An Investigation of the Professional Development Practices of Vocational Education and Training Educators in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Faculty of Arts, Education and Human Development
School of Education

Victoria University
Victoria, Australia

2008

Declaration of Originality

I, Kim Marianne Williams, declare that the EdD thesis entitled *"An Investigation of the Professional Development Practices of Vocational Education and Training Educators in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector"* is no more than 60,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Kim Marianne Williams

Signature:………………………………………		Date …………………..2008

Dedication

I dedicate this study to my father Arthur Edward Williams (1916 – 2007), and my mother Wilma Eleanor Williams.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express appreciation to the following people for their support and assistance during the preparation of this dissertation:

Dr Bill Eckersley who took on the role of principal supervisor; his guidance, recommendations and patience, supported me throughout this long journey.

All participants who offered their valuable time to contribute to this study.

Dr Paul Lynch who provided support and motivation to re-energise me in the final stages to strive onto the most difficult and final steps of completion.

My family, Schatzi and friends who supported me throughout this challenging time and provided me with the motivation and drive to complete this academic dream.

Abstract

This study investigated the practice of professional development (PD) within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) arena. The major focus of this study was to investigate how PD provision for a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector has equipped them with both the technical competence of their discipline and teacher/training competence.

This research has direct practical relevance to the educators working in the VET tourism and hospitality sector. Identifying PD strategies that are consistent and effective could facilitate the development of PD at a national level thus providing benefit to the VET sector as a whole.

The study was conducted utilising the qualitative research technique narrative inquiry. The investigation focused on a case study context of educators currently working within a department of tourism and hospitality at a VET registered training organisation. Interviews were conducted with 10 front-line teaching educators and 4 management Heads of Department. Interviews were transcribed and portrait narratives were developed from the interview data.

The portraits were analysed to answer the study's five objectives:

- To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the technical competence needed to conduct effective teaching/training programs
- To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the professional teaching/training competencies required for effective practice
- To construct a detailed taxonomy of teaching/training competencies in VET tourism and hospitality sector
- To determine the appropriate qualification for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector
- To propose specific recommendations for the improvement of PD practices for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Results of the study indicated that educators and management are required to consider specific issues when designing PD. A set of recommendations arising from the research findings have been developed that focus on enhancing the PD for tourism and hospitality educators particularly in the following areas:

- Increased relevance of the PD to the educators' work
- Development of a culture that supports lifelong learning
- More transparent PD funding and budgetary arrangements
- Access to PD for ongoing and sessional staff
- Increased emphasis on professional learning arising from PD.

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Chapter 1   Introduction

Aim of the study

This study explored the practice of professional development (PD) within the VET tourism and hospitality sector. The major focus of this study was to investigate how PD provision for a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector has equipped them with both the technical competence of their discipline and teacher/training competence. Based on data collected and a review of the relevant research, I have developed a set of recommendations that can be implemented for future training and development of VET educators at a national level.

Context

A change process in Vocational Education and Training (VET) commenced in the late 1980s (Harris, Simons, Hill, Smith, Pearce, Blakeley, Choy, and Snewin, 2001). During the 1990s the "VET system in Australia could be characterised by a process of rapid and fundamental change" (Anderson, 1996, p.3). The reforms to education were made in the context of an economy increasingly exposed to international pressures (Burke, 1998). The stimulus and directives for these changes evolved from many reports and inquiries on various aspects of industry and employment, sponsored by government and industry (Kirby, 1985; 2000; Finn, 1991; Carmichael, 1992; Mayer, 1992). The research conducted by the government agencies indicated that:

> The apparent factors for the changes in education and training were inadequate levels of employment for both semi-skilled workers and school leavers. It was also essential to improve the training provided to the existing workforce owing to changes occurring in organisational structure, competition in the market place, technological advances and industrial issues (Burke, 1998, p. 20).

The development of a national perspective on skill formation and training led to a National Training Reform Agenda and the establishment of the National Training

Board in 1990. The reform agenda was developed in response to:

- the need to up-grade the skill level of the workforce so that Australian industry would be more competitive
- the influence of award restructuring and a trend to enterprise bargaining agreements (EBA)
- workplace reform that enhanced newer methods of organising and performing work (National Training Board, 1992).

In 1992, The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) was established. ANTA was a government statutory authority which provided a national focus for vocational education and training. ANTA reported to an industry-based board and was administrator and advisor. It advised the ANTA Ministerial Council (MINCO) of Australian Government, state and territory Ministers responsible for vocational education and training on:

- national VET policy, strategy, priorities goals and objectives
- VET plans, which state and territories developed each year. These plans detailed how states and territories proposed to meet national priorities, goals and objectives.

ANTA administered national programs and the Australian Government funding of the national VET system. ANTA's mission was to ensure that the skills of the Australian labour force were sufficient to support internationally competitive commerce and industry and to provide individuals with opportunities to optimise their potential (Department of Education Science and Training, 2006, viewed on 10 July 2006).

When ANTA was abolished in June 2005 its functions and responsibilities were repositioned into the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST). This change had implications on the focus of the National Training Agenda and professional development for VET educators.

The National Training Framework (NTF) was created from the ideas and practices that drove the training reform in the early 1990s. The NTF included a national endorsement of Training Packages and advocated greater flexibility for Registered

Training Organisations (RTOs). This resulted in varying approaches to meet client needs and the provision of greater flexibility in achieving training outcomes (Australian National Training Authority, 1997).

Coinciding with these changes, Waterhouse, Wilson and Ewer (1999) explained that:

> There have been shifts in the structure and composition of the world of work. Women represent a much larger percentage of the workforce. Unemployment has re-emerged along with increased casualisation, contracts and flexible working hours have become more predominant; continuous tenure is a luxury of the past; unionisation of the labour market has declined and many positions are now out-sourced rather than filled by internal employees (pp. 7-9).

Changes in the labour market and the worlds of work have influenced the provision of educational services. VET, in particular, had to develop an appropriate response to the dynamic alterations at the workplace. Harris et al., (2001) highlighted that the VET sector, in line with other labour markets, had seen the emergence of part-time and casual employment. "By 1998, the proportion of contract and sessional to full-time was 48% and this trend has continued to rise" (Malley, Shah, McKenzie, Hill and Putland, 2000, p. 33). The changing profile of VET educators has produced an impact on professional development (PD) practices.

The VET system in the twenty-first century is undergoing further alterations to respond to shifts in funding provision. An increased proportion of funding is now allocated through open tenders (Australian National Training Authority, 2003). There has been a move away from the Government supplying VET services towards it being a purchaser of training services from a wide range of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). All RTOs now have the opportunity to apply for the "training dollar" if they have the suitable resources to provide training to a "user choice" market. These changes in the funding policy in the early 2000s have encouraged new players into the now extremely competitive market of VET education. These changes motivated the production of various policies and procedures especially aimed at providing an educational system that displays

quality and accountability. With the increase in the number of educational providers came the call for the introduction of new policies to provide strict regulatory requirements. The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) was introduced in 2001 setting out twelve detailed standards that must now be adhered to if a RTO is to maintain its registration for training. In 2007 the AQTF was revised to a set of three standards which encompassed the previous twelve (refer to Appendix 1).

The national approach to training has shaped the need for PD on a nation-wide scale (Mitchell and Young, 2001). PD activities maintain proficient industry currency and should be considered to be a fundamental component of any professional's career path. Lifelong learning is perceived to be a key requirement for all, and especially for those who are key stakeholders in the educational development of the next generation. Contemporary organisations have recognised that on-going training and development are essential for growth, prosperity and success. The VET sector is no exception. The challenge of tackling the enormous diversity of the VET workforce must be addressed before effective and long term strategic PD can be implemented at a national level (NB: For the purpose of this research professional development and staff development are used synonymously). "Staff development does have a key strategic role, but it should not be isolated from the activities of strategic planning and organisational change" (Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment, 2000, p. 93).

The problem faced by VET systems is how to ensure that there are adequate and effective PD practices available to all educators over the duration of their teaching careers. Harris et al., (2001) and Smith (1997) affirmed that it is vital for VET educators to maintain and update their skills and knowledge to tackle the continual changes in the world of work, ongoing reform and increased competition in the VET training sector. However economic circumstances may restrict the quantity and quality of PD that organisations can implement, especially for those classified as sessional or short-term contract employees. Educational budgets are by no means less prone to economic scrutiny. It is essential therefore, that any form of PD was effective and realises quantifiable outcomes. Harris et al., (2001)

supported this assertion and indicated that currently most PD is conducted ad hoc with little or no consistency. There is a need for greater emphasis on specific programs that will provide educators with technical competence of their discipline as well as their professional teaching/training competencies.

The problems of how to provide adequate and effective PD to educators are reflective of concerns experienced by technical educators on a worldwide basis. Loveder (2005) discussed a range of factors impacting on staff development for technical educators: "These factors include changes in clients, recent advances in technology, the growth of the knowledge economy, flexible approaches to teaching and learning and work intensification" (p. 2). Loveder's factors are also a predicament faced in the Australian training arena.

Study objectives

This study aimed to achieve the following five objectives:

1. To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the technical competence needed to conduct effective teaching/training programs

2. To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the professional teaching/training competencies required for effective practice

3. To apply the VET educators' perceptions in the construction of a detailed taxonomy of teaching/training competencies in the VET tourism and hospitality sector

4. To apply the VET educators' perceptions in determining the appropriate qualification requirements for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector

5. To propose specific recommendations for the improvement of PD practices for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Statement of significance

PD strategies are needed to assist with the processes of energising teaching and training approaches applied in the VET sector. Without continual enlightenment of educators' skills and knowledge in both the technical competency of their chosen discipline and in their teaching competencies, educators will become stagnant and fall behind in their current practices. Educators, for example, can lose touch with the latest industry trends, including advances in technology and processes. An example of the changes in technology is the dispatch of airline tickets which are now produced electronically.

Government policies concerning VET requirements are regularly reviewed. A new version of the Australian Quality Training Framework was released in July 2007 and it is essential that VET educators are familiar with these changes. The VET educator is required to be up to date with current teaching and regulatory requirements. Teaching and learning of the Y generation can be challenging. To engage the Y cohort in learning, the VET educator needs to keep abreast of current teaching methods for teaching in the traditional classroom and via flexible delivery modes.

This research has direct practical relevance to the educators working in the VET tourism and hospitality sector. Identifying PD strategies that are consistent and effective could facilitate the development of PD at a national level thus providing benefit to the VET sector as a whole.

Contribution to knowledge or practice

PD strategies are needed to assist with the processes of enlivening teaching and training approaches used in VET. This research has direct practical relevance to the educators working in the VET tourism and hospitality sector.

This study will assist in increasing the understanding of the necessary skills and knowledge required by VET educators to perform teaching duties effectively. This

increased understanding could facilitate the development of more effective PD strategies during pre-service and in-service. The stakeholders that will benefit from this contribution are VET educators; clients of VET organisations; VET funding bodies (Office of Training and Tertiary Education); VET policy makers (Department of Education Science and Training); and VET sector in general (TAFE, private providers, VET in Schools).

Definition of terms, acronyms and abbreviations

The following list of terms, acronyms and abbreviations are applied throughout this research.

ACPET: Australian Council for Private Education and Training.

ANTA: Australian National Training Authority.

competency: The broad concept of industry competency concerns the ability to perform tasks and duties to the standard of performance expected in the workplace. Competency requires the application of specific skills and knowledge relevant to effective participation in an industry, industry sector or enterprise (Department of Education Science and Training, 2007, p.45).

DEST: Department of Education Science and Training.

experiential learning: Learning in which the learner is directly in touch with realities being studied and makes use of that direct contact to acquire changed insights that are carried forward to subsequent encounters with other realities (Harvard and Hodkinson, 1994, p.40).

Industry Training Packages: Training Packages form the basis of all nationally recognised vocational education and training throughout Australia. They are flexible national products developed by industry to ensure quality training outcomes and to meet current and emerging vocational skill needs. They are a nationally endorsed, integrated set of competency standards, assessment guidelines and AQF qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise (Department of Education Science and Training, 2007, p. 50).

MECA: Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Multi-Employer Certified Agreement 2003.

mentor relationship: This is when a more experienced educator provides feedback to and discussion with the less experienced educator. The less experienced educator is able to reflect on the suggestions provided by their mentor and apply this to their teaching practice.

professional development (PD): Learning opportunities which improve an individual's competence making them more valuable to their workplace team and organisation. PD is obtained throughout an individual's lifetime, via formal and informal learning pathways.

professional development activity: Any single professional development session that is attended by an educator.

professional development strategy: A plan, policy or approach to facilitate PD for the educator.

professional learning (PL): Any PD that subsequently translates into effective outcomes for the participant involved in the learning process.

policy: A plan of action that has strong connections to state administration.

portraits: A narrative which reveals the participant's vocational history, including a personal career history with specific focus on professional development activities undertaken prior and during the participant's working career.

practicum: Is where the participant was required to actively perform teaching duties which were observed and evaluated by a supervisor or colleague.

public policy: An action which employs governmental authority to commit resources in support of a preferred value.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO): A training organisation registered by a state or territory registering body in accordance with the AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration within a defined scope of registration. A training organisation must be registered in order to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications (Department of Education Science and Training, 2007, p. 49).

staff development (SD): Refer to professional development.

Training Package: A Training Package is an integrated set of nationally endorsed competency standards, assessment guidelines and Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise. (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2008 Vol 1, p. 1).

TAFE: Training and Further Education.

VET: Vocational Education and Training.

VETiS: Vocational Education and Training in Secondary Schools.

VISTA: Association of VET Professionals.

Organisation of the study

This research is presented in a narrative style describing the PD experiences of 14 participants who teach within or administer VET programs in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Figure 1 depicts a conceptual overview of this research study. The context, Section 1, of the study was centered in the Vocational Education and Training sector with specific focus on the hospitality and tourism discipline. In recent years this sector has witnessed a number of social, political and environmental changes, which have all influenced the structure of the sector. This context has influenced the PD practices of educators working in the VET sector.

Key aspects of professional development and professional learning practices were examined, exposing issues and identifying the required variable for successful application. Section 2 depicts the range of variables that impact on the effectiveness of PD practices. Section 3: For PD to be effective and the learning translate into a professional learning experience a number of factors need to be present. Section 4: Professional learning is then able to improve the learning outcomes of the educator's students.

Section 1

Education Reforms

Unemployment re-emerged

Decline in unionisation

Changes in the VET labour market

**Context:
VOCATION EDUCATION &
TRAINING
Hospitality & Tourism**

Increased casualisation

Increased % of women in the VET Sector

Contracts & flexible working hours used in a flexible firm

Section 2

Lifelong learning

Environments for learning

Adult learning theory

Learning contracts

Professional development

Employee's proficiencies - skills, knowledge, attitudes for the job of teaching

Workplace relevance and application in a real life situation

Barriers to PD

AQTF

Section 3

Strategic planning involved

Professional learning

Relevant to participants' needs

Workplace application

Motivation

Section 4

Improved student learning outcomes

Figure 1 – A conceptual overview of the research study

Conclusion

Chapter 1 provides the context of the study, the aims of the study; the study objectives; statement of significance; the contribution to knowledge and the organisation of the study. Chapter 2 presents a synthesis of the research concerning appropriate literature pertaining to the study. This includes research literature related to learning: adult, lifelong, organisational, work based and experiential. Literature concerning PD and the VET arena was reviewed and education related to the tourism and hospitality sector was examined. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology including research design; rationale for the qualitative methods; interviews; portraits; group interviews; data collection; narrative research and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 unveils a series of participant portraits that provide an insight into each participant's vocational history and personal career journey. These journeys focus on specific professional development activities undertaken prior to and during teaching in the tourism and hospitality VET sector. Chapter 5 provides a discussion and analysis of data collected. Chapter 6 condenses the analysis into a set of recommendations for the potential direction of PD strategies for educators in the VET sector highlighting some final conclusions and suggestions about future related research considerations.

Chapter 2   Literature review

Introduction

This chapter examines and presents a critical analysis of selected theoretical frameworks that provide insight into the research questions and are connected to the PD practices of VET educators. These frameworks include the concepts of learning and adult learning in particular; the ideas associated with lifelong learning; the learning organisation and how that corresponds to the learning of VET tourism and hospitality educators. To fully appreciate the challenges related to PD practices, it is necessary to examine and interrogate different aspects of learning. The exploration of relevant theory provides a constructive description of the areas deemed necessary for the effective implementation of PD for VET educators. When reflecting on issues related to PD, it is advantageous to investigate and consider the significance of learning theory. This investigation can assist in formulating more effective strategies in relation to the PD practices for VET educators within a training organisation. VET policies, strategies and related issues are discussed and education of tourism and hospitality is reviewed. Effective PD experiences for a VET educator will provide the participant with valuable skills and knowledge that are directly transferable into the workplace and ultimately provide better outcomes for the educators' students (Cacciattolo, Cherednichenko, Eckersley, Jones, Kruger, Moore, Mulraney, Watt and Cosgrove, 2006).

Adult learning theory

Understanding adult learning theory and principles is essential to fully appreciate the challenges attributed to PD. The list of researchers ascribed to contributing to the development of adult learning theory is extensive. John Dewey (1963), Cyril Houle (1984), Roby Kidd (1973), Malcom Knowles (1984), Alan Knox (1986), Jarvis (1995) and in more recent times Andrew Gonczi (2004), Tarra Fenwick and Mark Tennant (2004) contributed to the research in adult learning. Aspects of each authors' work will be explored in relation to PD practices of VET educators.

Contributions to the development of adult learning theory

John Dewey, professor of Philosophy at the University of Chicago in 1894, was one of the first to explore educational philosophy and adult learning. He developed a number of key concepts of education. The central concept was learning comes from experience. Experience provides a platform for problem solving and solving problems leads to growth and change. Burns (2002) recalled that Dewey perceived a teacher to have a specific role when facilitating the learning of others.

A teacher's role includes:
- Being aware of the capacity, needs and past experience of those under instruction
- Using environment and experiences as a basis for learning
- Taking a guiding and cooperative role
- Ensuring learning experiences are constructive to growth (p. 240)

The educator is an instrument to assist with the learning experience and is not the font of all knowledge. Learning is obtained from past knowledge which is adapted and transformed to move forward to newly acquired knowledge. It was Dewey's ideas that stimulated and influenced others to follow.

Another key researcher of learning in the 1940s was Cyril Houle, Professor Emeritus in Education at the Chicago University. He asserted that all people have a desire to learn and they will all engage in some form of learning (Griffith, 1997). In the 1950s Houle expanded his research about this concept and conducted a study on why adults engage in continued education. Adult learners seek learning because of three motivating factors:

- Goal-orientation – seeking learning to fulfil clear objectives
- Activity orientation – seeking learning for social interaction; and
- Learner orientation – seeking knowledge for its own sake (Knowles, 1984, p.44-45).

These three motivators are not mutually exclusive and there can be some overlap depending on the individual. To understand why a participant is seeking or engaging in learning, or in some cases avoiding learning opportunities, is important. Houle's research offered an initial insight into what might motivate adults

to learn. To increase a participant's motivation, the PD activity should be designed to at least capture an aspect of the above learning motivators. An understanding of why adults are motivated to learn will assist in developing a framework for the implementation of effective PD learning programs in the VET sector.

Roby Kidd, a Canadian scholar and teacher had a lifelong learning interest and commitment to the education of underprivileged adults. Kidd extended the examination of adult learning during the 1970s. He was fascinated with the meaning of learning both individually and in a social context. He concluded that "learning for all humans is wholly a natural impulse of the living organism" (cited in Thomas, 1987, pp. 199-200). Kidd asserted that adults are capable of independent learning and do not require force and persuasion to learn. Learning is something that comes naturally, especially when a participant is provided with the appropriate stimulus. It could be suggested that VET educators in the current working environment of continual change are seeking skills and knowledge to assist them to overcome workplace challenges and difficulties. If VET management provides access to relevant PD activities, VET educators are more likely to embrace the chance to learn and acquire further skills and knowledge to support them in the workplace.

Kidd (1973) compared doctors to educators in regard to keeping in step with current developments in their fields. "Every good doctor assumes such a responsibility as part of his job; any good practitioner in education has a similar obligation" (p. 298). This notion can be further developed to include the employing institution. Educational institutions that desire to employ competent and professional staff members have a responsibility to provide them with access to relevant PD. This access to PD encourages VET educators to enhance their skills and knowledge in a variety of areas and to keep in step with changes in their industry discipline and their teaching competencies. These teaching competencies range from classroom-related teaching skills through to administrative requirements prevalent since the introduction of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) standards in 2001.

It has been widely documented that adults learn differently from children (Cross, 1981; Knowles, 1984; Knox, 1986; Jarvis; 1995). Knowles was stimulated by the previous work of John Dewey. Knowles investigated the concepts of adult learning and is considered to be the "father" of andragogy (Jarvis, 1995, p. 90). Andragogy as defined by Knowles (1980) is "the art and science of helping adults to learn" (p. 43).

Knowles (1984) developed a set of androgogical principles about adult learning:

- Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking learning
- Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives
- Adults come into educational activities with both a volume and different quality of previous experience
- Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with real-life situations
- Adults are life-centred, task-centred or problem-centred in their orientation to learn
- Motivation to learn is more associated with internal rather than external pressures (pp. 55-61).

These specific adult learning principles emerge when an adult is engaged in a learning activity. These principles indicate a number of essential factors that an adult must perceive when engaging in learning experiences. There should be a perception of value or worth and an aspect of personal relevance in what they are learning. If the participant cannot identify any personal need or application for the knowledge or skill presented at the learning activity, then learning acquired can be of limited value. The activity may be rendered ineffective, thus providing the participant with the view that they have wasted precious learning time. Therefore, any PD undertaken by a VET educator should include an aspect of personal need which provides workplace relevance to the participant. If PD has workplace relevance, the educator is able to apply the learning and professional learning (PL) is likely to occur. PL is any PD that subsequently translates into effective outcomes for the participant involved in the learning process (Caciattolo et al., 2006).

For PD to be a totally valuable exercise, it is essential for both the individual and the organisation to acquire benefit from the experience. All stakeholders will profit from improving the performance of the employee. Organisations have a desire to see that financial investment in PD is money well spent and individuals have a desire to see a particular relevance in what they are learning. If the outcomes of relevance and application are obtained then the employee is more likely to return to the workplace energised and motivated to implement the newly learnt skill (Knowles, 1984). One central point, therefore, is that the adult must see some worthwhile reason to learn and understand that there is some application of this learning in a real life situation (Knapper and Cropley, 2000). Unfortunately adults do not always perceive a purpose to the learning in their real life practices. The principles provided by Knowles can be applied when developing PD strategies for VET educators. Relevance and real life application are significant factors in motivating an adult to learn.

Knowles (1984) believed that adults undertake a form of learning due to pressure from a current life situation. An adult will be willing to learn a new process in order to be able to solve a prevailing problem that faces them. This willingness to learn can be translated in the workplace as a PD practice that will equip the educator with solutions to workplace predicaments. Adult workers are continually faced with new challenges in the work environment and following the principles of Knowles these challenges provide motivation to learn how to overcome the current difficulties. Under these circumstances adults are able to take responsibility for their own learning. These challenges encourage and motivate an adult to obtain relevant and beneficial information that may be applied to their workplace predicament and improve work practices.

Historically PD activities have not always reflected relevance and applicability to real life teaching practices. Many educators have experienced a one-way communication mode on subjects that had very little application to their duties in the workplace. These experiences have made adult learners sceptical about the value of PD. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) supported this notion stating that "many

staff development initiatives take the form of something that is done to teachers rather than with them, still less by them" (p.7). If there is limited interest in the PD activity, learning obtained will be inadequate and could provide a negative outcome. This example illustrates the potential futility of PD when the educator does not have a voice in what the PD experience will be.

Knox (1986) argued that adult learners demonstrate a number of different characteristics when it comes to learning. These relate to past experience, current abilities and roles and future aspirations. Management within the VET sector could be more responsive to the current needs of VET educators by providing PD that facilitated the closure of individual employee's skills and knowledge deficiencies. Mitchell and Young (2001) suggested a number of areas that need to be addressed in respect of the deficiencies of skills and knowledge of VET educators. These included skills for on-line delivery; work-place training and assessment; skills development for casual staff and the expansion of management competencies.

Knowles (1975) proposed that learning should be self-directed and the learner should be able to negotiate learning contracts with their educators or their employers. In this way employees are able to structure their learning and presumably increase their motivation to learn. By following this process, employees are able to incorporate personal and professional relevance to the PD practice thus increasing the effectiveness of the activity. In this context, VET educators need to be able to negotiate with management the structure of their PD in order to gain maximum value for the PD exercise. The effectiveness of the PD can be reflected by an improvement in the educators' motivation and increased motivation can translate into positive student learning outcomes. A PD activity that increased an educator's motivation level could be considered to have translated into a rewarding PL experience.

