- Dealing with diversity and meeting each learner's personal learning needs
- Using a variety of assessment approaches

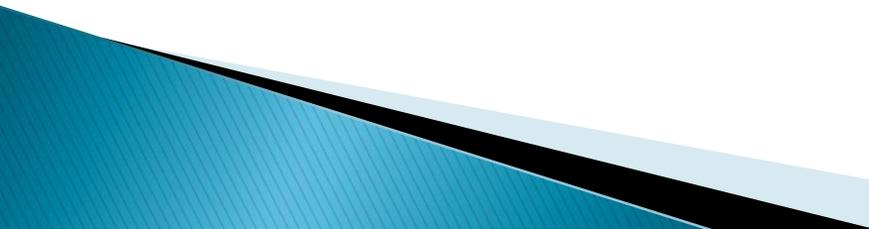
▶ Characteristics

- Respectful of learners
- Listening
- Caring
- Approachable
- Available
- Accessible
- Able to connect
- Patient
- Involved
- Engaged and engaging
- Motivating
- 'Treating us like adults'
- "Going the extra mile" to help and support learners

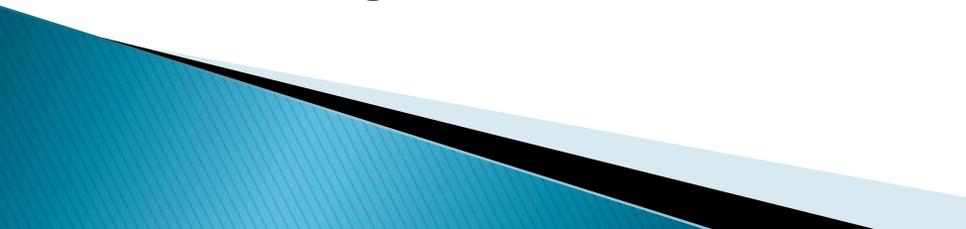
Some quotable quotes: stakeholders

- ▶ ‘Good educators understand that they are teaching learners, not a curriculum and not a trade ... it’s an approach to learning’
 - ▶ ‘It’s a combination of both the vocational expertise and industry experience as well as a solid understanding of pedagogy/andragogy in terms of what’s happening in the learning process. I think a good teacher is somebody who engages learners’
 - ▶ ‘A good professional teacher would be reflective. I think they certainly have to be current and they have to have ways of maintaining their currency’
 - ▶ ‘I think a good professional, in whatever profession, maintains their own professional practice’
 - ▶ ‘I think the main thing is passion... there has to be a passion for teaching whatever the content, and a passion for learning and helping people to learn’
 - ▶ ‘they have to understand how adults learn and how adolescents learn’
 - ▶ ‘one of the important things is providing feedback... continually monitor where a student is, and assist them appropriately... and help them stay motivated’
 - ▶ ‘it’s about knowledge, knowing their material, knowing about learning, knowing how to teach’
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Some quotable quotes: teachers

- ▶ ‘you’ve got to be committed to the cause’
 - ▶ ‘I think the TP is an interesting document which kind of determines how we practise our teaching. It can be binding at times, while it can also be a good guide... you have to unpack, you need to understand what implications does it have in teaching’
 - ▶ ‘being a good tradie doesn’t necessarily mean you’re going to be a good lecturer or VET teacher’
 - ▶ ‘You need technical skills plus the principles of good teaching practice’
 - ▶ ‘the ability to reflect and change a practice where necessary and the preparedness and the willingness to do that’
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Some quotable quotes: learners

- ▶ ‘good industry experience in their past is a good thing’
 - ▶ ‘it all comes down to the availability of the teacher’
 - ▶ ‘They’ve got to have the interaction, they’ve got to have the communication, they’ve got to have patience, got to have respect’
 - ▶ ‘making it an enjoyable experience, like a fun learning environment’; ‘when you really feel involved in it’; ‘can keep you interested in the subject’; ‘knowledgeable but also approachable’; ‘being treated like adults’; ‘individual attention’
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A quotable quote about 'capability'

So, at best, written competency standards are rough and ready, though useful, guides and we should be wary of assuming that actual realities of what competence is are reflected in the words used to describe them. Therefore it is not the words that are important but what they *mean*, and the extent to which what they mean is widely *understood*. This intangible nature of competence can present particular challenges, one of the most significant of which is its assessment. This is because there is a tendency to concentrate more on the tangible and the overt and less on the underlying (but possibly more critical) attributes of competence.

(Guthrie
2009, p.18)

What do we conclude?

- ▶ Similar perspectives from the three groups on what is ‘good VET teaching’
 - ▶ Importance of personal attributes in ‘good VET teaching’ (‘the art of capturing a learner and their interest’, ‘ability to inspire learners in their field’; ‘it’s the care and pride that makes a really good educator’)
 - ▶ Inherent difficulty in capturing and measuring the less tangible aspects of good teaching
 - ▶ While capability frameworks are popular and may be helpful, do they really tell the whole story?
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