

***AN ANALYSIS OF WAYS IN WHICH VET TEACHER
TRAINING, RECOGNITION AND
ONGOING PERFORMANCE
APPRAISAL CAN BENCHMARK AGAINST RELATED
INDUSTRY TRAINING STANDARDS***

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Abstract:

The emergence of an industry focus towards the provision of education and training has created a shift in attitude reflecting the relevance a VET sector expects of its practitioners. The reliance on previous industry experiences can arguably no longer be sufficient claim on teaching relevance or expertise. In many cases, students in VET courses (or equivalent Training Packages) study in areas directly related to, and defined by, related industry standards.

Consequently VET teaching practitioners are directly involved through an implicit understanding of particular competency standards and in ensuring an effective delivery of this system. Ironically, many teachers have themselves not been trained or assessed using means which now reflect their own teaching practice. Where teacher training does exist, (almost exclusively for full-time teachers), the principal emphasis and assessment is on teaching pedagogy and not on workplace competence or industry relevance. This latter capability is assumed as existing, presumably having been tested via recruitment processes. Similarly, some organisations responsible for the training of VET teachers have actively refuted the validity of using standards as an industry-relevant teaching benchmark.

This paper challenges that whilst this relevance may be true for an initial period, it has the potential to rapidly diminish. Where professional development processes exist, their success or otherwise rests largely with the motivation of the individual to maintain professional knowledge or to undertake an occasional return to industry. Such reliance has mixed results and as a consequence remains largely an unmeasured process both for the individual and the VET sector overall. Obviously research must therefore play a key role in determining the professional relevance and development of VET teaching staff, and arguably this should best be undertaken by VET organisations themselves.

Some case studies would indicate that where appropriate industry standards do exist, they may form a valuable basis for being incorporated into teacher training. Such standards can also form the basis by which the relevance of part-time practitioners can be validated, and may also form the basis by which staff industry relevance can be maintained as an ongoing process.

In many cases, it would appear that contrary to seeing this as an imposition, staff would greatly appreciate the feedback inherent in a review process, especially if esteem or career promotion is interdependent on the outcome.

Initial studies using National Arts Related Design Competency Standards and National Print Standards are being examined as a basis for VET teacher development and review. The paper explores some of the issues raised and puts forward recommendations for further research.