Gonczi (2004) argued that in recent years there has been a development in the adult learning paradigm. He perceived that there is a link between the learner and

the environment in which learning takes place. Real learning takes place only in and through action. To obtain competence in an activity, one is required to grasp a "…holistic approach. This means bringing together a range of attributes (knowledge, skills, dispositions, values) in a particular context" (p. 21). Competency based training has become the model applied within the VET sector and was introduced in Australia over ten years ago. This development in adult learning has some educational implications. Gonczi suggested that teaching and learning, and the acquisition of competencies, are tied to the world of practice and learning and can be obtained in the workplace in conjunction to the traditional classroom.

Fenwick and Tennant (2004) described a concept of "four lenses" to understand adult learning:

1. Learning as acquisition, knowledge as a substantive thing
2. Learning as reflection, an active construction of knowledge
3. Practice–based community, participating in meaningful everyday activities
4. Learning as embodied co-emergent process, the relationship that develops among people and everything in a particular situation (p.56).

Fenwick and Tennant did not profess that any one lens is better than another but they believed that educators need to consider incorporating aspects of each lens in a learning activity. Learning is the process of acquiring knowledge while having time to reflect and practice what has been learned. Learning occurs in all situations because adults are always being exposed to new experiences. An adult learner, in this case the VET educator, can apply the understanding of these learning concepts when undertaking PD to obtain further educational and vocational skills and knowledge.

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning incorporates PD practices conducted by individuals over the

duration of their lives. The PD may be organised by individuals or controlled and structured by the organisation at which the individuals are employed. The workforce of the new millennium can no longer work under the assumption that initial education acquired in youth will provide the required learning for a lifetime. Technological advances and the rapid and continuous changes at the workplace have provided an arena where learning throughout the entire life span is essential to keep abreast of ever increasing changes in professional practice.

Organisations which incorporate PD practices as an important aspect of the overall long-term strategic plan of the business are building and developing a culture to embrace lifelong learning. Robinson (1999) proposed that:

> … policies to further promote lifelong learning are the key direction for the future, if Australia is to maximise its economic potential. The onset of the information age and knowledge-based economy require countries to become learning societies (p. 4).

Lifelong learning is the concept of continual development of individuals well past the mandatory secondary education requirements. Individuals welcome learning opportunities and continue to keep pace with the ever changing work environment. Individuals adopt the position of continually updating or learning new skills and knowledge to keep currency in his/her chosen career path. The philosophy of lifelong learning needs to permeate the culture of the organisation. Robinson's assertion supported this notion suggesting that organisations should foster the importance of lifelong learning.

The ultimate outcome of education is the progress and development of the learner. A major contributor, however, to this development is the learning undertaken by the educator. If an educator is professionally fulfilled and demonstrates skills, knowledge and job satisfaction then they are more likely to motivate their students to learn (Stoll and Fink, 1996). Educators can provide a role model for their students. Highly motivated people have the tendency to motivate others. When an educator displays passion for their discipline and also for the learning environment of the students, this passion about their subject matter supplies the ingredients to

build a learning culture, which may translate into lifelong learning inclinations. Knapper and Cropley (2000) reinforced this concept and suggested that it is essential for an educator to display passion and curiosity for their professional practice, thus exhibiting characteristics of a lifelong learner. They suggested involving external experts or industry practitioners to enliven the classroom with real life experience. A VET educator who has obtained industry currency, via a return to industry PD placement, is able to reflect on real life workplace practices that can be used as examples in the VET classroom.

Pfeffer and Veiga (1999) recognised that people work smarter when they are encouraged to build skills and competence, and work harder when they have more control and choice in their work. Unfortunately, training is often treated as an added extra and is the area to be cut back when economic rationalism looms over the organisation. Pfeffer and Veiga regarded training as providing an organisation with a competitive edge, if implemented effectively. They maintained there is a connection between management placing an emphasis on putting people first in the organisation and the ultimate success of the organisation. Investing in employee development will eventually pay dividends. Nadler and Nadler (1994) suggested that there is a direct correlation between enhancement of job performance and the learning that comes from training.

The National Board of Employment, Education and Training (1996) asserted that the acquisition of lifelong learning skills would be affected by teaching methods and practices. "Therefore, it is vital that there is a greater focus on initial training and continual PD of educators in all sectors" (p. 18). Training institutions could embody the essence of lifelong learning in all students. If students experience engagement in the process of learning, and also understood and appreciated the importance of continual learning, in both a formal and informal environment, they would carry these concepts for a lifetime. The attitude of participants to learning activities can be strongly influenced by prior learning experiences. This commences in initial learning activities as a child and then in youth. The educator in these instances plays a large part in determining how a person will view learning in the future. The

VET sector is also responsible for developing lifelong learning aspirations in their students.

The learning organisation

When expanding the concept of lifelong learning and developing a culture of continual learning within an organisation, it is necessary to discuss the concept of the learning organisation. Senge (1990) introduced the concept of a learning organisation, defining it as an:

> organisation where the employees continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where employees are continually learning how to learn together (p. 3).

This definition indicates that a learning organisation cultivates an environment for PD practices to flourish. An organisation is able to develop a culture of learning which fosters the growth of both the individual and the organisation as a whole. Therefore there is a continual expansion of knowledge and skills for the betterment of all involved.

Daniels (cited in Griego, Geroy and Wright, 2000) contended that there is no shared meaning of what is a learning organisation and many researchers have augmented the development furnished by Senge. Morris (1993) and Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell (1991) however, asserted that there is an actual definition. "A learning organisation or company is an organisation that learns powerfully and collectively and is continually transforming itself to better collect, manage and use knowledge for corporate success" (Pedler et al., p. 1). Griego et al. contended that even though there is discussion as to a finite definition, there is an indication of a very strong relationship between current practices in the workplace and the existence of a learning organisation.

A learning organisation is a continually developing business that is willing to equip its people to take on the challenges of the future. To further substantiate the

connection between lifelong learning and PD practices, Ogisu-Kamiya (1997) suggested that:

> … there is an enormous competitive advantage associated with a workplace that incorporates a vision, strategy and structure to make human resource development a continuous process (p. 19).

In recent decades there has been a move to equip society with the philosophy of lifelong learning. With the rapid changes occurring in the world of work, it is necessary for the members of a progressive society to continually develop and increase their knowledge and skill to stay competitive in the global market place. The culture of an organisation should try to foster the importance of lifelong learning. A learning organisation is a continually developing organisation that is willing to take on the challenges of the future (Senge, 1990). Every organisation and each employee should be willing to participate in their own professional growth to provide a path to business and personal success. For this favourable participation to transpire the climate needs to be appropriate and the culture of the organisation should develop a spirit that celebrates and recognises the accomplishments of the individual no matter how large or small. Value has to be equated to the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, adequate support, appropriate resources and learning and infrastructure should be available. If not, then little can be accomplished and motivation on the part of the individual will be deficient (Robinson, 1999).

Learning contracts

Byrne (2001) suggested there maybe a paradox between individual development and the development of the organisation. If an individual acquires improved skills and knowledge, they may have the tendency to leave the organisation for a better position or be more desirable to a competitor because of their increased marketability. This paradox poses the question of how to motivate employees to remain loyal to their current employer. Byrne recommended a correlation between the individual's learning and the strategic goals of the employing organisation. The employing organisation could facilitate any learning in parallel to the immediate targets of the organisation. Knowles (1975) proposed the implementation of a

learning contract (discussed previously on p. 15) that set the boundaries for mutual gain and cooperation. Carl Rogers also believed in a learning contract arrangement between the learner and teacher in which the learner could negotiate their own learning and be self directed in the learning activity (Burns, 2002).

A learning contract, or in this case a PD contract, can reflect (as stated before) a correlation between the individual's learning needs and the organisational goals (Byrne, 2001). Organisations should facilitate any PD learning in parallel with the goals of the organisation. A learning contract could be developed between employer and employee, where each works towards common goals and agreed objectives. A VET educator could establish a PD contract or yearly plan with their employer which enhances the organisation's goals as well as the educator's career aspirations. Further to the notion of learning contracts, Ellyard (1998) advocated "the importance of also establishing a workplace learning culture, to stimulate a desire in all employees to follow lifelong learning principles" (p. 73).

The flexible firm

The flexible firm demonstrates a capacity to change due to alterations in the market (Anell and Wilson, 2000). Increased changes in employment practices in the world of work have provided an impetus to alter the traditional structure of the working environment. International competition and new emerging technology has assisted in creating an organisation that provides more employment flexibility to its employees. This employment flexibility has provided a number of employment tenure opportunities including part-time, temporary, sub-contracting and home-base employment.

Smith (1995) indicated that the notion of a 'flexible firm' could introduce the concern of dualism within the labour market. Dualism of the labour market is when there is an increased emphasis on the use of a secondary labour force: that is those that may not be viewed as favourably as the primary full-time labour force. The VET labour market has shown signs of dualism in recent years. Sessional educators are now an essential component of the VET labour supply and

contribute to at least 48% of the VET workforce (Malley et al., 2000). In this case the secondary employee, the sessional, does not have access to the same economic guarantees and benefits as the primary workforce. Sessionals do not have access to employment stability; holiday and sickness payments; PD access and a range of stable employment conditions.

The concept of flexibility can be more aligned with the individual worker rather than with the organisation. Sessional employees have become more favourable in recent years in the VET sector with the expanding and shrinking vocational educational training market. Certain industries require more trained workers while others have an over supply. Training organisations have to have the ability to alter their course offerings depending on the training market demand. Therefore sessional worker requirements will change in line with training market forces. It is the sessional employee who exhibits flexible work-life practices to assist the organisation's development capacity.

Individual employment flexibility introduces practical problems for secondary employees. Anell and Wilson (2000) indicated that a secondary worker or "temp is in a more precarious position because they are expendable and they know it" (p.169). This unstable employment arrangement can manifest into a disadvantaged position for the temp worker who may also be marginalised in a number of ways in the workplace. The sessional educator may have limited access to competence development or PD opportunities, and employment stability can be a major personal concern. The sessional educator is reliant on work opportunities and may have a tendency to switch organisations depending on the best offer at the time (Anell and Wilson). This situation can ultimately cause instability problems within the organisation.

Work-based learning

Lifelong learning activities, some of which take the form of PD, could be implemented via work-based training. Trigwell and Ried (1998) described:

Work-based learning as a form of flexible learning. It can be offered

flexibly to participants in what they study; where and when they study; on the nature and scope of assessment and on entry and exit (p. 142).

Work-based learning can therefore provide a strategy for executing a more structured and formal PD within the workplace. Karakowsky and McBey (1999) advocated that employers need to better understand the role of the workplace in facilitating learning and development. Employers having a better understanding of the role of the workplace can assist the encouragement of more effective employee training and development programs and help to build policies that foster and reward employee growth and development. These strategies provide a climate to encourage the development of lifelong learning skills.

Many PD activities may occur outside the organisation. Work-based learning suggests an alternative strategy that endeavours to reduce the disruptions that can occur when a worker is removed from his/her place of employment. This strategy is designed to develop programs to be delivered in the workplace. Work-based learning provides a suitable alternative to the more traditional off-the-job training.

Many PD activities for educators are conducted within the workplace, but in addition to the normal operational activity of conducting lessons for students. Specific time is allocated for the PD activity when the student or client will not be disrupted. An alternative to finding this additional time could be to conduct the training with the institution's student clients also involved. This time could be in the classroom with students participating in the learning process and a more experienced educator providing a peer review of the educator.

Traditionally educators have learnt the required teaching and learning skills and knowledge through the guidance of more experienced and established educators; that is in a mentor relationship. A mentor approach was adopted in the Diploma and Graduate Diploma of Education at Hawthorn Institute of Education in the 1990s where an educator undertook a teaching placement or practicum. The trainee educator was mentored by a colleague and assessed by a supervisor

(teacher trainer) on their teaching skills. This type of system has been reduced within the VET sector over the past five years. The introduction of the minimum qualification of Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training rather than the Diploma or Graduate Diploma of Education has reduced the quality and quantity of mentor-facilitated learning experiences. This is because the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training does not include a supervised practicum of teaching, which was part of the Diploma or Graduate Diploma of Education. This research study will endeavor to determine what could be the entry qualification requirements for VET educators and then suggest appropriate programs to improve the effectiveness of the educator in achieving better student learning outcomes.

Experiential learning

Experiential learning practices provide an environment where the participant experiences the learning on a first-hand basis and is immersed in the learning experience. Many PD activities incorporate experiential learning as a component of the learning. Teaching practicums or simulated teaching activities enhance and assist learning and are traditionally incorporated in formal education degrees.

Providing a universally agreed upon definition for the term experiential learning can be complex. Experience can be explained in numerous ways. Harvard and Hodkinson (1994) defined experiential learning as:

> Learning in which the learner is directly in touch with realities being studied and makes use of that direct contact to acquire changed insights that are carried forward to subsequent encounters with other realities (p. 40).

A fundamental ingredient to effective experiential learning is that the learner not only has an experience but also adopts the information gained during this experience and applies it to future activities. Experiential learning is not one-dimensional. It takes the form of stages into which the participant develops a conscious understanding of the importance and value derived from the experience (Henry, 1989).

Kolb (1984) developed a well-respected model of experiential learning. This is represented in six propositions of adult learning:

- Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes
- Learning is a continuous process grounded in experience
- The process of learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world
- Learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world
- Learning involves transactions between the person and the environment
- Learning is the process of creating knowledge (pp. 25-38).

Experiential learning concepts are implied where the learner is able to learn by doing the actual activity in a real world environment. Carl Rogers (1969), a respected humanist, claimed "I know that I can't teach anyone anything. I can only provide an environment in which he/she can learn" (p. 163). Experiential learning provides that environment where the learner can become the master of their own learning.

The experiential learning concept underpins the current delivery model in the VET sector. The emergence of Industry Training Packages in the late 1990s has guided vocational education techniques. This application of experiential learning concepts has translated into workplace learning becoming an integral component of the model. Training Packages provide a flexible arrangement for skills delivery and incorporate both classroom and workplace delivery strategies. VET educators require access to PD that will equip them with industry currency and strategies to apply effective learning principles into their professional practice, and that of the learner.

Direct experience or experiential learning within a discipline has been used in many fields for a number of years. In the case of educators who specialise in the training of a particular industry, it would seem appropriate that they are required to participate in a form of direct experience to obtain skills and knowledge to keep up-to-date with associated changes and developments. A teaching practicum is an example of experiential learning. The student educator is required to prepare, present and assess lessons under the guidance of an experienced and qualified

educator. This relationship allows the learner to gain valuable feedback concerning their progress as an educator. The learner is able to refine and adapt their teaching techniques as they progress in their classroom delivery.

Another form of experiential learning that can be adopted by the VET sector is the PD activity of spending a period of time back in the industry that the educator is now instructing. Williams (2000) suggested that a return to industry activity provides an excellent experiential learning opportunity to re-acquaint the educator with their industry discipline. PD programs for VET educators can incorporate an aspect of direct involvement in the training. Experiential learning concepts suggest that it is not enough to be an observer on the periphery of the learning activity. The learner must also participate in the action. This is also supported by Dewey (1963), Rogers (1969) and Jarvis (1987) who all believed that learning comes from experience.

Barriers to professional development

Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) (1997) indicated that there is a lack of appreciation of the strategic value of PD. This is demonstrated by the fact that PD is often perceived to be an individual's concern. The findings in the Research Reports into Professional Development by Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) (1997) indicated that PD was viewed as competing with real work. The report indicated that the inadequate appreciation of the value of PD, an organisational barrier to PD, needs to change in all organisations and across all disciplines in order for Australian business to compete successfully in an ever-developing global economy.

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) proposed that adults may possess barriers to learning participation. The two most cited reasons for non-participation in extra learning activities were "lack of time and money" (p. 56). These barriers need to be considered when structuring any PD program. Adult learners possess a number of other barriers in respect to furthering their education: attitudes, perceptions and expectations of the learning experience (O'Mahony, 1997, Darkenwald, 1980).

These barriers can be further exacerbated by an individual's lack of confidence in their own learning abilities and the fact they may consider themselves as too old (Cross, 1981).

Reed, Forwood, and Reed (2003) discovered a range of barriers which prevented educators from tackling PD and the ultimate flow on effect of PL. The learning barriers included:

> A lack of funding for backfill, transport and fees; increasing workloads; lack of access to casual staff; lack of education and industry-relevant PD opportunities; geographic isolation; and a lack of management support for PD for certain groups of teachers such as sessional educators (p. 47).

These barriers need to be addressed and eradicated at the strategic planning level in order to assist in the achievement of satisfying PL experiences.

Obtaining effective PD can be fraught with obstacles and problems. Reed et al., 2003 and Harris et al., (2001) identified a number of common barriers to PD. Harris suggested that there was a lack of time available for educators to complete a PD activity. Management was not always supportive and did not have the expertise to properly manage PD requests to provide adequate time release. The vision to see the benefits associated with effective staff development was absent because the organisational culture did not assist in encouraging effective staff development strategies. Forwood, McClean and Butler (2001) indicated that 'a large number of staff have been employed in the TAFE system for over 15 years and a large group of managers are due to retire in the next few years' (p.14). The VET workforce is an aging one and many of the cohorts are resistant to completing any new training activity at this stage in their careers. One key barrier to PD proposed by Harris concerns the fact that the workforce has become increasingly casualised and many educators are sessional or have fixed term contracts and take a secondary place to the main full-time staff in respect to PD access (p. 45). Funding in general in the VET sector is an issue and the funding available for PD activities can be even harder to acquire.

The VET training system has undergone rapid changes in the last decade and has provided limited formal support to educators to cope with these changes (Harris et al., 2001). When governments and training organisations develop policy agendas, it is essential that the barriers to PD practices are taken into consideration and strategies are developed to overcome them.

Teaching in the tertiary sector – VET

Educators in the VET sector provide delivery and assessment in vocational competencies. The current profile of a VET student is predominately a student who has come straight from the secondary school. Their ages range from late teens to early 20s. The VET educators' role is to equip these students with the skills and knowledge to prepare them for a career in their chosen vocation. These students are now considered to be studying in a tertiary "adult learning" environment (Knowles, 1984). There are still a number of issues concerning these students that need to be addressed by a VET educator and their employer. These issues include understanding different approaches to teaching, overall classroom management including handling challenging behaviour, counselling skills and current legislative and compliance requirements. The educator is required to manage the learning environment and possess the appropriate skills and knowledge to perform their teaching obligations to a satisfactory standard to maximise effective learning for all student participants (Armitage, Bryant, Dunnill, Hayes, Hudson, Kent, Lawes and Renwick, 2003). PD activities undertaken by a VET educator need to include training about how to deal with these issues.

A VET educator needs to have an appreciation that classroom management and approaches to learning can vary depending on the format of the classroom and the profile and demographics of the student cohort. The educator may have to exhibit more control of the classroom environment if their students display challenging behaviours. The educator might not be required to implement classroom management techniques if their students are engaged in learning because the learning is conducted in a self directed, simulated real life context. Armitage et al., (2003) suggested that:

An educator may apply a variety of approaches to control the classroom but this is influenced by a number of factors. A factor that influences an educator's ability to manage a learning environment could be the internal confidence and topic knowledge of the educator, but there are also external factors that influence the classroom management outcomes. These external factors include how long the educator has worked with this group of students, the age of the students and what prior experience they have with the subject area being taught (Armitage et al., 2003, pp.94-95)

Cooperation and interest of the student participants is vital to a good learning environment. Therefore, the educator must have access to satisfactory and contemporary learning resources, equipment and sufficient delivery time. In addition to this, the participants need to be willing to try new things and experiment.

The internal and external factors that influence an educator's ability to manage a learning environment shape the educator's delivery and assessment style. Part of an educator's role is to develop a classroom culture of respect and engagement in learning. A classroom group grows through Tuckman's (cited in Napier and Gershenfeld, 1989) stages of group development: forming, storming, norming and performing. The educator facilitates the development of a positive learning culture as the group progresses through each stage. Engaging in discussion and questioning can be constructive and allow the group to grow but disruptive and challenging behaviour cannot be tolerated by the teachers and the participants. Armitage et al., (2003) believed an educator needs to be equipped with strategies to minimise unwanted behaviour. Educators can acquire these strategies from effective teacher training education studies or over time from trial and error experience.

Educators are often faced with providing counselling or guidance to students. In the fast pace of the current world many students may search out information to assist them to achieve their personal and career goals. In many instances this information is obtained from an educator who they trust, respect and have possibly built a good relationship with. Counselling students involves the use of effective communication skills, showing empathy, active listening and being non

judgemental. Educators must however, assess each situation and realise at certain times that it is better to refer a student to a professionally trained counsellor than handle the situation themselves (Armitage et al., 2003).

Professional development and professional learning

The term professional development (PD), also known as staff development (SD), can be difficult to define. Loveder (2005) pointed out that PD is not just training but is intertwined in a variety of approaches, industry programs, mentoring, succession planning, job rotation and communities of practice. All these contribute to the enhancement of an educator's professional practices.

Loucks-Horsley (1996) defined SD and, by extension, PD as:

> Opportunities offered to educators to develop knowledge, skills, approaches and dispositions to improve their effectiveness in their classrooms and organisations (p. 4).

The Centre for Education Research and Innovation (CERI) cited in Loveder (2005) defined PD as:

> Any activity that develops an individual's skills, knowledge and other characteristics as a teacher/educator. These include personal study and reflection as well as formal courses (p. 4).

This definition suggests that PD can be obtained in both informal and formal pathways. McGrath and Palmer (2004) produced a list of both formal and informal PD approaches that have been used in the VET sector:

- Formal training
- Mentorship
- Career pathing and rotation
- Exchange programs
- Communities of practice back to industry
- Information sites and databases (p. 5).

The above definitions of PD will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 5 to provide a specific definition for this research study.

The above PD approaches in themselves do not necessarily provide an

atmosphere for PD to become professional learning (PL). Cacciattolo et al., (2006) suggested there are certain requirements for effective PD to translate into a PL experience:

> Professional development is effective when it is a high priority for the school and is either through the school charter or other identified need. Professional development should be formally co-ordinated at the school level and based on the collective and individual needs of teachers. The professional development should be resourced appropriately, with adequate time-release provided to the educator and a suitable time selected for the delivery of the professional development activity (p. 5).

PL could be considered as an effective extension of PD or SD. PL occurs when a participant is able to implement and make changes to their work practices on a continuing basis. In many cases the terms PD and PL can be interchanged but for this study, there is an important difference between the two. The definition of PL has been further defined as any PD that subsequently translates into applied learning and effective outcomes for the participant involved in the learning process (Caciattolo et al., 2006). In the case of an educator, PL may also enhance the learning outcomes of the educator's students. A PL experience rather than a PD experience is a more effective outcome for a learning organisation. A successful learning organisation needs to concentrate on achieving PL experiences for the employees, not just PD experiences.

Cort, Harkonen and Volmari (2004) contributed to the debate concerning professional development approaches for VET educators. They suggest the following about PD:

- Staff development programs should take a 'dualistic approach', integrating practice and on-the-job learning in the practitioner's classroom with theory
- Where possible, staff development should use flexible, modular approaches to meet the needs and backgrounds of practitioners
- Staff development is most often beneficial when it uses a 'bottom-up' approach and encourages practitioners to reflect on their own teaching practice
- Use of 'study circles' or, communities of practice' involving staff from different departments, disciplines or institutions can be beneficial

- Use of ICT to provide a powerful medium for encouraging active participation in staff development (p. 27).

The reference to integrating practice and theory in the first dot point reflects the possible use of experiential learning techniques or work-based learning (Trigwell and Ried, 1998). Dot points 2 and 3 advance the concept that PD should be driven by the participants' needs in conjunction with the requirements of the institution. The elements suggested by Cort et al., (2004) provided a framework for the development of suitable PD programs that could be implemented at both the institute and at the state level of the VET system and thus are relevant for this research.

A problem faced by the VET system is how to ensure that there are adequate and effective PD practices available to all educators over the duration of their teaching career. PD practices which translate into PL experiences within VET educational contexts are always important. As in many other industries, the need for lifelong learning has become increasingly important due to the rapidly changing workplace. Smith (1997) stressed that perhaps the most important features of the changes in VET that have impacted on PD of educators are the increased number of providers. This has meant that all providers must be more competitive, and teachers must learn to operate in a number of contexts including:

- the devolution of the TAFE system
- adoption of new strategies for delivering VET
- the ability to respond to rapid changes in industry (pp. 120-121).

It is essential for VET educators to maintain and update their skills and knowledge and to be able to tackle the continual changes in work caused by ongoing reform and increased competition in the VET training sector (Harris et al., 2001, Smith, 1997). Economic circumstances may restrict the quantity and quality of PD that organisations can implement, especially for those classified as sessional or on short term contracts. Educational budgets are by no means less prone to economic scrutiny. Therefore, it is essential that any form of PD is effective and realises the quantifiable objective outcomes. Harris et al. indicated that "currently most staff

development is conducted ad hoc with little or no consistency" (p. 23). There is a need for greater emphasis on specific programs that will provide educators with technical competence as well as their professional teaching/training competencies. Basu (1997) recommended that "PD programs require some flexibility in content, duration and place of study" (p. 41). The learner should be able to select the content according to their individual job requirements in order to gain maximum motivation and participation in the program.

A report by The National Training Authority (1997) stated:

> The lack of strategic appreciation of professional development has contributed to its widespread treatment as peripheral to the core in many TAFE institutes and private enterprises. Much of professional development was not considered part of the normal work but, rather, as competing with it. Many organisations made it clear that professional development is not valued, with managers and supervisors not supporting their staff in their development needs. Professional development remains largely an individual concern (p. 56).

This statement suggests that there is a lack of real planning involved with PD. One may ask who is responsible for PD. Does it rest on the shoulders of the individual or should the organisation take a large portion of responsibility? If there are shared benefits to be obtained for both sides then there should be shared expenses. Handy's (1994) "Chinese contract" highlights:

> The importance of compromise as a prerequisite of progress. Both sides have to concede for both to win. It was about the need for trust and belief in the future (p. 81).

For progress to be achieved in a PD activity there needs to be a win-win situation. A win-win in this case is where both the educator and the institute invest in the development of a staff member: they both benefit from the investment. This investment does not always have to come in a monetary form. The training organisation can also exhibit support for PD, recognition of the PD undertaken and provide time allowances for the PD activity. If this investment occurs there is a greater chance that the PD will translate into a PL experience.

Hill and Sims (1997) advocated that an educator's PD should be much more than education and training. PD can embrace the development of educators at the professional, personal, entrepreneurial and general levels. PD can provide educative experiences which are not just restricted to current or future roles but which cater for the reality that the nature of work is in a state of considerable change. PD can assist an educator to keep up to date with current teaching and learning strategies, industry trends and increase motivation and (where necessary) rejuvenate the educator. Educators, who participate in worthwhile PD, can enhance their future value in the employment market place.

If the reality of staffing in the VET sector involves increased casualisation and fixed term contract employment arrangements, it will be difficult to facilitate effective training for all VET educators. The Australian National Training Authority (2003) suggested that there is less support for training of part-time and casual employees in VET education. Thus the evidence suggests that with increased employment of casual workers there is a decrease in the funds invested in training. Thus, it is not clear who has the responsibility for PD of sessional staff.

Since sessional staff comprise of approximately 50% of VET educators (Malley et al., 2000) there may be a real dilemma for RTOs in trying to fulfill the AQTF Standard 1.4 (Appendix 2) in respect of providing quality training and assessment across all of their operations. Standard 7 and now Standard 1 have produced a number of implementation issues and the introduction of the 2007 AQTF requirements has not reduced these challenges. Will training institutes expect their sessional trainers to obtain the appropriate qualification prior to employment or will RTOs provide this training? The alternative to this is to utilise full-time staff, with the required qualifications, as a direct supervisor of the sessional employee for the required VET training. This strategy will satisfy the AQTF requirements but will produce another problem of ultimately decreasing or undermining training qualifications across the VET sector. It has been suggested that the devaluing of the qualification has already occurred with the shift from traditional diploma teaching qualifications in the early 1990s to an industry-based certificate level

qualification required in the current climate.

The VET sector – Australian Quality Training Framework

One objective of this research study was to determine an appropriate teaching qualification for VET educators, both at entry level and in the long term. Therefore it is important to understand the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) registration requirements for RTOs in respect of their trainers and assessors.

The issue of appropriate qualifications for the VET educator is under debate with numerous contemporary practitioners and current governmental policy makers. Pedagogically, educators require a sound understanding of learning principles to become effective educators. In the VET sector, an educator needs to possess vocational skills that are current and be able to develop and update their education and training skills via appropriate PD.

The Staff Development Policy and Priorities Framework (Office of Training and Tertiary Education, 2003) identified a set of key policy elements for the future operations of PD in the VET sector. These principles that support the government's orientation to PD in the State Training System are:

- Strategic co-ordination – endeavoring to make sure PD activities are consistent with Victorian Government policy
- Client-driven quality assurance – endeavouring to make sure VET staff possess the correct capabilities to provide a quality training service to clients
- Cost effective returns – endeavouring to achieve best returns for each professional development dollar (p.1).

These principles for PD provide funding guidance at a national policy level and provide limited implementation strategies. The reality is that decision making responsibility lies in the hands of individual employers. Office of Training and Tertiary Education (2003) imparted a national view that may be accepted or rejected by individual RTO management teams. PD is mainly addressed at the local provider level and, increasingly, by individual staff themselves (Australian National Training Authority, 2003). Decisions concerning the nature of PD, of what,

how much and for whom are at the discretion of the individual RTO management.

The AQTF is the national set of standards which assures nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment services for the clients of Australia's vocational education and training system. The AQTF sets out the minimum standards required by registered training organisations. It Is these set of rules that each RTO is audited against.

The AQTF was introduced in 2001 setting out twelve detailed standards that must be addressed for a RTO to maintain its registration. Standard 7 in the AQTF detailed the qualifications required for both training and assessment in the VET sector. To provide training, the educator must have completed all the competencies in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment from the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training, BSZ98 (or demonstrated the equivalent competencies) or must be under the direct supervision of a person with these competencies. In 2004, the AQTF was reviewed as part of the Australian National Training Authority's commitment to continual improvement. Only minor changes were implemented providing greater clarity of meaning and interpretation. In 2005, the revised standards were fully implemented.

The introduction of a more streamlined AQTF took place in 2007. It now consists of only three standards which incorporate the positive elements of the previous twelve standards. The AQTF 2007 focuses on the quality of services and outcomes for clients rather than on administration requirements. Standard 7 is now detailed in Standard 1, element 1.4. (Refer to Appendix 2). The AQTF 2007 provides a minimum qualification standard for VET educators. This research attempted to determine a qualification requirement to ensure best practice.

Tourism and hospitality education

Tourism and hospitality education has expanded enormously in the last twenty years in Australia. A number of key factors have influenced this growth. Australia now attracts a greater number of international visitors because of the introduction of long range aircraft

which have brought Europe and Australia much closer. There were 1.1 million arrivals in 1985 and this has increased to 5.6 million in 2007 (Australian Bureau of Statistics). The tourism industry is recognised as significantly contributing to Australia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2006-07 tourism directly contributed $38.9 billion to GDP and provided 483000 people with directly related employment (Tourism Australia, 2008). Hobson (1995) indicated that in the 1990's the tourism industry took on greater importance in Australia by providing both employment prospects and economic benefits (p.25). Tourism and hospitality education blossomed at this time and a greater number of universities and VET providers introduced both hospitality and tourism course offerings to their list of programs. In 1987 there were three Higher Education institutions offering programs, in 1995 this had expanded to 21 (Craig-Smith, Davidson & French, 1995). In 2008 the number has grown enormously with courses being offer by 86 institutes in both the private and public VET sector and the university arena (The Australian Government Directory, 2008).

Prospective students are able to choose between numerous courses offered in both the Higher Education and VET sector. Courses range from certificate level, diploma, advanced diploma and associate degrees which now have established pathways to undergraduate and then post-graduate qualifications.

Akin to other industry sectors, tourism and hospitality has experienced progressive and continuous changes in technology and market trends. Educators within this sector have the responsibility of up-dating, refining and extending both their educational knowledge and skills and their understanding of the industry in which they instruct. Inui, Wheeler and Lankford (2006) indicated that the tourism educator is responsible for preparing the tourism and hospitality industry professionals of tomorrow who are able to create and manage the future of the industry. Students should emerge from their studies as critical thinkers who are able to reflect and examine the social responsibilities of the industry as well as possessing the essential employability and vocational skills required by this rapidly expanding industry (Morgan, 2004). Barron (2008) revealed that 'the Y generation of graduates has difference demands and preferences for education and careers to their predecessors'. Educators need to provide a realistic image of the industry, including the associated challenges of working in tourism and hospitality so that

graduates are job ready and comprehend the realities of working life.

The tourism and hospitality industry is comprised of a variety of organisation of various sizes from owner operators to multi-national master caterer. The specialist skills and knowledge required by these organisations can vary greatly. At the time of this study, vocational education in this sector was guided by the Tourism, Hospitality and Events Training Package SIT07, which was scheduled for implementation in 2009. The Tourism, Hospitality and Events Training Package comprises of:

> An integrated set of nationally endorsed competency standards, assessment guidelines and Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications for the tourism, hospitality and events industry. (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2008 Vol 1, p. 1).

The training package provides detailed training information concerning the units of competency required by employees in the tourism hospitality and events industry. The tourism and hospitality industry requires graduate that are highly trained according to the training package and are highly motivated to succeed.

Tourism and hospitality training has traditionally applied a range of teaching and learning strategies: learning in the workplace; internships (Petrillose and Montgomery, 1998); simulated training environments and now online and flexible training tools. Increasingly, educators will need PD to enable them to use these relatively new strategies to support student learning. Educators will need to be able to use the Internet as an e-learning tool for communication with students and possibly a virtual classroom of the future. It is very common for tourism and hospitality students to obtain part-time work within the industry while they are studying. Since this part-time employment can occur outside normal 9 to 5 working hours, e-learning via the internet can provide a more flexible alternative to the traditional classroom (Sigala, 2002).

Conclusion

This research study endeavoured to facilitate an understanding of the effective PD strategies for educators in the tourism and hospitality VET sector and identify the strategies that equipped VET educators with the necessary skills and knowledge for the job of teaching and enhancing student learning outcomes.

Chapter 2 provided a synthesis of the research literature pertaining to adult learning theory; lifelong learning and the learning organisation and, work based and experiential learning. Connections between these theories and the PD of VET educators were also established. Issues and challenges associated with PD practices within the VET sector were discussed and the relevance of the case study area of tourism and hospitality was exposed.

Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the study design and how the research was operationalised.

Chapter 3   Methodology

Introduction

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 provided essential background to studies that have been conducted previously and provided a context for this research. The essential objective of this chapter is to describe the research methods applied when operationalising this study. Elements of a phenomenological research method are explored and narrative inquiry is examined in relation to the application in this research study. The research design is explained and the context of the study and sample for the research are described. The operational stages are clarified and the validation techniques which were utilised are elaborated. Finally, ethical considerations are examined and the limitations of the study are exposed.

Narrative Inquiry

Qualitative research is defined by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) as:

> Multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive naturalistic approach to its subject matter…qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use of and collection of a variety of empirical materials…that describe routines and problematic moments in individual lives (p. 2).

This definition indicates that the qualitative researcher is interested in developing an understanding from the data collected. Narrative inquiry can be located as a form of qualitative research methodology. Narratives or "stories lived and told" are employed to understand the experiences of others (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.20).

Participants in this research study were able to reveal their past experiences by telling the researcher about their personal career journeys with specific focus on any professional development undertaken prior to and during teaching in the tourism and hospitality sector. These stories formed a set of individual portraits of

each educator's vocational history. The educators described a series of events related to their past PD experiences. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated that "narrative inquiry involves the reconstruction of a person's experiences in relationship both to others and to the social milieu" (cited in Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007, p.5).

Benson (2005) suggested that "narrative inquiry allows theorising to grow out of practice and experience thus providing a method for reflection on educational practice" (p.29). Benson applied narrative inquiry to research educational technology in distance education. This methodology was utilised because there was limited knowledge and experience available to assist with building a foundation for future guidelines for practice. McEwan and Egan (1995) explained that:

> … narratives form a framework within which our discourses about human thought and possibility evolve, and they provide the structure and functional backbone for very specific explanation of this or that educational practice (p. xiii).

Narrative inquiry was used in this study to facilitate the collection of individual experiences of PD practice in the VET arena to assist in the development of key recommendations for effective PD procedures at local and national levels. Gall, Gall and Borg (2005) define a narrative as:

> A form of reporting qualitative research study that uses poems, stories, folk tales, anecdotes, or other literary genres to describe research procedures or findings. It is a method of synthesizing qualitative research findings that involves using a consistent writing style to create a brief description of each study (p. 552).

One of the foundations of narrative inquiry is the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Narrative inquirers understand that both the researcher and the participants of the study will learn and change during the research process. As the collection of data expands, the researcher will develop a greater understanding of the research area and may form views and make judgments, especially if the researcher has previous knowledge and opinions about the study context. Due to these possible assumptions, the researcher must

preserve a distance from the research participant and try to be objective even though they may be embedded in the context of the study. The researcher is required to impartially interpret the data collected, while understanding that the relationship he/she has with the researched is not static and there is an interactive relationship between the two parties.

Research design

Qualitative research methods were applied to collect the primary data for this research. Qualitative methods are predominantly oriented towards exploration and discovery of social phenomena through the use of inductive processes (Mininichiello, 1995). The qualitative research technique, narrative inquiry, was employed for data collection and analysis. Qualitative research offers the opportunity to explore the rich contextual elements central to this type of study (Cohen and Manion, 1994). The study deliberately set out to investigate and examine the real world practices of VET educators (Patton, 1990).

An instrumental case study was applied, where the particular case played a supportive role in developing an understanding of the issues concerning PD practices of VET educators (Stake, 2003). Yin (2003b) proposed that a case study contributes uniquely to our knowledge of the individual, organisational, social and political phenomena (p. 2). Yin (2003a) further suggested that case studies are a preferred strategy for research when "how" and "why" questions are posed (p. 7). A case study approach provides an inductive process to deal with and understand any significant issues of practice thus providing insight to improve this practice (Merrian, 1998). Based on Stake and Yin's research, a case study approach was utilised for this research study. I elected to collect data that could answer the question of "how" PD is currently being implemented in the VET sector and "why" this is the current approach. The research design is revealed in Figure 2 depicting a concept map of the entire research methodology.
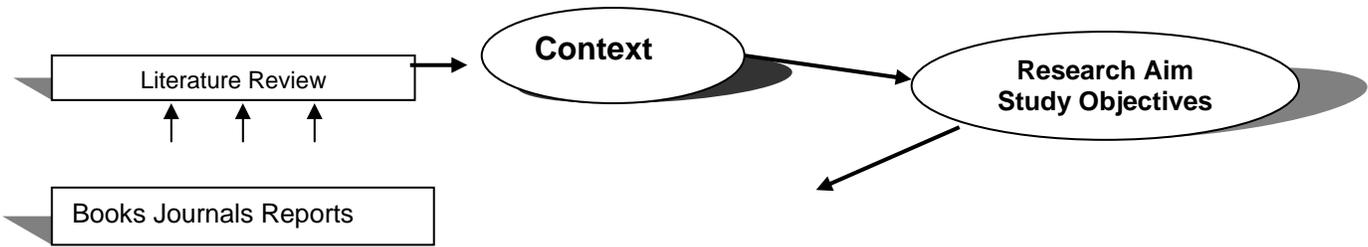
Methodology
Case Study - Hospitality and Tourism Educators
Interview questions developed from study objectives
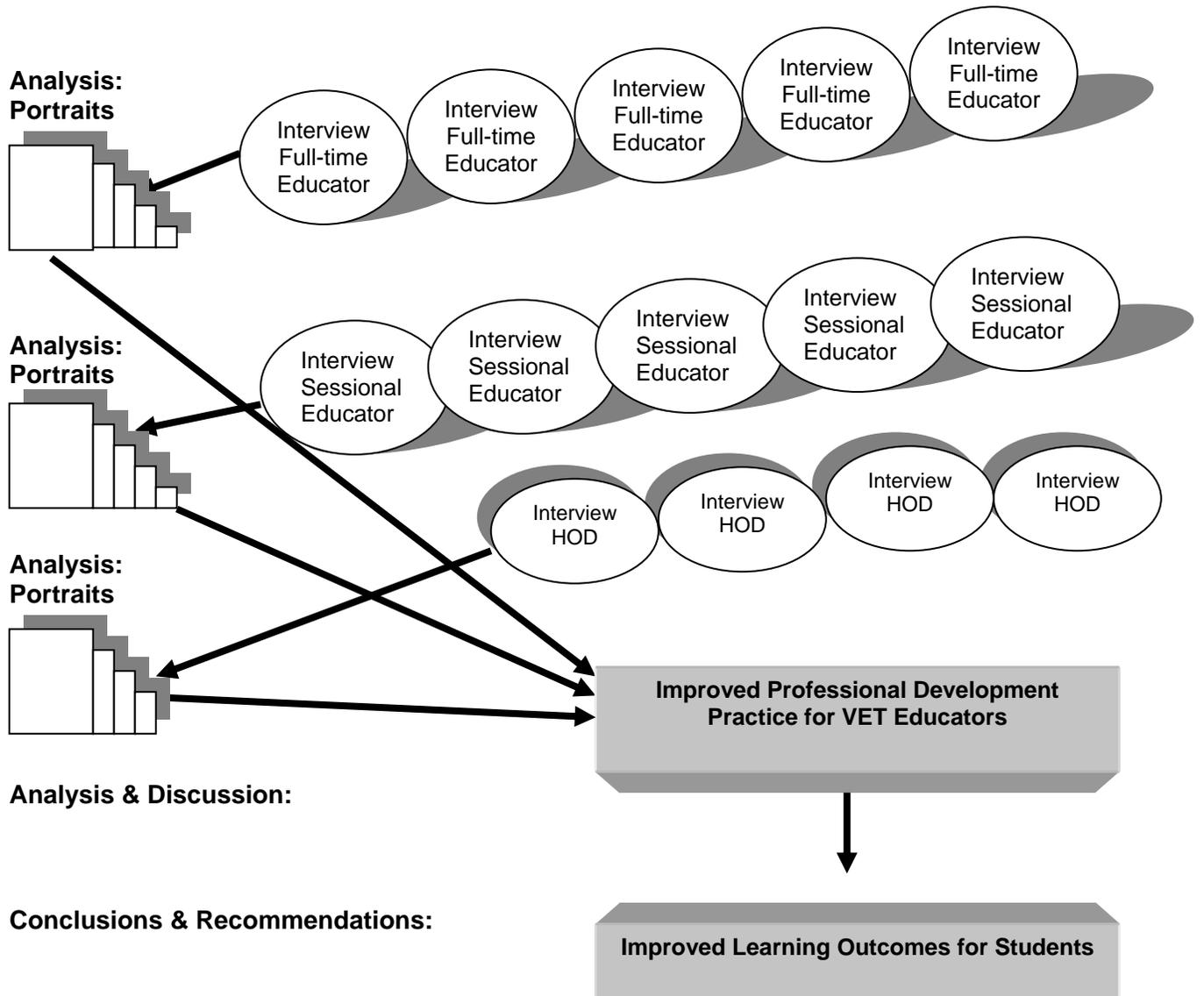
Figure 2 - Concept map of research design

Rationale for qualitative methods

To explore the qualitative research method, a case study approach was applied. "The case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied" (Stake, 2003, p. 134). The case study context for this research was VET tourism and hospitality educators in Victoria with a predominant participation from educators in the central Melbourne metropolitan region. A case study aspires to develop an in-depth understanding of a situation (Punch, 1998). Bell (1993) believed that "a case study method allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance or situation and to identify, or attempt to identify, the various interactive processes at work" (p. 8). I (as the researcher) was able to obtain richer and more focused data by only concentrating on a specific case in the VET arena. The case of VET tourism and hospitality educators assisted in identifying the PD practices of those working in this area. In this situation the case was instrumental in examining and understanding the underlining issues associated with PD (Stake, 2003).

Selection of contexts and sample for research

The case study context for this study was VET tourism and hospitality educators in Victoria with a predominant participation from educators in the central Melbourne metropolitan region. The rationale for this selection was that the VET sector is large and diverse and for this reason I focused on one specific field or discipline of study. In addition, my background is in the tourism and hospitality sector and this prior industry experience provided an additional basis of understanding of this division and enabled access to a greater number of potential contacts to assist in the data collection stages of the study.

I selected 14 participants for the first two stages of the study: 5 sessional educators, 5 full-time educators and 4 management staff (see figure 2). The sessional and full-time participants were involved with face-to-face teaching in their organisations at the frontline. The frontline of the VET sector is where the educator has contact with the student this may be in the traditional classroom or via a

flexible teaching delivery mode. The management staff members were responsible for a hospitality and tourism department. All participants were employed in the VET sector working in a tourism and hospitality department in Victorian, predominantly in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Participants were selected according to the return of an expression-of-interest form. The sequence of interviews was not dependent on their employment arrangements (full-time or sessional). It was decided that the management interviews should be conducted on completion of the front-line staff interviews, because it was perceived that the front-line data could influence the direction of the interview questions applied to collect the data from management participants.

The study participants were from the TAFE and private provider sectors. Some of the participants had experience teaching students in VET programs located in the secondary schools sector (VETiS). To be able to comprehend, interpret, analyse the data collected, it was important for me to possess a good understanding of the culture from within (Miller and Crabtree, 2004). I have also been employed in the VET sector in both TAFE and in a private provider over the past 15 years.

Potential participants from the following organisations were invited to take part in this study: Association of VET Professionals (VISTA); Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) and VET institutions within the Melbourne metropolitan area. Permission to conduct the research was sought from senior management at each organisation, (e.g., Head of Department of Tourism and Hospitality). Each Head of Department was sent an email (Refer to Appendix 3) which introduced the research study and solicited their support in circulating a letter to potential participants within their organisation. The information letter (Refer to Appendix 4) invited participation in the study and provided my contact details plus an expression-of-interest form.

Potential participants completed the form and returned it to me via email. I contacted the interested person via email and clarified any issues of concern. An information kit, including the information letter (Refer to Appendix 4), consent form

(Refer to Appendix 5) to be signed by participant and a revocation of consent form (Refer to Appendix 6) were distributed to inform the participant of their obligations if they were prepared to take part in the study. Suitable interview dates and times were arranged with each participant taking into consideration: time pressures, availability of participants and the reduction of disturbances (Bell, 1993). Interviews were conducted at the participant's place of work. Consent forms were collected at the interview or received via standard mail prior to the interview.

At the interview, I clarified the process which had been previously explained in the information letter (Refer to Appendix 4). Participants were again supplied with contact details for the researcher, supervisor and secretary of the University Human Research Ethics Committee should problems or issues arise at any stage.

An attempt was made to include a representative sample of participants based on both gender and age (the mid 30s to the mid 60s). 12 participants were from the TAFE sector of the VET arena including one of whom also taught students in the VETiS system. Two additional participants were from the private training sector within the VET arena.

Individual interviews

Individual interviews were conducted in the first two phases of data collection. Semi-structured interviews (Esterberg, 2002) provided the researcher with some certainty about obtaining data concerning the research questions which could be then evaluated between participants (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). A sequence of questions was employed as a guide. While I endeavored to ask the same specific questions of each participant, I also retained some flexibility that enabled me to ask additional questions for clarification. This questioning flexibility allowed the interview to be a dialogue of discussion with open, probing questions rather than a strict question and answer sequence. The objective of these semi-structured interviews was to investigate an area of interest that allowed the participants to express their perspectives in their own words (Esterberg). Marshall and Rossman (2006) stated that fundamental to the implementation of qualitative research is the

development of the participant's perspective on social phenomenon. "Situations and experiences should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it" (p. 82). The participant should lead the discussion and the interview should facilitate the conversation. Using a semi-structured interview method provided a friendly atmosphere and assisted the development of a rapport, thus setting a comfortable environment for the interviewee. The participants were able to follow a natural conversation during the development of the interview (Brown and Dowling, 1998). This natural flow of discussion assisted me to collect and obtain an honest account of the participants' PD experiences, rather than a stilted review of their past.

The decision to record the interviews enabled me to transcribe them and thus develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the data collected. Personally transcribing the interview data provided greater accuracy and enabled me to concurrently identify possible themes and material required for analysis (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). Transcriptions were completed progressively to ensure that I had current familiarity with the discussion. Transcriptions were verbatim and only limited nuances and speech patterns were recorded (Esterberg, 2002).

Data collection

The study was operationalised by collecting data over 2 stages.

- Stage 1: Individual interviews with front-line staff – sessional and full-time educators whose prime role was to provide face to face teaching to students
- Stage 2: Individual interviews with Management (HOD) whose prime role was to provide administration services to manage a hospitality and tourism department.

(Refer to Figure 2 – Concept map of research design p. 44).

The front-line interview participants were drawn from two sections of a training institute's hierarchy: full-time teaching educators and sessional teaching educators. It was anticipated that these two key stakeholder groups would possess varying

degrees of organisational commitment, thus they would provide a range of educational perspectives and experiences about access to PD. Management interview participants were at a HOD level. This position within the educational hierarchy is initially responsible for decisions relating to PD.

Stage one: Individual interviews with front-line staff

1. Five individual interviews of 1 hour were conducted with educators who were employed full-time with a minimum of 3 years teaching experience. Their major role was to provide teaching delivery. They operated at the frontline. For the purpose of this study, this group was classified as full-time educators.

2. Five individual interviews of 1 hour were conducted with educators who were employed on a sessional basis with a minimum of 1 year teaching experience. Their major role was to provide teaching delivery. They operated at the frontline. This group was classified as sessional educators.

When considering who to interview, I identified a minimum number of years of teaching experience for both the full-time and sessional educators (i.e. 1 year). The application of this selection criteria was to ensure participants had sufficient awareness of this type of employment tenure. The sequence of individual interviews was dependent on availability of the participants.

Question schedule 1 was developed from the study objectives (Refer to Appendix 7). These questions were designed for educators who were predominantly responsible for teaching.

Stage 2: Individual interviews with management

After completing Stage 1 of data collection, four individual one-hour interviews were conducted with VET managers who volunteered to participate in the study. The managers were classified as Heads of Department and were predominantly responsible for the operational aspects of VET department administration. These

participants had held this position for a minimum of 1 year and had therefore experienced the role sufficiently to participate in this research. For the purposes of this study, they were classified as Head of Department (HOD).

Question schedule 2 was also developed from the study objectives (Refer to Appendix 8). Management interview participants were initially responsible for decisions relating to PD. The questions were designed for management personnel who were responsible for planning, implementing and approving PD for teaching educators. The goal of the Stage 2 interviews was to provide a management perspective of challenges associated with PD practices.

Portraits

Eckersley (1997) borrowing from Lightfoot (1983) developed a portrait approach to explore specific schools' cultural identities. This narrative approach has been adapted in this research, to assist with the analysis and presentation of data obtained during Stages 1 and 2. The 14 individual interviews with front-line educators (sessional and full-time) and the VET managers were developed into 14 individual portraits (Refer to Chapter 4).

Burns (1998) described research as "a systematic investigation to find answers to a problem…a naturalistic approach to research emphasizes the importance of subjective experience of individuals, with a focus on qualitative analysis" (p. 3). The portraits related an individual's personal PD experience, providing in-depth and rich data presentation. It was important to obtain rich and thick descriptions of the participants' PD experiences (Creswell, 2003). Portraits provided the reader with a glimpse of the participants' real world experiences thus disclosing possible answers and solutions to the questions posed in the study objectives.

The portraits introduced the reader to the participants' vocational history by revealing a personal career journey with specific focus on professional development activities undertaken prior to and during teaching in the tourism and hospitality sector. Lightfoot (1983) explained this as telling a sequence of events

"from the inside out" (p. 7). The portraits provided rich descriptions of each participant's experiences in the tourism and hospitality sector. Within and across all portraits, were specific references to areas relating to the research questions. Krathwohl (1993) stated that "qualitative methods are inductive and allow problems to emerge from the data" (p. 311). These areas or themes assisted in highlighting and illuminating the current VET practices for all participants.

The two question schedules utilised in the interviews (Refer to Appendix 7 and 8), which were formulated from the study objectives, provided the basis for the sub headings to be investigated and analysed in the portraits. "The challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal" (Patton, 1990, pp. 371-372). The data collected was transcribed and analysed via content analysis process that uncovered patterns, themes and categories of significance within the data which evolved from the interview question schedules.

Validation and authenticity

Each participant received a copy of their portrait via email. This allowed the participants to make corrections or clarifications to their portrait (Esterberg, 2002). Each participant was asked to validate and authenticate their portrait and offer additional data where relevant. Seven out of 10 front-line participants responded to this request and provided additional data. All management participants participated in this member-checking process and provided additional detail to their initial portraits. Creswell (2003) described member-checking "as a process to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings by taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to participants and determining whether the participants feel that they are accurate" (p. 196). Silverman (2005) referred to this process as "respondent validation" (p. 212).

Ethical considerations

Ethical issues must be considered whenever a research project is associated with the collection of data from human participants. An Ethics application to conduct this research was submitted to the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee and approval was received prior to commencement of data collection.

Participants signed the appropriate consent form (Refer to Appendix 5) and were provided with a revocation consent form if required (Refer to Appendix 6). I provided information to all participants indicating that they could withdraw from the research at any time prior to publication.

Permission was sought from participants to record the interviews. The recordings were transcribed by me without using administrational support, thus reducing the chance of personal information being supplied to a third party. Confidentiality was ensured with pseudonyms being used for all participants and organisations.

To reduce any chances of anxiety and to increase honesty and disclosure of information, I limited the discussion to the participants' perception of professional development activities relevant to the VET sector. This strategy was employed in case participants were concerned that their careers could be at risk if opinions expressed in the interviews about colleagues and managers were made public.

Study limitations

The study focused on one educational sector, Vocational Education and Training, in one State in Australia, Victoria, with a small number of participants: 14 educators.

The VET sector within Australia is comprised of a very large and diverse workforce. The scope of this project was limited to hospitality and tourism educators in the Victorian region with most participants being employed in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Data was collected from three divisions of the hierarchical organisation structure; sessional educators, full-time educators and operational managers, (HODs).

The hospitality and tourism VET sector case study was chosen because I possessed a sound understanding of this context. I have worked as a teacher and manager in this area for the past 15 years. This prior knowledge of the sector is a strength and also a limitation. A limitation of narrative inquiry discussed previously is the relationship of the researcher to what is being researched. In the case of this research study I possessed a sound knowledge of the study context and also held views concerning current PD practices. "Case studies are particularly vulnerable to subjective biases and subjective interpretation can influence the outcomes" (Isaac and William, 1995, p. 52). I was aware that my experience in this VET sector might influence the outcomes and recommendations of this study. It was, however, important for me to acknowledge that I held views about certain aspects of this study. All participants were aware of the fact that I was also involved with the education of students in hospitality and tourism. I endeavored to only ask questions from the schedule and not to comment on any emerging issues discussed. Additional discussion would be developed by the participant but not the researcher (Bell, 1993). I attempted to reduce the incidence of bias during the individual interviews. I did not add additional remarks to the participants' comments and provided minimal personal commentary. I was conscious to allow each participant to speak freely about their personal views and perceptions concerning PD.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a description of the research methodologies used to support the data collection and analysis processes. Bouma (2000) suggested that "qualitative researchers exercise great discipline in order to find out 'what is going on here' from the perspective of those in the situation that is being research" (p. 171). Chapter 4 provides portraits of 14 front-line and management staff in the VET hospitality and tourism sector.

Chapter 4   Portraits

Introduction

This chapter focuses on a set of 14 portraits. These portraits provide the reader with a lens through which each participant's vocational history and personal career journey can be brought into sharper focus (Goodwin, 2005). Each journey has a specific focus on professional development activities undertaken prior to and during teaching in the VET hospitality and tourism sector. The portraits provided valuable data to be further explained and explored in Chapter 5.

This chapter is divided into 3 sections:

1. Full-time educator portraits: Phillipa, Jane, Richard, Sarah-Anne, Giuseppe
2. Sessional educator portraits: Elizabeth, James, Jenny, Mary, Natasha
3. Heads of Department portraits: Jack, Lynne, Joanne, Mark

Full-time educators

The following 5 portraits relate to educators who had been working full-time in the VET sector for at least 3 years. The full-time participants were Phillipa, Jane, Richard, Sarah-Anne and Giuseppe. The names used in these portraits are pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality for all participants. These participants worked in the tourism and hospitality sector at a metropolitan TAFE institute. Their major role was to provide teaching delivery, which predominantly involved student instruction. For the purpose of this study this group was classified as full-time VET educators.

Phillipa

Phillipa was aged between 40 and 49 and had been teaching in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for approximately 12 years. She had always been employed on a full-time basis predominantly with one educational institute in the TAFE sector of the VET system. At the time of the study interview she was

working as a full-time coordinator at a TAFE institute and had been employed in this position for the previous two years. Phillipa's teaching experience included: administration, management, leadership, customer relations, tourism studies and sales and marketing. She completed a Bachelor of Arts degree prior to commencing teaching and then completed a Graduate Diploma of Education (once she commenced teaching) and had just completed a Master of Education. She had also attended a number of short courses on customer relations as well as industry-specific courses such as fares and ticketing and reservation systems courses. In addition to this PD, Phillipa has attended tourism and hospitality industry conferences.

Professional development and professional learning

Phillipa defined PD as:

> A range of things and it would mean anything that contributed to you being competent in your profession, so I suppose from a teaching point of view that's perhaps my teaching qualification and my tourism qualifications (Interview, Phillipa, August, 2004).

In the 1970s Phillipa completed a Bachelor of Arts degree and concurrently started a Diploma of Teaching in Secondary Education. During her education studies she was employed in the Tourism Industry and because of this employment she left the last round of her teaching practicum uncompleted. A number of years later she commenced a Graduate Diploma of Teaching (P-12). She considered the mix of travel and tourism experience and a qualification in education suitable preparation for her to commence teaching in the VET sector.

Phillipa was motivated to complete these qualifications because her original degree was a family expectation that she would complete further study. This first experience warmed Phillipa to study. She enjoyed it and learnt to love learning. She returned to do the Graduate Diploma in her mid 30s to facilitate a career change. Finally she undertook the MEd based on personal interest and motivation:

> I just love education and wanted to delve into it further. I suppose it could also assist a long-term interest as I would like to eventually

teach teachers how to teach (Edited information, Phillipa, May, 2006).

Phillipa was employed during her time in industry by a prominent airline and was able to obtain valuable PD during this period. She was sent on a number of industry training courses:

There was a lot of PD on customer service and dealing with clients, dealing with different cultures and that sort of thing as well as the professional PD that I needed like fares and ticketing and reservation systems and all that sort of thing (Interview, Phillipa, August, 2004).

Phillipa was able to convert these PD experiences into professional learning (PL) through her improved knowledge and skills application on the job. These skills and knowledge provided a basis for the subject content that Phillipa was teaching.

The funding for the majority of Phillipa's PD was provided by her industry employer and also the TAFE institute. She personally funded her Master of Education degree. However, even this qualification was partially funded by the TAFE institute. She was able to have the cost of two subjects covered and time release to attend the designated lessons was granted. Phillipa commented that her TAFE institute was very proactive with the provision of PD. She had been very satisfied with the support and funding arrangements for her PD.

Her MEd studies translated into improved classroom teaching and learning activities. A required task in one of the subjects was to apply different teaching methodologies to classroom delivery. This newly acquired understanding of teaching methodologies energised Phillipa and motivated her with her classroom delivery. "So really that has been fantastic and I think that is why I like the classes because we are continuously thinking about our delivery" (Interview, Phillipa, August 2004).

The only negative PD activity that Phillipa could remember was a computer-based training session. This PD was unrewarding because the trainer was not effective in imparting the delivery information:

> I thought I would stop going because in the end the delivery was not there and the back up was not there and we were all confused. So if you had an idea with computers you were OK and the rest of us just sat there and thought, "I do not know what is going on here". So yes it was a delivery problem (Interview, Phillipa, August 2004).

VET teaching qualifications

Phillipa was more than satisfied with the pathway she had taken to obtain a teaching position. She believed that:

> A VET teacher needs to have thought through her philosophy of education. You need to be very sure on your own philosophy of education and I think you also have to have studied a range of methods and a range of ways of dealing with the different problems that you come across in a classroom and I think that the Diploma of Education helped with this (Interview, Phillipa, August 2004).

Phillipa had quite specific opinions about the quality of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace training. She stated that "I really think that Certificate IV is not enough. I think you need an educational qualification as it is important to keep learning about education" (Interview, Phillipa, August 2004).

Phillipa possessed very strong views about the type of qualification, skills and knowledge an educator should have prior to commencing a teaching career. She stated:

> I think that you should obtain an educational qualification. Why should you be over-seeing people's education when you do not have proper qualifications yourself? I think yes you need industry experience and you need to understand the industry but you really need to know how to teach as well because basically what we are on about is educating people (Interview, Phillipa, August, 2004).

Phillipa also added a final statement about her view on the required qualification level for a VET educator:

> I think it is time that educational qualifications became mandatory for all teachers and by that I don't mean a Cert IV. That could be a

starting point but people should compulsorily upgrade that qualification while working. We wouldn't accept a nurse without a qualification: why should we accept our educators without one (Email, Phillipa, May, 2006).

Phillipa's view of being employed as a sessional staff member

Phillipa commented that the majority of staff members in her Department were employed on a full-time basis and their department only used sessionals if there was a specific skills gap. This employment of predominantly full-time staff members allowed the department to deliver many units in a holistic manner, grouping units together and blending the assessment tasks to incorporate all units. Only the full-time staff had the time allocated to work together to develop holistic delivery strategies which provided a more real life training experience. From Phillipa's experience:

> There is a problem with sessional staff. They aren't here all of the time and you cannot communicate with them. For us to do a holistic assessment program you cannot deal with people who are not here on campus (Interview, Phillipa, August, 2004).

Phillipa revealed that PD activities were predominantly funded by the Institute and were proactively supported. She suggested that this access to funding may have been due to the fact that many of the staff members were full-time. The TAFE institute could see transferable benefits from the PD because the staff would gain updated skills and knowledge and be available to apply this learning in the workplace.

Phillipa suggested that sessionals could access PD that was delivered on campus at her institute especially if this PD did not cost anything. She indicated that any PD with an attached cost was treated cautiously by the institute. She pointed out that sessionals often worked in a range of places and ended up running between campuses and it was not all that practical for them to pursue PD, which meant they were often left out of this training.

VET teaching competencies

Phillipa suggested there were a number of competencies required by a VET

educator. She pointed out that a VET educator requires sound industry skills and knowledge. The educator must be able to understand how to implement a unit from the Industry Training Package.

Phillipa's final thought

At the conclusion of the interview Phillipa stated:

> The best professional development I have done is the informal learning; finding out what people are really doing out there in industry. It has been a great way to keep abreast of what is happening. I mean I could go and do a formal course but it wouldn't give me half the information that I get from chats with people who are happy to give up time and come and talk to the students. We run an industry lecture series for our students where industry guests come in to talk to the student about a range of topics in running their businesses – this has been invaluable for both the students and us as teachers. It's like action learning in life. (Interview, Phillipa, August, 2004).

Jane

Jane was aged between 40 and 49 and had been teaching in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for approximately 10 years. She had worked at a number of TAFE institutes as a full-time staff member. Jane's teaching experience included: occupational health and safety, hygiene, computer technology, management and leadership. Prior to commencing teaching, Jane completed a Diploma of Foods and Food Service, a Diploma of Business (Project Management), a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, a Diploma of Education and Training and she had recently completed a Bachelor of Education and Training. During her working career she had also completed a variety of short courses which focused on management skills and industrial relations.

Professional development and professional learning

Jane defined PD as:

> Not only training but opportunities to improve my work related skills … not just hands-on teaching skills but also industry updates, application of technology in industry, the latest gizmos and any skills that will help to improve teaching or my job (Interview, Jane, October 2004).

Jane suggested that she was able to gain these skills via formal and informal pathways. She described formal as structured, undergraduate and accredited courses and informal as personal research on the internet, reading journals and visitations to industry and institutional workplaces.

Jane worked in the health sector prior to commencing teaching and attended courses which focused on management skills and industrial relations. There was no pressure to undertake any additional formal training once she had completed the Diploma of Foods and Food Service after completing her secondary school education. Jane did not consider this qualification to be a form of PD. She described 'it as undergraduate training' and it was fully funded by her employer at the time (Interview, Jane, October 2004).

After commencing teaching 10 years ago, Jane embarked on a self-funded Bachelor of Education and Training degree which took a number of years to complete. She obtained a small monetary subsidy from her employer at that time but no time allowance was given for this study. After moving work locations to her current employer she was able to use seven days of required PD to compensate for attending lectures on a Sunday.

Jane completed additional PD that focused on computer skills, Recognition of Prior Learning assessor training and lots of "small bits and pieces" that she could no longer recall (Interview, Jane, October 2004). While questioning the value of these forgotten PD activities, she pointed out that hopefully some skills gained at these activities had since become second nature. Jane believed the value of PD also extended beyond the session aims to the incidental learning exchange between participants.

One of Jane's very beneficial PD experiences was a three day desktop publishing course using Microsoft Word. She was able to apply the skills she learnt directly into her day-to-day work activities; it was very relevant to her current work requirements. She could also see that this training translated into improved

learning outcomes for her students. She developed a unit of study using a flexible delivery mode and gained positive feedback from the students concerning this unit. This PD initiative depicted a successful transformation of the PD into professional learning (PL) for her.

Departmental development sessions or year forward planning days were examples of inadequate PD for her. She explained:

> When the department staff get together in a formal format to work through different issues often there isn't closure on the issues discussed. We often start various things but do not have a sense of achievement at the end of the day. Plus we are unable to apply what we have discussed to our work (Interview, Jane, October 2004).

Jane felt frustrated with these types of PD because she could not see the relevance and any immediate implementation into her workplace. There was no PL obtained from these PD activities and this caused a decrease in her personal motivation after completing the training.

VET teaching qualifications

Jane obtained her Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training concurrently with a Bachelor of Education. Her view was that:

> The Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training isn't sufficient … may be as an entry but it is very basic and there has been a de-skilling of teachers in the TAFE sector … the Certificate IV might be acceptable as an entry point but one should be strongly encouraged to continue their education training from this point of entry (Interview, Jane, October 2004).

Jane also suggested that "to study beyond a Certificate IV you need to be in a training role ... to get benefits from that learning" (Interview, Jane, October 2004). There needs to be an application of the learning to a work environment and this application will contribute to the PL experience.

While Jane was completing the Bachelor of Education she was required to have a workplace supervisor or mentor. In this case the person was not required to

observe Jane's teaching practices but was there to provide advice and support in delivery strategies. Jane was able to ask her mentor to advise her about teaching and learning issues that she had experienced during her lesson delivery. Jane said the workplace supervisor "talked through your class preparation and so forth … prior to delivering and then reviewed your class after delivery" (Interview, Jane, October 2004). Jane indicated that this feedback provided a chance to have some reflection about her practice.

Jane's view of being employed as a sessional staff member

In Jane's experience, sessional educators' access to PD was very limited and in some cases non existent, compared to what was available for full-time or contract employees. Jane believed given the reliance on sessionals, the impact of such inconsistencies was significant for the sessional staff, their students and the organisation.

VET teaching competencies

Jane believed that a VET educator is required to have the skills and knowledge to provide a suitable learning environment for all participants. Providing an effective learning environment can at times be difficult if the class comprises of some students who display challenging behaviours. Jane described a half-day training session which focused on different types of challenging classroom behaviours and strategies to address them as a valuable PD session. She was able to apply this PD directly to her work environment therefore translating the PD into a PL experience.

Jane was fortunate to be able work in a team teaching environment when she first started teaching. She voluntarily attended a more experienced teacher's class prior to her own delivery. This classroom observation provided her with example of how to improve her teaching quality and also achieved better delivery consistency across classes. Jane was able to develop her teaching skills and knowledge and this increased confidence in her own teaching ability and had eased her transition from industry to a career in education.

Responsibility for professional development

Jane believed that PD had a "personal growth aspect and that a lot of the personal growth is the individual's responsibility but then there is also the employer's responsibility. This shows a commitment to the staff to develop their skills" (Interview, Jane, October 2004).

Jane was able to access ten days per year of PD from her employer. With this employer, the access to negotiated financial support and suitable time release was provided so long as it did not interrupt scheduled classes. Jane was very appreciative of this formal arrangement. She stated that "this was the first place I have had a clearly defined number of days for PD. I am now able to connect my PD activities to a formal yearly work-plan which is negotiated between myself and management" (Interview, Jane, October 2004).

Richard

Richard was aged between 40 and 49 and had been teaching in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for approximately 15 years. Since commencing teaching, he has experienced full-time tenure at two educational Institutes in the TAFE sector of the VET system. Richard commenced teaching in the area of cookery and further developed his scope of teaching delivery to include: occupational health and safety, hygiene, food and beverage studies, management and leadership. He completed a trade qualification in cookery, a Certificate of Proficiency, prior to commencing a teaching career. Very shortly after beginning teaching Richard completed a Diploma of Education (TAFE) and then further obtained a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. In addition to this training he attended a variety of short courses.

Professional development and professional learning

Richard defined PD as "a way of people gaining knowledge to then be able to perform effectively in their job roles" (Interview, Richard, November 2004). Richard indicated that PD could be obtained via formal and informal pathways. The Institute he was working at the time of the study interview was very proactive in supporting

PD. Some form of PD was part of the departmental meeting process and when a training gap was discovered management was eager to close that gap with appropriate PD activity. The institute had an official PD officer employed to allocate funds to PD activities requested by staff across all disciplines at the TAFE institute. There was a main file kept on all PD completed by the staff at the institute therefore providing a formal record. Richard identified three reasons why the maintenance of a central file was important. Richard stated that:

1. It is a formal record / portfolio of new and acquired skills over a period of time
2. The expanding portfolio demonstrates to the employer of the employees' commitment to ongoing learning and development
3. It is a form of evidence for AQTF auditors to demonstrate that you are keeping up to date with changes in laws, industry developments and technology (Interview, Richard, November 2004).

Richard completed his cookery apprenticeship at a large hotel and was fortunate to experience a very comprehensive and well-planned training program. He spent time in all sections of the hotel's kitchens and in addition was required to complete a project to develop an area of interest. During his apprenticeship, Richard funded a further course in pastries at one of the main cookery institutes. He did this extra training because he perceived a deficiency in his skill set in that area. Richard revealed that at the end of the pastry course he realised that he could now do what was required but he had no real interest in developing this area any further. He considered it to be a deficiency that he had improved but not an area of passion which he wanted to develop.

Upon completing his apprenticeship, Richard worked in the culinary sector of the hospitality industry and really did not undertake any further formal study but worked at a number of establishments gaining further experience, skills and knowledge as he developed his craft of cookery.

Once Richard commenced his teaching career he was required to gain a teaching qualification. He asserted that:

> As a part of the conditions when I first started teaching I was required to complete a Diploma of Education: TAFE. It was fully

funded by the institute and comprised of two days a week for two years and there was also a corresponding reduction in my full-time teaching load (Interview, Richard, November 2004).

Part of the Diploma course required Richard to be supervised by a more experienced teacher or mentor at their institute and also a lecturer from the awarding university. Richard was also required to complete a number of observations and practicums in the classroom and then he was assessed by the lecturer. Richard found this course very valuable. He mentioned that:

I was happy that I went and did the Diploma because it helped prepare me for the classroom environment rather than just providing basic skills … it gave me a good grounding at the time (Interview, Richard, November 2004).

Richard described positive PD experiences as learning that he was able to apply directly to his teaching or any session that presented a network-building opportunity. Some of the valuable PD activities that facilitated this learning experience for him were the Diploma of Education, attending a TAFE hospitality and tourism conference and an overseas tour of Singapore to visit a Culinary Expo and a number of international hotels to observe and discuss Asian cookery techniques. These PD activities provided excellent examples of PD that he converted into professional learning (PL).

One disappointing PD experience was a course that Richard was told he had to attend where the delivery was rather dry and boring. It focused on new occupation health and safety requirements. Richard stated that:

I walked away from that feeling uncomfortable with this added responsibility that I had taken on, and responsibility that I didn't have a lot of influence over because of an aging practical working environment (Interview, Richard, November 2004).

The learning acquired from this course was viewed in a pessimistic light and although it had immediate application Richard had not been motivated to obtain this information.

Richard also completed the assessment section of the Certificate IV in Assessment

and Workplace Training and considering his years of teaching and previous completion of a Diploma of Education, he was able to obtain the full Certificate IV Assessment and Workplace Training qualification.

VET teaching qualifications

Richard considered the qualification pathway he followed was successful. He stated that "going off and doing a Certificate IV is a bare minimum. You really are coming in raw and have got a long way to go in development before you are really going to get your finger on the pulse" (Interview, Richard November 2004). Richard suggested that in the Diploma of Education, the practicum, observation and discussion with your mentor/supervisor were exceptionally valuable because this reflection experience occurred over a two year period and he was able to obtain continual feedback and make adjustments and modifications to his teaching style. It provided him with confidence: "I gained a lot of useful information and a lot of useful skills that would have taken me years to have developed on my own, if it all" (Interview, Richard November 2004).

Richard's view of being employed as a sessional staff member

Richard believed that money is tight across the whole TAFE system and getting tighter every year. In his experience, the funding set aside for PD was generally only available for full-time staff members with sessional teachers receiving a very small portion. Richard stated:

> The poor sessional teacher doesn't even get a look in. In most cases, it's these people that need the greatest amount of PD to provide them with critical classroom management skills and to help them understand the burden of administrative requirements needing to be performed in order to meet AQTF standards (Email, Richard, May, 2006).

The institutes where Richard worked tended to focus on professional development for what the institute would gain. Richard indicated that organisations do not always focus on the longer term gain such as succession planning for teachers moving "up" through the institute.

VET teaching competencies

Richard highlighted some specific examples of what he considered to be essential teaching competencies. He suggested, for example, that educators need to connect with their students and be able to impart their skills and knowledge. This connection could be achieved by providing lots of variety in their classroom delivery. He felt that it was also important to be able to manage the learning environment and reduce the number of disruptions by students with challenging behaviours. Ultimately the focus should be on maximising learning for all students. Richard pointed out that:

> A good understanding of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) and the compulsory policy and procedures is essential. A teacher has to be able to complete all the administrative requirements as well as the delivery in the classroom" (Interview, Richard, November 2004).

Richard further stated that:

> One of the biggest problems is obtaining people who fully understand AQTF requirements. We are constantly conducting internal audits…but some people are still getting past the system by not following through on what is required (Interview, Richard, November 2004).

Responsibility for professional development

Richard believed that the responsibility for PD was a shared responsibility, partly individual and partly from the organisation. He stated that:

> PD lies in several different quarters. Certainly a staff member should be able to identify what PD that they should be doing. May be their weaker areas or areas they want to develop further and may be specialise in it. It should be done in consultation with management to foster any opportunities. But I also see it as the role of the institute as a whole to help coordinate the funding, to allocate the funding to areas that are necessary (Interview, Richard, November 2004).

Richard's final thought

In the past, Richard experienced support for some of the PD that he participated in. His current institute, like many others was under pressure with the amount of financial funding available but this situation had not created a huge problem for

Richard because there was a culture of ongoing PD within his department and genuine support for PD from his direct manager.

Sarah-Anne

Sarah-Anne was aged between 30 and 39 years and had been teaching in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for approximately 10 years. She had held a teaching position at three educational institutes in the TAFE sector of the VET system. Sarah-Anne was working as a full-time educator and had been with her employer for the past six years. Sarah-Anne taught in a number of areas including: administration, management, leadership, customer relations, meetings, events, sales and marketing. She had completed an Associate Diploma of Hospitality and a Post Graduate Diploma of Education. In addition to these, she had attended a variety of short courses including:

- Project Management Course - to assist with delivery of a subject related to feasibility and business planning
- Sales Skills Course to update knowledge in this area to enhance teaching
- Basic Counselling Skills Course - to assist with student liaison and working with students with problems/difficulties
- Power Point upgrade Course - to improve/enhance ability in this area
- Visual Merchandising and Sales Techniques Course.

Professional development and professional learning

Sarah-Anne described PD as "a way of updating my skills and knowledge, in particular, in relation to the work that I am currently doing" (Interview, Sarah-Anne, November 2004). She believed that PD could be very formal in nature or extend to very informal discussions with colleagues.

A great deal of Sarah-Anne's PD had occurred due to self-directed desires to improve her abilities. She was very interested in attending industry forums and conferences to keep up to date. There had also been a certain level of prescribed PD by her employer. The PD had ranged from activities that she had chosen to other things that were compulsory. The quality of the PD activities had varied. She

perceived that some had been very worthwhile and others had not provided any particular benefit. One compulsory PD activity that lacked personal benefit was a three day web page development course, which had limited application even though she completed the course over two years ago.

Prior to commencing teaching, Sarah-Anne attended numerous PD activities. The organisation she worked for was a large national company which was very proactive, running a number of in-house training courses for its staff. Sarah-Anne completed her initial teacher training qualification, Train the Trainer, with this company. Sarah-Anne explained that there may have been an increase in interest in training staff during this time because there was a compulsory training levy imposed by the Government. All companies were required to conduct a certain amount of staff training in correlation to a percentage of their overall payroll.

When Sarah-Anne reflected on the variation of her own motivation prior to, during and after a PD experience she remembered the benefits she obtained. A motivating PD experience was when there had been immediate relevance to her work and the PD experience had been viewed as being positive. A PD activity which caused her to lose motivation was when attendance was compulsory as in the case of the web page development course. The activity had little relevance to the workplace and therefore could not be applied in a practical setting. In this case, she perceived the PD as negative or unconstructive experience.

VET teaching qualifications

In relation to teaching qualifications, Sarah-Anne suggested:

> I really do think that VET educators need a teaching qualification. People can start with their industry qualification… I think given that you are a teacher, it's important to have a teaching qualification. I suppose for me personally it has been invaluable to have that background to equip me with how to deal with students (Interview, Sarah-Anne, November 2004).

Sarah-Anne perceived the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training was more appropriate to trainers delivering short training sessions to people

working in industry. She suggested a more formal teaching qualification was essential if an educator was dealing with school leavers. She had experienced that many school leavers have very limited professional knowledge of the tourism and hospitality industry and often possess patterns of challenging classroom behaviour. A formal teaching qualification equips an educator with skill and knowledge to understand the different learning styles/parameters that they are working with and relevant strategies to support all students' learning.

Sarah-Anne's view of being employed as a sessional staff member

Sarah-Anne commenced teaching as a sessional and felt that she was exposed to limited PD during this period. However she was recommended by the Institute to complete a teaching qualification on a self funded basis and was able to complete it in her own time.

As a sessional staff member, Sarah-Anne stated that she "came and went and I was not really involved in and was not offered any options of participating in any PD activities" (Interview, Sarah-Anne, November 2004). Once Sarah-Anne obtained a full-time position and was able to secure ongoing employment she perceived a change in the scope of PD available for her to attend. She stated that there was a "significant difference" (Interview, Sarah-Anne, November 2004) in the availability and support provided for PD. She had noticed that her current employer did not always include sessional staff in PD activities. Sarah indicated that this barrier to access for sessionals was possibly due to financial constraints. She believed that many institutes do not have sufficient funding to provide PD experiences for staff that are only employed on a limited basis.

VET teaching competencies

Sarah-Anne considered a VET educator gains more respect from their students if they have a depth of experience from industry and can provide industry examples to increase the students' understanding of the discussion topics.

Sarah-Anne believed an educator should have a good understanding of the

curriculum so that he/she can plan what has to be covered in the course. In addition to this curriculum understanding, she revealed that a VET educator is required to be organised. An educator has to pre-plan their lessons prior to the commencement of any classroom delivery. An educator can prepare a lesson plan which determines the timing of training delivery so that each activity has a designated duration. VET educators must successfully manage the learning environment in order to maximise the opportunity of providing a stimulating atmosphere for learning. An educator is required to monitor student engagement and progress. Thus the educator can provide assistance to a student in a timely manner if any learning difficulties arise.

Sarah-Anne pointed out that an educator cannot really do the job if they cannot be administratively organised. In the present teaching environment there is a considerable amount of attendance recording, assessment recording and monitoring of student progress. These items need to be up-to-date and accurate, especially for audit purposes.

Responsibility for professional development
In relation to who should be responsible for PD, (i.e., the individual or the institute) Sarah-Anne suggested: "I suppose it is bit of both" (Interview, Sarah-Anne, November 2004). She was willing to fund and complete PD because she found it stimulating and interesting, and was thus personally motivated to learn. However if the PD was organisationally directed, (e.g. training on the use of a student result system) then she thought the institute had the responsibility to fund the PD.

Sarah-Anne's current institute had an expectation that all full-time staff would complete 35 hours, or approximately one week of PD a year. This PD could be self funded or institute funded but the institute provided time release to complete the training. This strategy ensured that all full-time staff members were exposed to PD in each calendar year.

Sarah-Anne's final thought

At the conclusion of the interview Sarah-Anne suggested that institutes do not seem to perform effective training needs analysis. She indicated the importance of matching the PD needs of the individual with the PD requirements of the training institute, thus providing mutual benefit to both parties.

Giuseppe

Giuseppe was aged between 40 and 49 and had been teaching in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for approximately 13 years. Since commencing teaching he had worked as a full-time educator at one educational institute in the TAFE sector of the VET system. Giuseppe taught cookery and related subject areas. He completed a Trade qualification in Cookery and a Certificate of Proficiency prior to commencing a teaching career. He completed a Diploma of Education (TAFE) after commencing teaching and also completed a variety of short courses including Basic First Aid Level 1 and ICT skills training.

Professional development and professional learning

Giuseppe suggested that:

> PD is basically skilling yourself to cope with different changes in curriculum, technology, anything to do with teaching, life, work and so on… you are developing your skills and obtaining more skills as you go along in your career (Interview, Giuseppe, November 2004).

Prior to teaching, Giuseppe trained as a chef and he experienced very little or no PD during his time in industry. While working in the hospitality industry, he worked in small restaurants that focused on making money and could not spare personnel to do training. The industry worked in split shifts and there was no time to do any formal PD he obtained his skills and knowledge on-the-job. Giuseppe did not believe that his trade qualification was PD as he considered that to be a form of initial training to enter a specific industry.

After joining the teaching profession, Giuseppe completed a self funded Diploma of Education which he regarded as his first exposure to PD. He classified this learning

experience as PD because it improved his skills in teaching. He had also completed some institute funded computer training, specifically in the areas of Power Point presentations and web design. Butchery training was another PD experience that Giuseppe had completed in recent years. In all cases, Giuseppe could see relevant application and was able to implement the skills and knowledge obtained into his classroom activities. Giuseppe had not experienced a PD activity that was of no value to him: "I would say it is all positive because it improves your skill and knowledge" (Interview, Giuseppe, November 2004).

VET teaching qualifications

Giuseppe believed that:

> A VET teacher should have a Diploma of Education at least as a starting point … it shows a commitment to teaching. It also shows you have an understanding of people and how they learn. I don't think that the Certificate IV is good enough, because, I think it is too short. (Interview, Giuseppe, November 2004).

Giuseppe completed parts of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training and was able to gain the full qualification by obtaining exemptions due to his Diploma of Education.

Giuseppe perceived the need for an educator to obtain a good understanding of computer technology. So much is reliant on computers: "It is the driving force in everything we do now" (Interview, Giuseppe, November 2004).

Giuseppe's view of being employed as a sessional staff member

As a full-time staff member, Giuseppe had been supported with all his requests for PD. He had never had any PD requests rejected by his Head of Department. However he was very aware that it was a question of cost that determined what would be approved.

> It all depends on the cost. If it is in-house PD and a particular staff member is taking the training you will find the sessional staff will get in no problems. But if it is something that has got to be taught outside of the institute and there are costs incurred, sessional staff are not included, they get left behind (Interview, Giuseppe,

November 2004).

VET teaching competencies

Giuseppe felt that classroom management and in particular being flexible, adaptable and able to manage a changing environment, were essential skills for an effective trainer. He commented that an educator, especially in the vocational education and training sector, had to be able to change their teaching style quite easily and rapidly, because they were dealing with young and old students whose motivation levels can vary. "Flexibility is the key" (Interview, Giuseppe, November 2004).

Responsibility for professional development

Giuseppe advised that a professional educator should have the personal drive to go-out and find PD opportunities to enhance his/her skills. He felt that the employer or the institute should provide regular training sessions. These PD activities could be as simple as visiting tourism and hospitality enterprises and observing their current work practices and their methods of completing industry tasks and duties.

Giuseppe believed that the educator should not take all the control of the PD that they completed. It is also important for the institute to develop an environment that encourages staff to update their skills and knowledge. Giuseppe advocated the following:

> PD is the responsibility of both the educator and the institute. At work you can't insist on what PD you are going to do and as an employer you also have to entice your staff to do continual training (Interview, Giuseppe, November 2004).

Giuseppe's final thought

Giuseppe concluded that while he had been treated well by his employers with respect to PD requests, he noted that the institute initially always considered the financial costs before the benefits.

Sessional educators

The following 5 portraits pertain to educators who had been employed on a sessional basis with a minimum of 1 year teaching experience. The participants are Elizabeth, James, Jenny, Mary and Natasha. Their major roles were to provide teaching delivery. This group was classified as sessional educators. James had worked within the private VET sector and the others had been employed at a variety of metropolitan TAFE institutes. Mary had also delivered VET programs within the secondary school system.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth was aged between 50 and 59 and had been teaching in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for approximately 2 years. She had experienced sessional teaching in only one educational institute in the TAFE sector of the VET system. At the time of the study interview she was working across three campuses of that TAFE institute and had been employed in this manner for the previous 2 years. Elizabeth's scope of teaching experience included: administration, management, leadership, customer relations, computer technology, finance, law, meetings and events, sales and marketing. Prior to teaching in the VET sector, Elizabeth worked as a trainer in another industry area. It was at this time that she perceived the need to increase her knowledge and skills in teaching and thus completed a Bachelor of Education and Training. To enhance the Bachelor of Education and Training qualification, she undertook a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, which provided more specific knowledge of training and assessment for on-the-job employees. She completed additional training to become a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessor. In addition to this training, she has attended a variety of short courses such as Train the Trainer, Certificate of Training, Delivery and Evaluation of Training and Effective Reading and Writing Skills (Public Affairs) course.

Professional development and professional learning

Elizabeth defined professional development as:

> Enhancing the skills and knowledge you have already. Not just

enhancing them but making sure that what you learnt in the past is still current and continuous development of the person (Interview, Elizabeth, June 2004).

Elizabeth developed her teaching skills and knowledge by completing a Bachelor of Education. This course took Elizabeth six years to complete due to full-time work pressures and family commitments. Being a part-time student brought certain challenges. Elizabeth mentioned it was difficult to select and timetable certain subjects that she wanted to complete:

> I would have finished my degree a bit earlier if I could have got into the subjects when it suited my timetable. So that was a bit of a negative for me to finish. I had to do weekend workshops rather than after hours. So I saw that as a negative aspect (Interview, Elizabeth, June 2004).

Elizabeth suggested that the most rewarding aspect of this learning was the networking contacts she made. She stressed that being involved in an educational context, provided the impetus to develop a continual thirst for knowledge. She revealed that being a student herself had assisted her to improve her ability to impart knowledge in the classroom because she was able to relate to the students' situation more effectively. This knowledge was converted into professional learning (PL). The Bachelor of Education, the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training and also a broader understanding of RPL concepts all translated into her PL. Elizabeth was able to apply the skills and knowledge into her classroom delivery. Elizabeth's involvement in the Bachelor of Education and Training provided opportunities to work with fellow educators and to form a network for discussion on ways to improve their skills in the classroom or shop floor. Despite network participants coming from diverse vocational backgrounds, they managed to examine and develop sound understanding of adult learning. During her studies, Elizabeth acquired a sense of empathy towards her students. Elizabeth explained:

> The study I continued with via Melbourne University gave me an insight into the many areas a student needs to cover. I could also relate to how a student felt, why they were studying, why they could not complete particular assignments, their reasons for non-completion or non-attendance (Email, Elizabeth, May 2006).

VET teaching qualifications

When questioned about her perception on the most suitable entry-level qualification for an educator in the VET sector Elizabeth declared:

> The higher the qualification the better. I am not saying that someone that only has Certificate IV is not suitable, but I am saying that the commitment to educating yourself comes more from a commitment of several years (Interview, Elizabeth, June 2004).

Elizabeth described the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training as a short course that provided the participant with limited skills:

> It was very basic communication skills on how to communicate with your students. It did not tell you about the particular learning styles of people…The Certificate IV just skimmed the surface (Interview, Elizabeth, June 2004).

Elizabeth concluded that the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training is an adequate starting point but an educator should have a long-term view to complete a Bachelor or higher qualification in education.

Elizabeth's view of being employed as a sessional staff member

Elizabeth provided the following insight into what it is like to be a sessional educator:

> As a sessional teacher, you can't work more than 320 hrs a year at one institute. As a sessional I feel like it is a case of out of sight out of mind. And to be fair, a sessional will walk in and complete their face-to-face teaching … and then zoom off again and you will not see them for another week (Elizabeth, June 2004).

Elizabeth further revealed her perception of the life of a sessional educator:

> I do perceive it as different, for what ever reason and all I can think of is a sessional is here, minimum amount of time, not really, still part of the system, but more on the outer of training, the third arm to assist the organisation (Interview, Elizabeth, June 2004).

Elizabeth expressed frustration about "being left out of the loop about certain changes" (Edited information, Elizabeth, May 2006). She revealed that a sessional is not always informed of changes and at times the information only filters through in fragmented pieces. From a sessional point of view she recounted "you just get to

know the system and it changes and the full-time people overlook that we need to know certain things" (Edited information, Elizabeth, May 2006).

Elizabeth cited an example to illustrate this point:

> The last thing we need to hear at the death-knock, in an audit, is that we should provide paperwork over and above what we have provided. I suppose again I should mention – out of sight out of mind. A sessional, like a full-time person, needs fair warning of what is going to happen and when there might be an audit (Email, Elizabeth, May 2006).

VET teaching competencies

Elizabeth, when asked what types of PD she would recommend to a colleague, suggested that any skills and knowledge that assisted an educator with counselling or handling students with difficulties would be valuable. Elizabeth believed an educator requires knowledge and skills in the following competencies to be an effective VET educator: subject content knowledge; classroom management skills; the understanding of different learning styles; strategies to assess students; dealing with difficult situations and developed abilities in engaging students and motivating them to learn.

Responsibility for professional development

Elizabeth had predominantly self funded her PD activities since joining the VET sector. When asked who is responsible for funding PD, Elizabeth stated:

> Let me put it this way. It would be nice if the organisation would pay and this would assist you in what you are doing now and in the future. It would be nice if you take this offer and take yourself along and attend this workshop. But at the end of the day I really believe it is the individual's responsibility to look after their own professional development. Although it would be nice if someone else paid (Interview, Elizabeth, June 2004).

Elizabeth's final thought

Towards the conclusion of the interview Elizabeth stated that any PD she was willing and motivated to undertake had to be relevant and should enhance her skills and knowledge in the present and into the future.

James

James was aged between 30 and 39 years and had been teaching in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for approximately 8 years. He had experienced both full-time and sessional teaching with a number of private training providers delivering VET hospitality and tourism programs. He had also worked at a TAFE institute. James' breadth of teaching experience included computer technology, front office and food and beverage areas. Prior to commencing teaching he had completed a Diploma of Hotel and Catering Management. He had also completed a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, an Advanced Sommeliers course, a Diploma of Information Technology and a variety of short courses mainly in the area of personnel and business management. James was also a member of a number of industry-related associations including the Australian Wine Education Society; Australian Sommeliers Association; William Angliss Global Network/Alumni; ASCPA (Hospitality and Tourism discussion group).

Professional development and professional learning

James considered that PD falls into both the formal and informal categories. He defined PD as:

> Self education, improving your own skills and knowledge of your subject area and also improving your ability as a teacher or trainer to deal with training in that subject or area (Interview, James, August 2004).

Prior to commencing his teaching career, James completed a formal qualification (Diploma of Hotel and Catering Management) in the hospitality industry. He increased his management skills by attending a number of privately run courses and due to his strong interest in wine he completed an advanced wine studies course. The only course James could recall that was not self funded was when he was working with a restaurant management company. He described this management course in the following terms:

> The course covered topics like personnel and recruitment, training, business marketing, financial budgeting, and it covered business development in the hospitality industry. So it was fairly broad in the

major topics that it covered but it was aimed at a fairly high level. It was aimed or delivered to people who already had a lot of experience in the industry so it was aimed at management level so that was actually quite worth while (Interview, James, August 2004).

While working in the hospitality industry, James completed a Train the Trainer course which focused on training people in this industry in practical skills and knowledge. After James completed the Train the Trainer course, he joined the teaching profession. Within three years of commencing teaching, James undertook a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. The Certificate IV qualification expanded and upgraded James prior knowledge of training and allowed him to conduct training in the VET sector.

VET teaching qualifications

James suggested that there was little rigor in the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training:

> I considered there wasn't a very rigorous process applied to passing the qualification. I definitely thought more extensive training would definitely be worthwhile…ideally you need to have some training before you start teaching, but then after you have had some experience you also need to go back and do further training. It is not until you actually have some practical experience that you know where your particular strengths or weaknesses may lie. You can then focus on doing your PD in specific areas and that might be more relevant to the type of teaching or mode of teaching you are doing (Interview, James, August 2004).

James was not able to suggest any other more suitable qualification for an educator but did state that the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training was only an entry level qualification. He felt it would be more advantageous for an educator to complete a more extensive teaching course to gain an improved standard of training preparation and delivery. He considered these skills and knowledge would help to achieve higher student learning outcomes which would then benefit the industry and lift the profile of training in general and that the training courses might become more highly recognised and

sought after.

James' view of being employed as a sessional staff member

James briefly commented on sessional employment arrangements. He was predominantly employed as a sessional when working as a hospitality and tourism educator. He did suggest that there were advantages for sessionals when working for a public education provider as opposed to a private institute. He indicated that resources seemed more plentiful in the government sector and PD was more forthcoming and supported. James stated that:

> The public TAFE sector had better resources…there was more support and encouragement to undertake PD with financial assistance" (Interview, James, August 2004).

VET teaching competencies

James highlighted that an educator should possess a good understanding of their subject area, be able to identify the objectives for the class and translate them into learning outcomes for the students. There might be different teaching and learning delivery strategies required, depending on whether an educator was delivering in a traditional classroom at a training institute or delivering training in an industry workplace. The learning outcomes could be the same for the two environments but the delivery and assessment might have to be modified to suit the particular training environment. Being able to modify your delivery mode according to what the students will respond to and what is appropriate to the subjects that you are delivering is essential.

James highlighted the fact that an educator has to be able to include everyone in group activities and tasks that are being undertaken. At the same time, they have to make allowances and factor in individual considerations because students do not all learn at the same rate. James pointed out that:

> You may experience students with learning difficulties or a student might find a particular task a little bit more difficult. That student might need a little more attention. You need to be aware of different student requirements. You just can't treat all students in the same way. Some may need more time, more attention in some areas to learn a specific skill (Interview, James August 2004).

The educator needs to be able to plan, to have the capacity to communicate verbally and also to be able to listen to what their students are saying so that they can maximize the students learning outcomes.

Responsibility for professional development

James advocated that PD is a shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the trainer or the educator to take an interest in their own PD in terms of improving their job performance, skills and knowledge. He felt, however, that the employer or the training provider has a responsibility to make sure that their educators are suitably qualified and have sufficient access to suitable PD activities to enhance their skills and knowledge, thus keeping them up to date with current trends.

James' final thought

James highlighted one PD experience as being very worthwhile. The PD was a short course in business management. The course covered topics in personnel training and recruitment, business marketing, financial budgeting, and business development in the hospitality industry. This course was very relevant to him at the time of delivery because he was employed as a restaurant manager. One aspect of the training that he remembered in particular was being able to share his experiences with others in the class and also being able to learn from his classmates and teacher. This sharing and learning from fellow participants' past experiences was a highlight of the PD activity for him.

Jenny

Jenny was aged between 40 and 49 years and had been teaching in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for approximately 15 years. She had experienced full-time and sessional tenure with a range of different employers, predominantly in the TAFE sector of the VET system. At the time of the study interview she was working as a sessional educator at one TAFE institute and had been employed in this manner for at least the previous two years. Jenny's scope of teaching experience included: management, leadership, customer relations, wine studies, housekeeping, food and beverage studies. She completed the Certificate

in Catering prior to commencing teaching and then completed a Diploma of Education and a Diploma of Wine and Spirits once she started teaching. She had also attended a variety of short courses and industry conferences.

Professional development and professional learning

Jenny perceived PD to be:

> Anything that is going to allow you to do the role that you are currently in more effectively. PD should allow you to grow and be more professional (Interview, Jenny, April 2005).

Jenny agreed that PD could include both formal and informal levels of training. She believed a discussion with a colleague was not substantial enough to be defined as PD.

Jenny's first training experiences were with skills training for long-term unemployed. She then transferred into a hospitality and tourism department at a TAFE institute, initially teaching food and beverage studies, then expanding into other areas of industry experience.

Prior to starting a teaching career, Jenny experienced a mixture of support and funding for PD from her industry employers. She completed a Certificate of Catering and was able to attend structured management training courses that were supported and recommended by her industry employer. After commencing teaching in the VET sector, most PD that she undertook was self-funded with minimal support from any of her present or past educational employers. When Jenny started teaching, she completed a formal teaching qualification, the Graduate Diploma of Teaching. She also attended various conferences, including the Australian Society of Wine Educators and the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival. Some were funded but mostly the support was only a time-release allowance.

Jenny reflected that the most rewarding PD experience for her was the Diploma of Wine and Spirits, which she undertook in London. This PD activity was a major

accomplishment, in her opinion, especially since she had to relocate to the United Kingdom for a period of time to complete the qualification. The experience, however, came with some enormous personal and financial sacrifices. Jenny was only supported with leave without pay. She was responsible for all other expenses. When asked about her return to work after the overseas experience she stated that "when I came back I had a timetable that asked me to use my newly acquired skills to teach housekeeping. It seemed a bit odd" (Interview, Jenny, April 2005). This event provided an exciting PD activity but certainly not one with immediate professional learning (PL).

VET teaching qualifications

Jenny possessed specific perceptions about the value, quality and appropriateness of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. She stated that:

> It is great shame that Certificate IV is meant to be a suitable qualification to be involved with education at all. I think it is just a real short cut and it is economically driven and I think it is a waste of space (Interview, Jenny, April 2005).

Jenny further explained that:

> On another level...a teaching qualification is only meaningful with teaching experience. You have got to have both if you are going to be useful as there is nothing like being in the classroom to learn how to be a teacher (Interview, Jenny, April 2005).

Jenny's view of being employed as a sessional staff member

Jenny described her experience as a sessional employee in the VET sector as:

> Almost like persona non grata ... I would have to say that I haven't worked anywhere as a sessional and been treated as if I belong to the staff. We are gap fillers for the load that can't be filled by the full-time staff. Hopefully they use you because you have expertise. Fortunately I have specific expertise, but I am well aware that gaps are filled by anybody who is able to do the job. Sessional teachers main purpose is to fill the gaps and not to be developed in any way that makes you useful in the future (Interview, Jenny, April 2005).

VET teaching competencies

Jenny recommended that all educators develop their skills in how to deal with

different personalities and behaviours in the classroom. She attended a very valuable workshop which explored this topic. She had then been able to apply the information she had learnt to improve her classroom delivery.

In the later part of the interview Jenny described her perceptions of the essential competencies of an educator:

> A teacher needs to know how to interpret the Training Package … it is the ability to package individual lesson plans … interpreting the Training Package and develop appropriate delivery and assessment (Interview, Jenny, April 2005).

Jenny further suggested that VET educators also require computer skills. "You need Excel spread sheets, Power Point and data show kind of stuff…" (Interview, Jenny, April 2005). Jenny suggested that an understanding of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) was essential if one was to be an efficient teaching administrator. She acknowledged that the quality assurance requirements and AQTF standards were "pretty funny because it is just not real. It looks good, it sounds good but it is not what is actually happening" (Interview, Jenny, April 2005). Jenny suggested that many of the AQTF requirements were only really implemented when an audit was looming. While the policy and procedures for delivery in VET are defined in the AQTF standards, VET educators do not entirely have a full appreciation of their importance. For this reason educators may not always implement the AQTF compliance requirements fully.

Responsibility for professional development

Jenny stated that the responsibility for PD is a personal one:

> I have always seen it as mine. If I want to be professionally developed… then I would like to think that organisations cared about quality outcomes and would also take on responsibility to encourage PD. However, I haven't encountered much of that, attitude… I suppose I take the view that it is the individuals responsibility (Interview, Jenny, April 2005).

Jenny's final thought

At the conclusion of the interview Jenny finished with the following rhetorical

question: "Is PD going to be the solution for quality? I think that might be naive to say … but I think it might make it more satisfying for the professionals who are in it, but is it going to make it any better?" (Interview, Jenny, April 2005). This statement highlights the fact that this participant had some reservations about the effectiveness of PD activities she had undertaken.

Mary

Mary was aged between 40 and 49 years and had been teaching in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for approximately 10 years. She had held a sessional position at two educational institutes in the TAFE sector of the VET system. At the time of the study interview she was working as a sessional educator with one organisation and has been employed in this manner for at least the previous 2 years. Mary taught subjects related to food and beverage studies. She had completed a Certificate IV in Workplace Assessment and Training and had attended short courses concerning bullying in the workplace and computer software programs that had assisted her teaching.

Professional development and professional learning

Mary described PD from two perspectives:

> I think my expectations of PD is that there is a personal development side, in relation to teaching, your ability to handle yourself and to handle your students….and from an professional side. I think it is adding education that is relevant to my discipline (Interview, Mary, March 2005).

Mary revealed she had not undertaken PD activities that required extensive dedication to study due to personal reasons. She admitted that she lacked the self discipline that was required, and that she preferred to attend short courses. She had completed a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training but had not developed her formal teaching qualifications further. She stated:

> I haven't done any teacher training. I have done a lot of training relating to the hospitality industry and the reason I am able to teach was because of my industry experience. I have owned and operated a restaurant. Through out that time I was an active member of the local tourism association (Interview, Mary, March

2005).

Mary had obtained most of her skills and knowledge from on-the-job training and running her own business. In recent years, however, she had completed a number of computer software courses.

VET teaching qualifications
Mary perceived the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training as an 'excellent' VET teaching entry prerequisite. She had been involved with the delivery of this qualification at one of the TAFE institutes. She believed it provided a mechanism to cull out people who might decide to do teaching as an extra job rather than being dedicated to becoming an educator. She stated "I think that a lot of people are really quick to teach … when you really need a particular bent for teaching" (Interview, Mary, March 2005). She felt the quality of delivery of courses at many Institutes varied and there was no guarantee that a person with a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training had "grasped the methodology of teaching" (Interview, Mary, March 2005) and the preparation for classroom delivery.

Mary questioned the disparity of qualifications within the VET sector. Some staff members had the minimum standard of a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training or were under the supervision of someone who had that qualification. Other VET educators had completed qualifications which extended to a Master or Doctoral degree. Even though Mary held a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, she questioned the system that allowed so many different standards of qualifications. Mary stated:

> I don't think it is right that there are differences ... Why, for arguments sake, should TAFE students get a less qualified academic person ... I do find it strange that certain students were eligible for qualified teachers and other students are eligible for some one with limited qualifications (Interview, Mary, March 2005).

Mary's view of being employed as a sessional staff member

When an educator takes on the role of a sessional staff member Mary suggested that:

> There is a lack of fairness within the system in regard to being a sessional. In fact your hourly rate is being watered down continually regardless… If PD is not being funded for you, you're actually the one inadvertently funding the RTO and they are getting an interest free loan from you by you funding your own training (Interview, Mary, March 2005).

Mary had self funded most of her PD during her working career, especially since she had been self employed. Mary revealed that finding the time to attend PD could be difficult and as a sessional, the PD was usually completed in your own time.

> I just feel that the system is such a take on sessional teachers and unless there was some quid pro quo or some fairness in the system, you know my time is well taken up with the students (Interview, Mary, March 2005).

Mary concluded that the VET system was "very inequitable" (Interview, Mary, March 2005) in regards to the treatment of sessional staff members.

VET teaching competencies

Mary suggested that a VET educator is required to have skills and knowledge in a number of competency areas. First and foremost "they just have to have the students' interests at heart, regardless of anything else" (Interview, Mary, March 2005). She believed an educator must be very organised and have good time management skills which include time management in delivery. The skill of good time management in the classroom is developed through preparation and forward planning and knowing your content. An educator has to understand the "big overview of the program which will provide them with the scope to pull the whole thing together for their students to have the best results" (Interview, Mary, March 2005). Mary suggested that students need to be "engaged" for learning to occur and it is the educator that has to facilitate that engagement (Interview, Mary, March 2005).

Responsibility for professional development

Mary believed that PD was a "responsibility for myself" (Interview, Mary, March 2005). In other words, she had a personal obligation for her own development. However, she stated that "it is partly the responsibility of the people that want to retain you" (Interview, Mary, March 2005). The institute or employer should be accountable for providing access to PD in order to ensure the continued development of their staff.

Mary's final thought

Mary had some serious doubts about the quality of the recruitment strategies that have been applied within the VET sector. She pointed out that having some specific qualification requirements such as the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training would improve the calibre of candidates:

> I think that one of the things with the TAFE system in the past is it was actually too easy to get into. You know it was virtually word of mouth for a while… somebody said such and such has worked in hospitality. We are desperate for somebody to teach in hospitality. Now there would be no reference checks no, nothing…So I do think you have to have those levels, those hurdles for people to get over before they get into the system (Interview, Mary, March 2005).

Natasha

Natasha was aged between 40 and 49 years and had been teaching in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for over three years. She had held a sessional position with both a private training provider and an educational institute in the TAFE sector of the VET system. At the time of the study interview, she was working as a sessional educator with both organisations. Natasha delivered subjects related to: administration, computer technology, customer relations, front office, sales and marketing. She had completed a Bachelor of Business (Marketing), a Master of Arts (Communication) and a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training and she had also attended a variety of short courses on topics such as negotiation and presentation skills.

Professional development and professional learning

Natasha defined PD in the following terms:

> PD to me means what course of action I can take to improve skills, knowledge and practices that can help me in doing whatever it is that I want to do. So for example I would say with my current position now I have vast industry background and that seems to be sufficient for what I need to deliver. Perhaps what I feel that I am lacking is perhaps in the teaching methodology. So I would see myself as taking PD in that area (Interview, Natasha, December 2004).

She revealed that during her time working in industry, prior to commencing a teaching career, she was exposed to some "particularly relevant" PD activities which she could immediately apply to her job as an accounts manager (Interview, Natasha, December 2004). An example of this was PD training in negotiation skills. This training helped Natasha to deal effectively with her customers. She expressed a sense of satisfaction when discussing this training activity.

Natasha believed relevance is very important to the effectiveness of PD. Natasha indicated that relevance in the subject matter translated into motivated trainees. She stated:

> Relevance has got a great deal to do with it. I think that it is applicable to any learning, the approach and the readiness to do it. So I think you have to be ready and wanting. It is the relevance, and I think your disposition towards it (Interview, Natasha, December 2004).

Many of the PD activities completed by Natasha were self funded. She undertook a Bachelor of Business in Marketing to assist her with her job. Upon commencement in her position as an Accounts Manager, she had an expectation that there would be some financial support but that never eventuated. This circumstance, however, did not deter Natasha from obtaining the qualification and then completing an additional self-funded qualification: a Master in Communication.

Natasha completed another self-funded PD activity: the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. She was required to obtain this qualification

so that she possessed the correct credentials to work in the VET sector as an educator. (Refer to Appendix 2)

VET teaching qualifications

Natasha held a very favourable impression of the value of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training.

> It was fantastic at the time because I had absolutely no knowledge. I had done some training …. In-house training and that helped to do the position that I had at the time, but just being exposed to the different learning modes, how adult learning is different from any other learning. Adult learning principles, the different ways in which people learn. Those things were so enlightening that they have stuck with me (Interview, Natasha, December 2004).

Natasha believed the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training was a very "… good link. It is like a passport into teaching and training" (Interview, Natasha, December 2004). The course Natasha had undertaken required rigorous assessment to be completed after attending 3 or 4 days of face to face teaching. Natasha indicated she has experienced a "first –class" delivery and assessment.

Nataha was also keen to point out that, in her mind, there was really no equivalent to "experiential teaching" or learning from actually being in the classroom and having to deal with issues as they arose. She also suggested that at that stage in her teaching career, after having a few years experience, it was time to take her qualifications a little further.

Natasha's view of being employed as a sessional staff member

Natasha had been employed as a sessional educator for all of her employment in the VET sector. She discussed a sense of "not belonging" and "not being part of the team". Natasha stated:

> I am of that mind set, that I don't really belong here. I am not really a full-time member…I think I subconsciously put it all into the too hard basket and had the expectation that until I am a full-time employee I probably don't have any entitlement to PD (Interview, Natasha, December 2004).

Natasha further revealed:

> I would rather be a full-time member of staff so I can partake in the PD, without guilt. As I said I haven't had a sense of really belonging somewhere sufficiently enough to say: OK guys how about it? ... it is clear to me that some places do it better than others. Some can treat their sessionals as outcasts … I think that it is part of a culture that doesn't prevail everywhere … just in individual cases (Interview, Natasha, December 2004).

VET teaching competencies

Natasha considered an educator should be equipped with a number of indispensable competencies. She mentioned that with the growth in numbers of international students now attending the VET sector, English as a Second Language skills stand out as vital to enable one to operate in this challenging environment. Natasha identified the need for VET educators to have strong presentation skills in the delivery of curriculum and in the areas of using technologies to support learning. She asserted that an educator has the responsibility of "keeping a group engaged in the course" (Interview, Natasha, December 2004).

Natasha explained that a VET educator should possess good skills and knowledge in his/her area of expertise complemented with strong interpersonal skills. She felt it was important to have strong interpersonal skills that incorporated the ability to communicate effectively with individuals and groups and to be able to listen and be approachable. Natasha also emphasised the importance of educators knowing and understanding how people learn: "You have to be interested in people's learning and you have to be interested in the outcomes" (Interview, Natasha, December 2004).

Responsibility for professional development

Natasha commented on who was responsible for PD activity in the following terms:

> I think if an institute wants the best from its people it has to make up its mind on how the system recognises those people who want to advance and better themselves. Certainly the skills that a staff member develops can raise the professional standards of the institute…I think if an institute wants the best from its people, then it

has to make up its mind, that it wants its people to develop professionally (Interview, Natasha, December 2004).

Natasha indicated that PD activities could be paralleled to a recognition system. A recognition system could link PD effort with Institute support. Recognising that staff members have taken on the extra task of up-skilling, refining or learning new skills could be rewarded accordingly.

Heads of Department

The following 4 portraits relate to Heads of Departments who had been working in that position for at least 12 months. The Head of Department participants were Jack, Lynne, Joanne and Mark. These participants worked in the tourism and hospitality sector. Three worked at a metropolitan TAFE institute and Lynne with a private education provider. Their major role was to provide educational leadership for a specific discipline area. For the purpose of this study this group was classified as Head of Department.

Jack

Jack was aged between 50 and 59 years and had been working in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for over ten years. He had completed a number of qualifications which included a Diploma of Catering Crafts; City and Guilds 441,151; Diploma of Teaching; Graduate Certificate in Leadership in Education and Training; Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. He was currently completing a Master in Work-based Learning. In addition to these formal qualifications, he has undertaken training in the area of educational compliance and has attended a number of industry short courses.

Professional development

Jack defined PD as "equipping the individual and the team with the skill to be able to do the job adequately" (Interview, Jack, June 2005).

The process and procedure for professional development within Jack's VET institute

Jack revealed a number of approaches to fulfilling the PD requirements of the Hospitality and Tourism Department. He indicated that appropriate PD was decided from the requirements of the institute's strategic plan which informed the departmental operational plan. The department manager might suggest PD to a staff member. Individuals will have different interests which motivate them to do their job. PD tailored to these needs should be considered when approval for PD is evaluated. PD activities may be internal or external.

All full-time and sessional staff members were encouraged by the Head of Department to participate in suitable PD activities. Information on internal programs was disseminated via the email system. Jack explained that within the TAFE system in the Multi Enterprise Certified Agreement there is an expectation of 30 hours to be available for PD activities. Jack indicated that this PD requirement was the minimum and that many staff members completed considerably more than this PD in a calendar year. An example of a larger time commitment was completing a formal education qualification which might take a number of years to finalise. The institute usually only provided support for the 30 hours of PD a year. Any PD in excess of these 30 hours was an individual's responsibility.

Dissemination of skills and knowledge gained via professional development

Jack pointed out that dissemination of PD knowledge was difficult. Many PD activities undertaken by staff dealt with individual specific learning and provided limited PD for others. Dissemination of PD has to be conducted in a two-way environment. The sender and receiver both have to be motivated to communicate the PD information. Dissemination of individual specific learning can be ineffective if there is no shared interest in the PD activity being discussed. Jack indicated that it is usually better to try and send a team of participants rather than have an individual conduct a second-hand report after the PD activity.

VET teaching qualifications

Jack considered that the Diploma of Teaching delivered at Hawthorn Institute in the 1990s was very relevant because it developed educators' operational skills. Educators learnt theoretical and practical skills that could be implemented into their delivery preparation. The Diploma of Teaching provided an insight into counselling styles and appropriate strategies concerning classroom management. Pedagogy and learning styles were also explored and their applications discussed. An example of a practical skill is how to prepare a flyer or produce a classroom handout. Jack pointed out that the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training simply does not prepare an educator in the same way. There is insufficient time to do this training because the Certificate is only a maximum of 210 hours in delivery.

Jack considered an aspect of the diploma that was of great benefit to an educator was the support obtained from the other participants over the two years of the course. The educator was able to reflect on his/her experiences in the classroom and discuss any issues with other educators. Jack suggested that "you learnt from your colleagues and also learnt from the instructor" (Interview, Jack, June 2005).

Sessional staff members and professional development access

Jack suggested that there were two types of sessional staff members. One is the sessional who only wants to work part time across a range of institutes and/or is still working in an industry position. The other is the sessional who is interested in eventually obtaining a full-time position in an educational institute. The former type of sessional will usually only do PD on a needs basis, because there are only so many hours in a week and it is always difficult to schedule PD at a convenient time. The other sessional may be willing to do more PD, but until they have a full-time position, they may also be restricted by available time. They may be more motivated to complete PD because their long-term career goals are in VET education.

Jack revealed the following about his current employer's attitude to PD funding for

sessional staff:

> Certainly in this organisation it is changing. I think senior management is starting to value and recognise the work of sessionals and therefore they will agree to allocate resources and are willing to pay for training. This has probably come about as part of the changes in the Multi Enterprise Certified Agreement. There is a limit on teaching at 320 hours but there are other hours than teaching therefore the other hours can include PD activities (Interview, Jack, June 2005).

VET teaching competencies

When recruiting new staff members, Jack looked for specific skills and experience. He preferred to employ an educator with at least five years of industry experience although he was not sure this was always enough.

Other important skills he desired in a suitable candidate were classroom and people management experience. He felt the educator must be able to understand how to apply curriculum or the training package to the required subject/units of study and provide an interesting presentation of this material. The educator must be able to develop strategies to cater for the needs of different adult learning styles.

Jack further explained that an educator is required to have personal organisation skills as well as competent computer skills so that they can be prepared in the classroom with lesson plans and appropriate assessment strategies. When it comes to administration requirements, a VET educator must have a working knowledge of AQTF requirements. Another basic but important skill is to be able to source any required information, whether it be for teaching delivery or to address relevant institute policies and procedures. Jack also believed an educator should understand the larger picture of the VET system and know where and how they and the institute fit into that picture.

Professional development funding sources

Jack explained that government funds came into the institute for PD and that money was spread across the institute in a range of different ways. One portion

was applied at the School level. The department within a School was able to access these funds. Jack as the department manager, tried to arrange that the School paid for as much PD as possible. Another source of funding for PD was obtained out of the department's consumables budget or the reserve budget. This department budget, however, was usually a much smaller amount. PD activities were also available at the institutes' Staff College and the initial government money went directly to the programs developed by the Staff College. These programs were usually generic in nature and appropriate for a large range of institute staff. Much of the training approved by Jack at a department level was of an external nature and industry or discipline specific.

Responsibility for professional development

At Jack's institute the responsibility for PD at the department level was divided between the educator, the Head of department and the relevant Program Manager, who provided a supportive and directional role. As part of the educator's annual discussion about their yearly work expectations, the educator was expected to be able to suggest suitable PD activities they believed would benefit them and also the department. Jack drove the PD selection because he felt it was important to make sure that the department had a range of skill sets across the areas of the business to cover the projects coming up in the year and also to provide for succession planning so staff members were able to develop new skill sets for the future directions of the institute.

Jack's final thought

Jack explained that he found PD allocation a challenge because there were always a small percentage of the teaching team that came unprepared for their annual work discussions. These staff members did not view PD and the access to ten days of PD as a benefit to them. Jacks commented:

> It is a struggle to get them to think about the ten days let alone complete the ten days and that is a very frustrating thing. The majority of the staff approach PD with motivation and drive, and for those individuals, there is never enough money available (Interview, Jack, June 2005).

Lynne

Lynne was aged between 30 and 39 years and had been teaching in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for more than ten years. She was employed at a private vocational education organisation situated in a regional area outside of Melbourne.

Professional development

Lynne defined PD as "some kind of training, learning, education program that relates directly to the job that you are trying to do or that you are supposed to be doing" (Interview, Lynne, July 2005).

The process and procedure for professional development within Lynne's VET institute

Lynne was responsible for recommending people to do suitable PD activities during each year. In the past, several staff had written into their workplace contracts support of up to a $1000 to finance mutually agreed upon PD. The PD activities were recommended and agreed on between the HOD and the staff member and then submitted to the RTO Director. The Director was ultimately responsible for the approval of the PD activity. If approval was granted; the staff member would then make the final arrangements. The prior establishment of $1000 for PD for certain staff members had set a precedent in the minds of other staff members within the institute. Other staff that did not have this clause in their contracts still expected this employment condition. This situation had caused some dissension within the organisation. Many of the teaching staff indicated that there was inequity due to some staff having access to $1000 of PD and others assuming they were entitled to it.

At the time of the study interview, the institute had experienced financial difficulties and profit had been minimal. This financial situation had led to greater limits in the amount of money available to finance any PD for staff. The previously established agreements had not been adhered to and the Institute Director no longer endorsed PD as generously as he had in the past. He now had to be confident that there

would be an immediate gain for the RTO in order to approve specific PD requests. The PD activity had to translate into quantifiable results or outcomes.

Professional development and the relationship to effective teaching and learning outcomes for students

Lynne suggested that any PD or self development opportunity can allow educators or administrative staff members to have the time to stop and examine their own work practices from a more reflective perspective. She perceived that this professional reflection was a favorable situation. Lynne provided the following example of a PD activity which supported improved student learning outcomes. The institute provided training to staff about privacy legislation. This PD activity was delivered using a workshop strategy. The staff who attended gained a better understanding of privacy obligations and the associated requirements. Lynne was not sure if this PD translated directly into classroom teaching because the information on privacy dealt with an administrational context. Lynne did believe that the activity supported and improved the development of strategies in the management of the students' information.

The institute had conducted PD covering Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) requirements. Lynne believed this PD had an impact on classroom teaching because the educators obtained an enhanced understanding of their responsibilities. This PD training produced a greater confidence within the staff about following the correct regulations and standards. Lynne suggested that the information delivered in a PD session concerning specific institute policies and procedures had also given the staff more confidence in how to manage their classroom teaching and in teaching administration.

Dissemination of skills and knowledge gained via professional development

Lynne felt the institute endeavored to disseminate PD in theory, but not necessarily in practice. In theory PD was disseminated via educational group meetings and/or management group meetings, but in practice this did not happen because it was

sometimes difficult to rehash the essences of a training seminar to others who were not necessarily familiar with the content area.

Lynne stated:

> There are definitely pathways and strategies to do it, but I still think it is quite difficult even if you go to a one hour seminar to come back and to translate that into something meaningful to the rest of the staff. If it was the intention for everyone to obtain this learning then everyone should have gone (Interview, Lynne, July 2005).

VET teaching qualifications

Lynne expressed some serious concerns with the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. She commented:

> I think it is completely useless as far as delivery is concerned and I am not quite sure what the purpose of that qualification is or how it helps somebody in a VET context. It gives a really broad overview of what VET is about and what a competency is and some anagrams for teaching so that they remember to cover the steps to be a teacher. But for some one working full-time or permanent part time in a VET context it is useless (Interview, Lynne, July 2005).

Lynne believed being a good educator was more about being a good communicator or having even theatrical skills to apply in the classroom. An educator needs to be confident when discussing material with their students. Lynne stated:

> I think the skills required to be a good teacher are something that there is no way a short course or even a three year Diploma or Degree is necessarily going to teach someone (Interview, Lynne, July 2005).

She perceived that the traits of a good educator may be inherent rather than learnt; the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training does not make anyone a better or worse educator. She suggested that it is too short to have any effect on teaching skills. Lynne had grave concerns about where VET educators obtain skills and knowledge relating to the development of assessment materials. Lynne believed that while assessment is a component of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training there is a lack of depth to make any meaningful difference to the final knowledge retained by the educators. The qualification is delivered in

210 hours and this duration of time does not allow for an adequate coverage, especially if the course is taught by people who have not obtained a full appreciation of the overall VET system.

Lynne suggested that learning how to develop appropriate assessment strategies requires extensive explanation. Assessment strategies should cover issues such as validation, validity and reliability and this information is not covered in great enough detail in the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. Lynne felt this information was not discussed in sufficient detail and therefore there was no assurance that students would receive adequate evaluation of their skills and knowledge by the required assessment tasks.

Sessional staff member and professional development access

Lynne revealed that any PD that was conducted at the regional campus was open to all staff members, both full-time and sessional. However, it became an issue, especially for sessionals if the PD was delivered off campus, especially if it was in Melbourne.

Lynne suggested that sessional staff were no more disadvantaged than full-time staff when it came to accessing PD at her institute because of the limited funding options available. Sessional staff members had been disadvantaged in the past because the institute Director had a perception that sessionals had no loyalty to the institute. Lynne disclosed that at her institute, and in other regional or remote areas, a sessional depended on the sessional work and did not have a variety of employment options. Thus they were considered to be reliable employees. In fact many of the institute's sessional staff members were keen to obtain full time positions although few long-term ongoing positions were available. Sessional work was not always a personal choice in regional areas, due to the limited access to full-time employment.

VET teaching competencies

Lynne suggested that a VET educator should have a combination of the following competencies: organisational proficiency and computer literacy to produce handouts or information in a Power Point format, an understanding of the VET system and an understanding of assessment strategies and how to produce appropriate assessment tools. "Teaching and assessment skills are probably the key" (Interview, Lynne, July 2005).

A VET educator needs a propensity to be a good communicator which assists in effective teaching delivery. Lynne indicated that an educator has to possess an inherent ability to communicate; she did not think it is something that can be taught or obtained via a qualification. In addition, she felt that an educator should be required to have a good understanding of the relevant sections of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) requirements.

Lynne took into consideration a number of criteria when employing a new staff member. She felt that potential candidates should have broad experience in the tourism industry because industry practices change frequently and she saw advantages in potential staff members possessing knowledge across a range of current technology and industry techniques.

Professional development funding sources

PD activities at Lynne's institute were funded out of either the course program budget or the course delivery budget. Budget information was only available to the Institute Director. When teaching resources or PD activities were requested, the Director had the discretionary power to approve the application. The response however, was usually "no, we can not afford it" (Interview, Lynne, July 2005). It was difficult to negotiate for suitable PD activities if the HOD did not have sufficient access to relevant financial information. This situation was very frustrating for Lynne. There was no equitable allocation of funding for PD. The decision to approve a PD activity occurred on an ad hoc basis.

Responsibility for professional development

Lynne perceived there is a shared responsibility when it comes to completing PD activities. The educator and the employer have a responsibility to make sure the educator undertakes PD activities on a regular basis. She stated:

> People are transient and they are going to come and go through organisations and through departments and through jobs etc. PD should be something for the individuals to take on themselves as a lifelong learning process. If you can get some support from your employer that is fantastic. If you obtain full support from your employer, that is even better. If you get no support from your employer then it should be something for your own professional improvement (Interview, Lynne, July 2005).

Lynne had personally always been prepared to continually pursue PD whether it was self-funded or undertaken with some support from her employer. She believed it reflects an individual's commitment to their profession.

Joanne

Joanne was aged between 50 and 59 years and had worked in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for over fifteen years. She had completed the following qualifications: Certificate in Hospitality, Diploma of Education, Diploma of Business, Graduate Diploma of Educational Administration and Master of Education. She had been employed as a Head of Department with her current employer for the previous five years.

Professional development

Joanne defined PD as "something that has to be self-driven and something that you want to do for yourself with a passion. It is not something that you can be directed to do" (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

The process and procedure for professional development within Joanne's VET institute

At Joanne's institute there were some "very quite sophisticated" PD processes and procedures in place (Interview, Joanne, July 2005). A three-month calendar of PD activities was circulated throughout the institute to advertise what was available to

staff members. Joanne had the calendar displayed in her office. She used this information in two ways: to identify activities that might enhance a staff member's skills set and to prompt interest with staff who were able to pinpoint areas of personal and professional relevance.

Joanne revealed the following:

> The staff can have a look at that calendar and say this is really something I want to do or alternatively I might identify a need when I am doing their work-plans or starting performance appraisals. We may have a chat about whether they might like to go. It's on a need basis and a want basis (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Joanne had worked with four institutes during her time in the VET sector. She suggested that her employer at the time of the interview was "very proactive" about PD (Interview, Joanne, July 2005). "The staff do not have to worry about getting knocked back usually for their PD whereas at another institute the answer was, 'there is no money'. Here it is really good. They are very people oriented" (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

As part of the Institute's working conditions set out in the Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Multi-Employer Certified Agreement 2003 (MECA), there was a 30-hour a year requirement for all full-time staff to have access to relevant PD activities. Joanne monitored the progress and completion of her staff in executing this requirement. She kept a written record of what staff had completed and when. This PD information was also recorded by the PD department in a specific section of Personnel. At this institute, staff were supported financially in both time and payment when they attended the 30 hours of approved PD. Staff members were encouraged to complete the 30 hours of PD but there was no actual penalty if the 30 hours were not completed.

Any PD activities that fell above the MECA requirement were negotiated and approved on a needs basis. Staff members were not discouraged from completing more PD than required but the accountability for payment and time might have been the individual's responsibility. "The institute's PD budget can only stretch so far" (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Professional development and the relationship to effective teaching and learning outcomes for students

Joanne believed there is an important relationship between the PD completed by staff and the application of newly acquired skills and knowledge into a classroom environment. She stated that:

> I don't think the staff take their PD activities lightly. They invest quite a lot of time and they know there is quite a lot of money. So they are usually things that they can bring back and put into the classroom. We do a lot of flexible delivery PD at the moment so that we can develop some flexible delivery tools to use in the classroom and out of the classroom. So I really do think they do translate into teaching and learning (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Reflecting further on this issue, she saw herself as a lifelong learner who was always anxious to share the knowledge she had acquired and to put it into practice as soon as possible.

Dissemination of skills and knowledge gained via professional development

Joanne had a number of techniques to ensure that staff members were able to share their PD experiences. Individuals who had participated in a PD activity were required to spend a few minutes reporting back to their colleagues at monthly department meetings. If the PD had wider application it was presented to the whole business services group at the bi-monthly meeting. In this way all staff members had an appreciation of what activities had occurred in relation to PD within the department.

As mentioned earlier PD is recorded in a number of ways. The institute kept records of who had attended a PD activity. PD development forms were completed by the staff members and recorded with the PD department, a section of Personnel. This information was distributed to Joanne from the PD department four times a year. It provided a listing of what staff members had attended and what money has been invested. Joanne was able to use this information to identify staff with newly acquired expertise in specific areas. These staff members could then be used as a resource to provide advice to other staff members.

VET teaching qualifications

Joanne believed the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training was insufficient as a minimum teaching qualification. She considered the appropriate qualification level for a VET educator to be a "minimum Diploma in Teaching" (Interview, Joanne, July 2005). However, she pointed out that she thought there were also shortfalls in the Diploma of Teaching: a deficiency in information concerning assessment strategies. Joanne believed this deficiency in the diploma is addressed in the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. She found that this course provided some beneficial strategies for conducting effective assessment.

Joanne suggested that:

> The sooner we get a National qualification in that area the better. I definitely believe in standardisation and I think we need a standard qualification and probably it should be a degree as well as industry experience. Absolutely (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Sessional staff members and professional development access

PD activities were promoted in Joanne's institute via the PD calendar and the email system. All staff members were registered on the hospitality department general email list. Sessional staff members were invited to attend department meetings and planning days and there were funds available to pay them for this time. However, this practice had only occurred in more recent years and Joanne stated "when I came here five years ago that didn't happen. Sessional staff came in, taught and left" (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Joanne maintained that sessional staff may be treated differently in the VET sector when it comes to access to PD. However, she affirmed the following PD practices at her institute:

> If any of the casuals come to me and want to do PD this institute will allow them to do any of the internal activities. Until this year they could do their Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training at no charge. With the new VET TAA course, they have to pay for that but it is only about $500. So we really encourage all staff. The institute really encourages people to develop and to be appropriately qualified. To continue their lifelong learning (Interview,

Joanne, July 2005).

VET teaching competencies

Joanne was required to recruit staff within her department. When she was looking for a VET staff member, she examined their technical skills as well as their people skills.

> A teacher needs to have the skills to work in that area. An example might be our accounting teacher who is about to leave. So when I am employing the new accounting teacher I will be looking at their technical skills as an accountant as well as their people skills (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Joanne sought VET staff that were capable of teaching students the key skills and knowledge:

> Aiming for the top, teaching the students the highest skills for example five star restaurant service. The students can work in industry in a less formal environment but at least they know about the formal restaurant service. The students might not practice them but it is not so hard to pick them up again if required (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Joanne suggested that a sense of humour was another important characteristic, because learning has to be "fun" (Interview, Joanne, July 2005). Joanne was required to ensure an educator had a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training or equivalent and had preferably supervised staff in an industry setting. Joanne believed a "supervisor knows how to transfer skills because skills transfer and teaching and learning are very much one and the same" (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Administration competencies are becoming more important in the VET sector. Due to the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) standards, it is imperative that educators are able to keep appropriate and accurate student records. Joanne stated:

> A teacher must understand how important compliance is. We have got a great induction process here that takes them through all the requirements. They must be able to meet deadlines and have good time management skills (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Professional development funding sources and the responsibility for professional development

At Joanne's institute the majority of PD activities were funded from a centralised institute budget for PD. There was a particular department which dealt with PD activities. Joanne was responsible for a certain percentage of dollars that she was able to place in the department budget. These funds can be allocated to PD activities that might be more specialised and specific to department requirements. An example of this specific PD was the membership fee for an industry-based association that supported the staff member to develop professionally and provide access to industry contacts and networks.

Joanne determined and negotiated PD activities with the staff within her department. This determination of PD was usually based on the "needs of the institute and the wants of the staff member that have been identified on the staff member's work-plan" (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Joanne's final thought

PD activities appeared to be working well at Joanne's institute. She identified that staff were enrolling in institute-based programs:

> If staff want to do something that isn't on the PD calendar they tell the PD department and they will find it for them. The feedback is saying that PD programs are booked out. People are taking up the offer. I don't think I have seen an internal program cancelled this year, which is quite a change from a few years ago (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Joanne's institute engaged external industry presenters with excellent reputations to deliver the PD activities and staff had become more interested in attending. She believed the PD programs were perceived to be "quality programs" (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Mark

Mark was aged between 30 and 39 years and had been working in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for approximately ten years. He was Head of

Department at a TAFE institute. Mark had completed a series of qualifications, including the Bachelor of Business (Catering and Hotel Management), the Graduate Certificate of Transformational Management, Graduate Certificate VET in Schools Implementation, Graduate Diploma of Education and Training and Master of Education.

Professional development

Mark described PD as "anything that enhances the skills or knowledge of an educator that is related to the programs that they deliver or the administrative skills they need to complete" (Interview, Mark, August 2005).

The process and procedure for professional development within Mark's VET institute

At Mark's institute the Training and Development Services division within the Human Resources department produced a PD handbook each year for institute staff. The handbook provided a list of PD activities available for staff to complete. A hard copy was placed in the staff room for easy access and each staff member could obtain additional information via the staff intranet. Staff members were also able to email other alternative activities to the HOD for consideration and approval.

The hospitality department also had a specific departmental strategy which was part of the management system and assisted it to be compliant with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

Professional development and the relationship to effective teaching and learning outcomes for students

Mark believed that there was not always an immediate application of the information acquired at a PD activity, especially in terms of the impact on students. Changes in staff behaviour and practice are observed and more apparent over the longer term. These changes could be reflected by the educator applying different teaching and learning approaches in the classroom. Mark suggested that staff could become more enthusiastic as a result of their PD participation, in how they

approached their teaching practices and how they introduced new ideas and innovations into their programs.

Generally, when assessing the effectiveness of a PD activity, Mark expected to see some change or impact in the staff member's performance this may not be immediate but become apparent over time. This change for example could be an increase in workplace motivation which was then translated into a more enthusiastic and motivated educator.

Dissemination of skills and knowledge gained via professional development

At Mark's institute, a staff member was required to make a formal staff presentation if a PD activity had wide application. Mark acknowledged that some PD activities were individually specific and there was little value in sharing this information with others.

VET teaching qualifications

Mark considered the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training qualification as a course that prepares some educators very well and others not so well. He felt some educators had insufficient opportunities to practice their delivery and thus were not well prepared for teaching in a classroom environment. Practice and reflection upon the teaching practice should be part of every Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. Mark stated that:

> It is important in the Certificate IV that whenever anyone does this
> course they have time to reflect on their teaching practice and they
> can actually work through some classroom case studies to develop
> their skills in making presentations (Interview, Mark, August 2005).

Mark pointed out that there is a huge variation in the quality of delivery of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training particularly in effective teaching delivery and fulfilling administration requirements. He revealed that when a staff member started at the institute, they had 6 months to prove themselves and hone their teaching practice and skills. If they did not, then the educator would not be rehired for the next six months. Mark stated:

If the Certificate IV qualification doesn't equip the educator properly and the educator doesn't take the time to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to assist them in providing a learning environment for the students, then they will not have a job (Interview, Mark, August 2005).

Mark believed a qualification that provides time for reflection, discussion with other practitioners and time for observation of practice is the essence of what is required to prepare an educator appropriately. These aspects need to be incorporated into a Certificate IV qualification.

Mark believed that an educator who desires to have a long term career in teaching should be contemplating further studies in education. The further studies he mentioned were a Graduate Diploma or a Degree. He felt these qualifications were suitable for people who are interested in a long-term commitment or looking at taking on a role of an administrator or a senior educator.

Sessional staff members and professional development access

Mark revealed that all in-house PD activities were open for sessional staff to attend. This invitation to attend did not always provide additional engagement for sessionals because a sessional might have other commitments when the in-house PD was being conducted. The sessional might be working at another institute or be working in industry. Mark stated the following about PD for sessional staff:

I think we are quite generous with what we do for sessional staff in terms of PD. They are entitled to access all the computer training and the cross-cultural courses, dealing with different people which are offered at the institute. We do put a lot of effort into training the sessional staff (Interview, Mark, August 2005).

Mark suggested that it could be difficult to include sessionals in more expensive activities conducted off campus. An expensive PD activity which might cost over $500 would only be available to full-time staff or contract staff. The PD budget would not extend to sessional staff members because the institute would only obtain a limited return from investment. Mark commented that "it just costs too much" (Interview, Mark, August 2005).

VET teaching competencies

Mark proposed some key skills that should be considered mandatory for an educator. Administration is important in the AQTF and therefore staff members need to possess appropriate computer literacy skills to be able to complete necessary paper work. An educator is required to understand the obligatory occupational health and safety standards especially if the educator is training in a hazardous environment, such as a training kitchen. Many VET institutes educate a diversity of international students as well as domestic students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Staff members are better prepared to support these students if they are familiar with cross-cultural issues and have an appreciation and understanding of working with a diverse client base.

Mark suggested that all educators need to have undertaken a PD program that provides them with a background to the VET sector. This will enable them to understand the historical changes that have taken place and appreciate the external issues that are influencing the sector. He felt that VET educators may then obtain an improved appreciation of the bigger picture and where they fit in that picture.

When employing, Mark looked for educators who were able to effectively complete the required paperwork. A high proficiency in English was important. He felt an educator should understand and be familiar with the research concerning learning styles and thus be able to deal with the learning differences within his/her classroom. An educator should be able to operate and comprehend new technology being employed in the education and hospitality industry, such as palm pilot used to record student attendance. Mark pointed out that there were a lot of reporting requirements that had to be completed on a computer, especially the entering of student results. Email was also an essential communication tool which all educators were required to understand and utilise.

Mark believed that educators should have good time management skills in order to organise classes and assessment and understand how to write an assignment

which is appropriate and can be understood by the students. They need to be able to provide adequate feedback to the students on their performance and have an understanding of trends, equipment and software packages such as Fidelio (an accommodation reservation system) and Galileo (an airline reservation system). Mark believed an educator must always be on the search for new resources that can be adapted and utilised in the classroom to enhance the students' learning environment.

The minimum recent and relevant industry experience required for VET staff is dependent on the qualification the educator holds. Mark for example, looked for educators with a degree in hotel management or tourism and a minimum of 5 years experience. If the educator had a qualification at Certificate level they should have a minimum of 10 years industry experience and if they did not have any formal qualifications, 15 years industry experience.

Professional development funding sources

The funding arrangements in Mark's department were allocated by the Associate Director who controlled a PD account and had the discretion to spend this account on appropriate PD activities. There was also an institute-controlled PD fund. Mark's institute allocated approximately $500,000 per year for general PD for staff across the institute. Mark said his institute had recently focused on a management development program for permanent staff. The institute identified suitable staff who they considered could have a long-term future with the organisation and who were seen as future senior management. Out of 16 staff who undertook this program, eight staff members were still with the institute and seven of these held senior management roles, at the level of head department or above at the time of the study interview.

Responsibility for professional development

Mark was partly responsible for PD in association with the Associate Director of the institute. The staff and the Training and Development Services division were also responsible for organising PD activities. Mark stated that "we all have a

responsibility and my responsibility is identifying PD that the staff need and making arrangements for that to be met" (Interview, Mark, August 2005).

Mark's final thought

Mark suggested that there are two areas that should deserve more attention in respect to PD activities: return-to-industry training and acquainting staff with the bigger picture of VET.

Return-to-industry training is a category of PD which provides access to work placements back in the tourism and hospitality industry. Mark pointed out that a greater emphasis on return-to-industry or workplace familiarisation would improve the staff member's skills and knowledge. For return-to-industry activities to work more effectively, the PD would need to be connected to the Multi Enterprise Certified Agreement (MECA). A formal structured program could be linked to the 30 hours of PD access mentioned in the agreement.

The Mark believed the general public image of VET required improvement and this improvement should start from within the sector by educating staff about the importance of vocational education and training. Mark believed the VET sector will need to be more predominant in the education arena if it is to move forward and grow.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 presented 14 portraits. Ten portraits revealed the career journey of front-line educators who participated in this study and 4 portraits examined how HODs managed PD activities within their department.

Each front-line educator portrait exposed a personal perspective of the challenges and rewards experienced when completing any PD activity. The HOD portraits examined issues on how to best execute effective PD practices within their department. The data obtained at interview was developed into specific categories of responses which were constructed from the study objectives.

Chapter 5 will present a discussion and analysis of the educator and HOD portraits. This chapter will provide a study definition for PD and examine the relationship between PD and PL. The key themes to be explored are: access to PD for all educators; the technical competencies and teaching competencies required by a VET educator; suitable teaching qualifications for this sector and the relationship between PD and effective teaching and learning outcomes for students.

Chapter 5　Discussion and analysis

Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the data concerning the original research questions listed in Chapter 1. Bouma (2000) emphasised the importance of reflecting on the original purpose of the study before launching into the analysis and drawing conclusions. This study's five objectives were:

1. To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the technical competence needed to conduct effective teaching/training programs

2. To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the professional teaching/training competencies required for effective practice

3. To apply the VET educators' perceptions in the construction of a detailed taxonomy of teaching/training competencies in the VET tourism and hospitality sector

4. To apply the VET educators' perceptions in determining appropriate qualification requirements for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector

5. To propose specific recommendations for the improvement of PD practices for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector.

These objectives were developed into 2 schedules of interview questions applied at the first 2 stages of data collection (Refer to Appendices 7 and 8). To complete the analysis stage of the research Patton (1990) suggested: "The greatest challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal" (pp. 371-372). Lofland and Lofland (1994) proposed that to overcome this challenge the research should be grouped into categories of responses and those categories should be ordered in some systematic manner.

The interview questions for this research were translated into specific categories of responses and these categories were utilised as the subheadings presented in the portraits in Chapter 4. This chapter examines each category to expose themes and patterns within the category and to actively generate meaning and draw conclusions that relate back to the original objectives (Esterberg, 2002). Similarities and differences are highlighted and discussed. The key categories are shown in Table 1

Key Response Categories	Typologies
Professional development: a definition	- Individual competence - Lifelong learning - Team/organisation - Formal/informal pathways
Professional development and professional learning	- Motivation - Relevance of professional development for participants - Dissemination of learning gained at professional development activities - Responsibility for undertaking professional development
Access to professional development	- Sessional educators - Full-time educators - Process, procedures and funding sources
Technical competencies	Industry skills and knowledge
Teaching competencies	- Students - Teaching and learning - VET - Content - Administration - Information technology
VET teaching qualifications	- Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training - An education diploma or degree

Table 1 - Key Response Categories

The following section provides some insights based on participants' interviews about these 7 key categories. (Refer to Appendix 9 for a summary of the key categories, constructs and discussion points in the chapter).

Professional development: a definition

Analysis in this category focused on the following 4 typologies: individual competence; lifelong learning; team/organization and formal/informal learning pathways.

Individual competence

Phillipa suggested that developing professional competence was an important outcome of PD. Improving performance was another PD outcome indicated by Richard. Loucks-Horsley (2005) agreed with this view on PD, defining PD as "Opportunities offered to educators to develop knowledge skills, approaches and dispositions to improve their effectiveness in their classrooms and organisations" (p. 4). James, Mary, Lynne, Sarah-Anne and Jane also concurred with this definition revealing that PD was concerned with the development of the individual "self education…self improvement"; "personal development"; "building the educator's skills". Joanne pointed out that an educator must "want" to do the PD activity. PD is: "Something that has to be self-driven and something that you want to do with a passion. It is not something that you can be directed to do" (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Lifelong learning

Giuseppe suggested a much broader definition of PD: obtaining skills as you progress in your career. This encompasses the concept of lifelong learning. Elizabeth agreed with Giuseppe's lifelong learning focus. She suggested PD was the "continuous development of the person" (Interview, Elizabeth, June 2004).

Team/organisation

Jenny and Natasha perceived PD to be an activity to improve skills and knowledge

so that the person is more valuable for the organisation. Jack, a HOD, referred to a similar perspective which provided an explanation from a management point of view. Jack defined PD as "equipping the individual and the team with the skill to be able to do the job adequately" (Interview, Jack, June 2005).

Formal/informal pathways

Jane, Richard and Sarah–Anne suggested that upgrading one's skills could be done using formal and informal PD pathways. A formal pathway could be a structured and accredited course such as a Graduate Diploma in Education. Informal pathways might involve personal research on the Internet, discussions with colleagues, reading journals and visitations to industry and institutional workplaces. The Centre for Education Research and Innovation (CERI) in Loveder (2004) agreed that PD includes both formal and informal pathways "PD is any activity that develops an individual's skills, knowledge and other characteristics as a teacher/educator. PD includes personal study and reflection, as well as formal courses" (p. 4).

Based on the participant's contributions I have selected the following definition for this research study. PD is defined as learning opportunities which improve an individual's competence making them more valuable to their workplace team and organisation. PD is obtained throughout an individual's life-time, via formal and informal learning pathways.

The above typologies assisted in setting a reference point or "a definition" of PD for this study. This definition allowed me to develop an understanding of the meaning of PD for the participants. It provided a basis to build a foundation from which appropriate PD activities could emerge. It is important to take into account aspects of the above typologies when considering appropriate PD for VET educators.

Professional development and professional learning

Analysis in this category focused on the following 4 typologies: motivation; relevance; dissemination and responsibility.

Motivation

The PD undertaken during the careers of the ten front-line educators consisted of both formal and informal activities. Many of the educators had completed tertiary or trade qualifications in their chosen discipline prior to commencing their teaching career. All had been motivated to educate themselves prior to educating others. The standards of qualifications held by both full-time educators and sessionals were high, since most held a degree or above. A number held more than one tertiary qualification.

Many of the educators described numerous PD experiences that they had found to be valuable and stated that they were able to apply many of the newly acquired skills and knowledge immediately into their classroom delivery. When this immediate application to the workplace occurred, it was both motivating and satisfying for the educators. Jane commented "I did a three day desktop publishing course using Word and I have applied that so much" (Interview, Jane, October 2004). She was able to establish a flexible learning subject by applying her newly acquired skills. She consequently obtained positive feedback from the students who undertook that subject and she found this reaction very satisfying and rewarding. In this case Jane's PD had translated into PL for her as it was a positive and motivating learning experience for both herself and her students. Jane perceived value and a useful application of the PD learning activity in the real life delivery of her subject (Knapper and Cropley, 2000). In this study, many of the front-line educators were able to reflect on a PD activity that was beneficial and motivating because it had translated into a significant personal PL experience.

In contrast to these positive learning examples, both Phillipa and Richard described PD activities that they considered rather pointless and de-motivating. Richard, for example, was told that he should attend occupational health and safety training and that he would be responsible for it in his area. Richard's forced attendance at the PD activity concurred with Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) who asserted that many PD activities are something forced upon educators rather than something they may want. Richard stated that he "walked away from the training

feeling uncomfortable with this added responsibility" (Interview, Richard, November 2004). This PD experience was a very de-motivating experience for Richard as he had viewed the PD activity quite negatively.

Negative perceptions were also identified in relation to the quality of teaching provided by the person delivering the learning activity. Phillipa's PD experience was training in information technology. Phillipa found the instructor to be ineffective in imparting the learning concepts. Phillipa commented that she "thought I would even stop attending in the middle of the course because I just didn't understand what was being taught" (Interview, Phillipa, August 2004). This PD activity left the learner with a negative and de-motivated perspective. The PD experience provided no direct application of the learning and no PL was obtained.

If a PD activity had little immediate application, the satisfaction levels of the participant diminished. If an educator had been instructed or formally directed to attend an activity, the level of satisfaction was at risk of being compromised. Motivation to learn is more associated with internal desires to obtain certain skills and knowledge rather than external pressure coming from the organisation (Knowles, 1984).

Relevance of professional development for the participant

When the participants spoke about their views on whether a PD activity was valuable, many indicated that it was dependant upon the relevance of the activity and whether it translated into direct workplace application. Relevance was an essential ingredient for PD to be effective. Sarah-Anne related an industry visit to the National Art Gallery that was very relevant for her delivery on customer service. She was able to discuss this customer service example with her students illustrating aspects of quality service provided at the National Art Gallery.

> I spent the next hour talking to students about customer relations and how there was different service staff…I have been able to use examples of the visit to the art gallery. I found that good (Interview Sarah-Anne, November 2004).

Both Elizabeth and James also referred to the importance of "relevance" of the PD activity to the educator. James re-affirmed this opinion when he spoke about his teacher training experience. He stated:

> It was very relevant to my work and job position and I was able to share experiences with other members of the class, not only learning from the teacher but my fellow classmates. This was an excellent learning environment (Interview, James, August 2004).

The teacher training PD had been appropriate at the time and had assisted in developing James' teaching skills. This PD activity had also increased James' job satisfaction levels. His learning was enhanced as a result of him being able to link his course to his practice (i.e. his teaching) (Knowles, 1984).

Jenny, a sessional educator was a little cynical when she spoke about her PD experiences. She asked "is PD going to be the solution for the quality? …is any type of PD going to enhance the skills and knowledge of the educator?" (Interview, Jenny, April 2005). This statement highlights the fact that Jenny had some reservations and concerns about the effectiveness of PD activities when there is no specific relevance to the educator. Is it PD for PD sake or should there be some strategic thought given prior to the selection of a PD activity?

Dissemination of learning gained at professional development activities

The HOD participants revealed major differences between what occurred at different institutes in the way they disseminated information obtained at PD activities. Each institute endeavoured to disseminate PD in theory, but this dissemination did not necessarily translate into changed or improved practice.

Using a train the trainer model, for example, can enable an individual or small group who have attended a PD activity to follow up later and provide training to their colleagues upon their return to the workplace.

Educators' meetings were a common mechanism or forum to discuss recent PD

activities undertaken by staff members. This strategy is burdened with communication barriers because it is difficult to replicate the essences of a training seminar in the very limited duration of a staff meeting. It was pointed out that communication is further diminished if the listeners are not necessarily familiar with the content area. It was recommended by Mark, Lynne and Jack that it is usually better to try and send a number of participants rather than have an individual present a second-hand report after the PD activity. Lynne argued that: "If it was the intention for everyone to obtain this learning then everyone should have attended" (Interview, Lynne, July 2005). Due to financial restrictions, however, the concept of sending everyone can be price prohibitive. It was identified that some PD activities could be individual specific and in these cases there was little value in sharing this information with others.

Responsibility for undertaking professional development

All professionals are required to keep abreast of current developments in their industry. Educators of the next generation of skilled workers should be accountable for passing on current and relevant industry skills. To be able to accomplish this practice, educators need to be up to date with contemporary teaching and learning strategies as well as current industry trends. PD is a way of obtaining and maintaining these skills. This situation raises an important question: where does the responsibility lie for ensuring educators possess the necessary skills and knowledge in both their teaching discipline and in teaching and learning?

Participants indicated that the responsibility for PD should be shared by both the individual and the institute. Attending a PD activity demonstrated a commitment from the educator to improving their professionalism and to enhance and develop their educational practice. The full-time educators had an expectation that their employer also had a certain amount of responsibility in respect to PD undertaken by a staff member. This expectation could be a result of the 30 hours of PD required by an educator as stated in the MECA, which was previously discussed. In contrast, the sessional educators indicated that institute support was a bonus rather than an expectation. Natasha suggested that PD should be linked to a

reward or recognition process, where educators are recognised for the additional effort of completing more than the required 30 hours of PD:

> It comes down to a recognition system that recognises those educators who want to advance and better themselves. The skills that they develop can be applied in a classroom and the educator raises the standards of the institute (Interview, Natasha, December 2004).

In most cases the full-time educators in consultation with the HOD determined and negotiated PD activities usually on a departmental and individual needs basis. PD undertaken might satisfy a skills gap in the department or be an activity identified by the educator to up-skill, re-skill or provide new learning to assist them with their professional practice.

Once an appropriate PD activity is selected, it can be then identified in the educator's yearly work-plan or staff performance and development plan. In some instances the HOD drove the PD selection because it was important to make sure that the department had a range of skill sets across the areas of current institute business requirements. An effective strategy is one that links the individual's learning with the strategic goals of the employing organisation. Providing a link to the strategic business goals facilitates any learning in parallel to the immediate targets of the organisation (Byrne, 2001). A learning contract or work-plan can provide grounds for mutual gain and cooperation and understanding (Knowles, 1975; Rogers, 1969; Burns, 2002).

In reality, the front-line educators indicated that PD selection was done on a rather ad hoc basis; it was not always in-line with nor linked with the strategic focus of the department (Harris et al., 2001). The HODs all had differing degrees of responsibility and authority for the PD activities in their departments. HODs usually were able to approve PD that was financially inexpensive and could come out of the limited department budget. Any PD activity which was considered expensive (i.e., expenses in excess of $500) required approval from the Associate Director. The HODs indicated that most TAFE institutes also had a specific department which dealt with generic PD activities. The multiple levels of approval contributed to

the complexity of the approval process and could be a barrier to access for both full-time and sessional staff members. Staff members could perceive the process to be too onerous and not apply because of this perception.

Access to Professional Development

Analysis in this category focused on the following 3 typologies: sessional educators; full-time educators; processes, procedures and funding sources for PD.

Sessional educators

One of the contrasting differences for sessional and full-time staff was their access (or lack of) to PD. The full-time educators were asked about their perceptions concerning the availability and access of PD for sessional staff in their workplace. The sessional educators were also interviewed about their personal experiences with PD activities across the institutes in which they had been employed. Reed et al., (2003) indicated in their research that there was a lack of management support for specific groups such as sessional educators. This lack of management support for sessional educators' PD reinforces the notion of a secondary labour force discussed in the flexible firm (Smith, 1995). This is where the secondary labour force is treated in a different way from the primary full-time employees.

Access to PD for sessionals may be connected with how sessional staff members are regarded by management. Phillipa, a full-time educator, commented that her department only used sessionals if there was a specific skills gap because there was a problem that sessional staff members were only on campus for a limited duration. This view was substantiated by Jenny, a sessional, who also described the main purpose of sessional staff as filling the gaps. They were not to be developed in any way that made them useful for the longer term (Anell and Wilson, 2000). PD was not considered to be critical for sessionals. Jenny and Natasha (another sessional) had never worked in an institute that treated sessionals as truly belonging to the staff cohort i.e., "member of staff". Elizabeth commented that many sessionals were on the periphery of the system because they spent limited time on campus and were restricted in the total number of hours they were able to

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work over a twelve month period. This curbed their ability to participate in PD activities.

Phillipa, Sarah-Anne and Giuseppe revealed that accessing PD was dependent on costs incurred, pointing again to the PD barrier of lack of funding (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999, Harris et al., 2001, Reed et al., 2003). Costs involved were central to approval for full-time educators in obtaining access to PD. This issue of cost was further exacerbated when it came to PD access for the sessional educator. If there was no obvious cost involved, a sessional might be included in the PD activity but as soon as funds were required, barriers to approval appeared.

Mark explained that it was very difficult to allow sessionals to go away for a conference or attend an extended PD session due to financial constraints on the institute. Inexpensive in-house PD was open to sessional staff. An expensive course (i.e., in excess of $500) offered at another institute or independent organisation would not be offered to a sessional, because management at many institutes did not believe they would gain maximum benefit from the money spent. An expensive course would only be available to full-time staff or contract staff who were alleged to have greater loyalty and commitment to the institute. Burns (2002) suggested that businesses consider training favourably if there is a perceived value added to the employee. In other words, will the employee be more valuable to the business post training. The decision to provide training can often be made on faith or prejudice rather than applying a true outcomes indicator measure. Therefore, expensive courses would be price prohibitive for sessional staff members and only offered to full-time staff members. This preferential treatment suggests that PD is only available to sessional staff when there are limited or no expenses associated with the PD activity.

An additional barrier for sessionals in accessing PD was the limited time they may spend at any one campus or institute in a specific week. They were often left out of any PD training because they were not on campus when the PD was conducted. Mary suggested that there was a "lack of fairness within the system in regard to

being a sessional" (Interview, Mary, March 2005). While Mary had self funded most of her PD during her working career, she revealed that finding the time to attend PD could also be difficult due to the nature of her sessional work as she was required to work at a number of different institutes. Thus for her and many other sessional staff, PD was usually completed in her own time, fitting it around work and home commitments.

In Jane's and Sarah-Anne's experience, access to PD by sessional employees was very limited and in some cases non existent. Richard, another full-time educator, indicated that PD activities were generally only available for full-time staff members: "the poor sessional educator does not even get a look in" (Interview, Richard, November 2004). Elizabeth expressed frustration about "being left out of the loop, out of sight, out of mind" (Interview, Elizabeth, June 2004).

James highlighted a particular challenge for sessionals who work for any private VET institutes. Lynne, HOD at a private institute also had similar opinions. They both discussed that there were disadvantages in working for a private provider as opposed to a public education institute (TAFE). As a sessional who had worked in both the private and public education system, James felt that resources seem less plentiful in the private sector. James and Lynne pointed out that support for PD activities in the private sector was difficult to obtain. Funding for PD must be found from the fees paid by the students, since private VET providers obtain very limited government funding.

Lynne revealed that any PD at her private institute became an issue, especially for sessionals, if the PD was delivered off campus by another organisation and higher in cost than what was offered on campus. Lynne mentioned that in her view sessional staff were no more disadvantaged than full-time staff. All staff members struggled to obtain any institute supported PD, especially in recent years with tighter financial constraints being experienced by her private RTO.

All HOD interview participants were questioned about their perceptions concerning PD availability and access for sessional educators. Sessionals were disadvantaged when it comes to accessing PD due to time, availability, motivation, interest and funding constraints. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) concurred that the "two most cited reasons for non-participation in extra learning activities are "lack of time and money" (p. 56).

At Joanne's TAFE institute, sessional educators were invited to attend department meetings and planning days and there were funds available to pay them for this time. This practice however had only occurred in more recent years. Joanne stated "when I came here five years ago that didn't happen, sessional staff came in, taught and left" (Interview, Joanne, July 2005). This increased sessional access to PD might have occurred because the institute had become more proactive in providing access to PD experiences for all staff members. Joanne followed this proactive stance and encouraged her staff to increase the time they devoted to PD.

Jack suggested there are sessionals who are eager to eventually obtain a full-time position in an educational institute and they are interested in completing PD. These sessional staff members find the limitation to PD access frustrating. Jack also indicated there are other sessionals who utilised teaching as a part-time job for the extra income. Jack felt that these sessionals have little time or motivation to participate in PD activities and have created their own barrier to PD access.

At the completion of this discourse, it is evident that there are considerable discrepancies with regard to the access sessionals have to PD activities between institutes and across the VET system. Sessional educators do seem to be disadvantaged when it comes to access to PD activities in the VET sector. This different treatment of VET educators in respect to PD opportunities is creating significant inconsistency across the VET system, especially when it is considered that sessional staff members comprise a substantial percentage of the current VET workforce.

Full-time educators

At the time of study the employment conditions for full-time TAFE educators were specified in the MECA. This agreement outlined a provision of 30 hours or more to be allocated for any PD activities in a calendar year. The interview participants who were employed full-time at TAFE institutes specified that their workplaces had provided at least 30 hours and in some cases up to 10 days to complete PD activities. However, in many cases not all the costs associated with each activity had been funded by the institute. Financial support and suitable time release had to be negotiated in consultation with management to foster positive PD opportunities. The obligation of providing a minimum of at least 30 hours of PD ensured that all full-time staff members had access to a certain amount of PD in each calendar year. If this obligation of a minimum number of hours of PD was not strategically planned to benefit the individual and the institute there was no guarantee that the PD would translate into PL.

The full-time educators stated that financial support for PD was more readily available from their industry employers they had prior to commencing a teaching career. All participants mentioned that they had self-funded a portion, if not a predominant part, of their PD activities in the past, especially after beginning a career in VET education. One of the barriers identified by Harris (2001) and then substantiated by Reed et al., (2003) was a lack of funding for backfill; that is for someone else to perform the educator's duties while they were attending the PD activity. Thus educators could only attend PD when they did not have timetabled classes. In addition to the lack of time release, the payment for the activity was usually sourced from the educator rather than the employer. The words "self-funded PD" was mentioned by all participants. This reference came with a negative reflection.

Richard and Giuseppe both held contrasting views to the other participants in that they were both satisfied with the support they had been given for PD that they had undertaken. They were both full-time educators and had received adequate encouragement and financial backing from their institutes. They, and Sarah-Anne,

indicated that the selection of PD could be ad hoc. She suggested that institutes do not seem to perform effective training needs analysis. Sarah-Anne indicated that conducting a training needs analysis prior to approving staff PD was a better strategy for matching the PD needs of the individual with the PD requirements of the training institute, thus providing mutual benefit to both parties.

Process, procedures and funding sources

In 2007, the AQTF was updated and the principles were revised to three standards rather than 12. These standards focus on improving outcomes for clients via continuous improvement approaches rather than just compliance to the standards. As part of the continuous improvement process, RTOs are required to document evidence that trainers and assessors are maintaining and improving their competencies, through attendance at relevant PD activities. The requirement to keep records of improvement of educators' skills and knowledge should assist in increasing the quantity of PD conducted by RTOs in the future, but it will not guarantee an improvement in quality and an increase in PL experiences.

Each VET institute may have slightly different policies and procedures when it comes to achieving the AQTF requirements of continuous improvement. Three HOD interview participants were employed at TAFE institutes and one was employed by a private RTO. There were minimal differences between the TAFE institutes but the private RTO procedures were quite different. These differences will be explained in the following section.

As mentioned earlier, the TAFE institutes' working conditions for VET educators are itemised in the MECA with a 30 hour access to relevant PD activities requirement for all full-time staff members. At Jack's institute, this requirement had been extended and there was an expectation from management that staff would complete 10 days or 76 hours of PD per year. This allocation of PD time was not common at all TAFE institutes and certainly not at private RTOs. The discrepancy of PD provision within the VET sector produces a workforce with some participants being able to keep up to date with advancements in their industry and others who

are lagging behind. This discrepancy in training has implications for the quality of teaching and learning available to students in the long term.

In most cases, it is the responsibility of the HOD to record and manage the PD activities of the staff within their department. This documented information is also kept at a School or Faculty level and also by the Human Resources department.

All PD activities have to be funded from some source. If there is no cost for the actual activity, there is always an expense associated with the time required to attend the activity. As mentioned earlier when PD is completed in work time, the educator may need to be backfilled to cover their teaching commitments or the other duties. This can be a barrier to participation (Reed et al., 2003). Jane negotiated suitable time release to ensure her PD attendance did not interrupt her scheduled classes. When a PD activity is conducted out of the work hours, the time allocation is the employee's responsibility. This increased workload creates additional work-life challenges at a personal level.

In the TAFE system, VET funding is sourced from the State Government. Each Institute sets specific budgets for PD activities. Within the TAFE institutes, there are a number of layers of approval and funding resources available. Firstly there is a limited amount of funds available for PD at the department level which in many cases comes from the department's consumables budget or the reserve budget. This departmental budget is usually a modest amount of money. An educator is required to apply and justify their request for any PD activity. Ideally these PD activities should be itemised in the educator's yearly work-plan. This approval process does not decrease the quantity of PD approved that can be decided on an on an ad hoc basis. This approval to access PD funding at the department level is at the discretion of the HOD and may not be linked to the strategic goals of the institute.

Joanne, a HOD at a TAFE institute, suggested that she would typically approve the use of department level funds for very specific industry PD (e.g. wine conferences;

chef bakery course or the membership fee for an industry based association). She would provide approval for the PD activity via a "needs and wants basis which has been identified by the educator and then stipulated in their yearly work-plans" (Interview, Joanne, July 2005). Joanne had worked with four institutes during her time in the VET sector. She mentioned that her current employer was "very proactive" (Interview, Joanne, July 2005) where PD was concerned. She stated:

> The staff do not have to worry about getting knocked back usually for their PD. At another institute the answer was, there is no money. At my current institute it is really good; the management are very people oriented (Interview, Joanne, July 2005).

Reed et al., (2003) uncovered in their research that educators desire a PD system that does not always rely completely on approval by the department manager. A comment from their research participants was "They say that there is no money for PD but we know it just gets spent on other things" (p.50). Similar views were expressed by the interview participants of this study.

The next level of funding is at the school or faculty level. This funding is at the discretion of the Associate Director and an educator must apply and validate the need for the requested PD training via the HOD. To obtain funding for PD at this level, an educator must justify their reasons for a specific PD activity and the application must be supported by the HOD. Therefore this situation creates two approvals before a PD activity can be undertaken. This two-stage process can thus increase the possibility of the application not being approved and the increased documentation can be a disincentive to potential applicants.

There is funding that is centrally controlled for all institute staff members. In some institutes there is a Staff College, as at Jack's institute, while at others (Joanne's and Mark's institutes) there is a Training and Development division within the Human Resources Department. These divisions advertise the available PD activities via the intranet, and/or annual calendar or handbook. PD provided from this source is usually generic and relevant for staff across the institute (e.g., IT application training that could have institute specific requirements concerning

student record systems or finance). Approval to attend these PD activities is obtained from the HOD.

Funding arrangements are different at private RTOs. Lynne, a HOD, was employed at a private provider and the funding was generated from fees paid by students and a small amount of funding allocated by the government. Lynne reflected that there never seemed to be sufficient funds available to conduct PD at her institute. PD approval is at the discretion of the Institute Director and she stated his usual response was "no, we cannot afford it" (Interview, Lynne, July 2005). Lynne felt she did not have sufficient access to relevant financial information to determine what PD might be/could be available. This situation was very frustrating for her. There was no equitable and transparent allocation of PD funding for any of the staff. Lynne believed that the decision to approve a PD activity occurred on an ad hoc basis depending on how the institute director felt on the day.

In addition to these ad hoc funding arrangements, there was no calculated minimum or maximum number of hours of PD allocated to each staff member, as at the TAFE institutes. In previous years, some staff members were able to negotiate in their employment contract, a maximum of $1000 to support Director approved PD activities. Some staff obtained this benefit but other missed out. Once again this decision was at the discretion of the Director. Lynne said:

> Many of the teaching staff indicated that there was inequity due to
> some staff having access to $1000 of PD and other assuming they
> were entitled to it" (Interview, Lynne, July 2005).

This expectation created staff frustration and conflict across the institute. PD once again was obtained on a very random basis with very little strategic forecasting. This outcome is congruent with the research findings of Harris et al., (2001) that supports the assertion: "Currently most staff development is conducted ad hoc with little or no consistency" (p. 23). Participating in ad hoc, inconsistent and at times unwanted PD experiences could reduce the chance that the PD could lead to PL experiences.

Technical competencies for VET educators

Analysis in this category focused on the following typology: Industry skills and knowledge.

Industry skills and knowledge

Technical competencies are concerned with the industry skills and knowledge a VET educator has acquired prior to commencing a teaching career. The interview participants highlighted the importance in the hospitality and tourism sector of educators possessing a sound understanding of their industry prior to teaching. The educator is not necessarily required to be an expert in the field. It was suggested that a breadth of knowledge may be more beneficial for students than an educator with a more specific and narrow depth of knowledge. The experience level required in the classroom is also dependant on the students' level of learning expertise. For example, pastry classes may require a very experienced pastry chef with specific industry knowledge and experience while a basic methods of cookery class may require a chef with broader, less specific industry knowledge. Educators with a wide knowledge base are typically able to provide extensive industry based examples to support their teaching.

Mark, a HOD, indicated that an educator should have a minimum of 5 years experience and possess a Hotel Management or Tourism diploma or degree. If the educator had a qualification at Certificate level then they should have a minimum of 10 years experience and if they did not have any formal qualifications then 15 years experience would be required. Jack also mentioned the notion of a least 5 years experience being a criterion for recruitment at his institute.

VET teaching competencies

The second objective of this study was to gain the perceptions of educators about the professional teaching/training competencies required for effective education practice. All educators were questioned about their opinions concerning the key teaching competencies required for a VET educator. It became evident that many

of the responses were common across the three educator categories: full-time educators, sessional educators and HODs.

Appendix 10 illustrates the responses provided by the interview participants in relation to what types of skills and knowledge are required by a VET educator. These responses were further refined to produce the set of constructs and related teaching competencies listed in Table 2.

Constructs	Teaching Competencies
A. Students	Student engagement
	Student welfare and counselling skills
	Teaching international students
B. Teaching and Learning	Classroom management skills
	Organisation, preparation and time management
	Research skills
	Delivery and assessment strategies
C. VET	Understanding curriculum and training packages
	Possessing an understanding of the VET big picture
	Possessing a working knowledge of AQTF requirements and identifying compliance regulations
D. Content	A sound knowledge of the subject area – industry skills and knowledge
E. Administration	Knowledge of institute procedures and policies
F. Information technology	Computer literacy – e.g. developing online delivery, developing classroom resources, email communication, entering results

Table 2   Constructs and teaching competencies

Analysis in this category focused on the 6 constructs listed above: A) students; B) teaching and learning; C) VET; D) content; E) administration and F) information

technology. Each construct refers to a broad category of data that has been analysed and categorised under specific teaching competencies.

A. Students

Within the broad construct "students", data concerning the skills and knowledge of the educator in responding to the needs of the student cohort is discussed within 3 main competencies: student engagement; student welfare and counselling, and teaching international students.

Student engagement

Elizabeth, Mary and Natasha highlighted the importance of engaging students in their learning to increase the desire and motivation of the student to learn. Communication, interpersonal skills and a proficiency in English were identified as important skills to facilitate the learning process. Students might become disinterested and even worse, confused with the material being presented by the educator if they did not possess these skills. Developing a 'connection' with the student was considered important for all educators. Mary stated "keeping a group engaged … is the single greatest challenge for a teacher… making it interesting" (Interview, Mary March 2005). Students who are engaged in the learning activity are more likely to retain the material and information that is being delivered because they become interested in the subject matter.

Educators need to be familiar with and capable of implementing a range of teaching and learning strategies to foster student engagement. These techniques include group work, problem solving, task-centred activities or inquiry based research. Educators can apply experiential learning practices which foster an environment where the participant experiences the learning on a first hand basis and is immersed in the learning experience. Students are more likely to become engaged in their learning when they understand why they need to learn and learning is linked to real life situations (Knowles, 1984). Educators today need PD that broadens their teaching repertoires and leads to PL by engaging students and enhancing student learning.

Student welfare and counselling

The front-line educators indicated there was a need for educators to care about their students. "Educators have to have the students' interests at heart" (Interview, Mary, March 2005). Educators are often called upon to provide counselling to students on their career aspirations and other more personal issues (Armitage et al., 2003). Educators require access to PD experiences that will provide them with skills and knowledge to be able to evaluate difficult situations that might be distracting students from their studies. If an educator is not able to provide advice then (perhaps due to a lack of professional counselling training) then it is important that the educator is able to recognise the limitations of their role. Appropriate PD activities can provide an educator with fundamental skills and knowledge to handle basic counselling situations with confidence. Confronting students' personal issues can increase the educator's stress level if they do not have the appropriate skills and knowledge to know when to refer the student to a more appropriate person or service that might be able to assist with their often complex personal issues.

There was a discrepancy about the necessity of these skills, since none of the HODs mentioned counselling skills or caring about the students' welfare as a quality required by an educator. This lack of appreciation of counselling skills may have occurred because in the day-to-day working practices of a HOD they are not focusing on front-line skills required by educators. Many HODs take a step back from contact with students and may not realise that in recent years students are requesting more and more personal attention from the front-line classroom educator.

Teaching international students

Natasha and Mark indicated there was a requirement for an educator to understand and be able to relate to international students. Many institutes now have a growing cohort of students coming from overseas to study in Australia and educators need adequate training to manage issues associated with different international cohorts. Knowledge and skills in cultural sensitivity and awareness of where the students come from need to be available. Teaching strategies that

support the delivery of material to a group of English as a Second Language (ESL) students is essential. If institutes continue to enrol large international cohorts of students then the provision of relevant educator PD is a priority. Increasing cultural awareness will assist educators to create a learning environment which is accessible and engaging for all learners.

B. Teaching and learning

The teaching and learning construct focuses on the skills and knowledge required by an educator to supply a suitable and adequate learning environment for all students. Participant interview data highlighted educator competency requirements in the areas of: classroom management; organisation; preparation and time management; research skills and delivery and assessment strategies.

Classroom management

Classroom management was identified as a major issue for the educators in the VET sector. A large percentage of students come straight from VCE studies and do not exhibit mature learning behaviours. Post-VCE students require a certain level of classroom management, until they adapt to a post compulsory learning environment. Giuseppe stated:

> Classroom management and in particular being flexible, adaptable and being able to manage a changing learning environment are important (Interview, Giuseppe, November 2004).

Elizabeth reflected on the importance of managing the classroom environment. "An educator is required to possess strategies to deal with difficult situations" (Interview, Elizabeth, June 2004). These assertions were reiterated by other participants, especially those who were full-time educators. This consensus amongst the educators may be due to the fact that full-time educators in the TAFE sector spend at least 21 hours per week face to face in the classroom with students. Good classroom management provides an environment which fosters the capacity for learning for all students. Disruptions and a lack of classroom control can inhibit the learning process. Armitage et al., (2003) discussed similar requirements for teachers in the post-compulsory education arena in the United

Kingdom. Effective classroom management skills are essential to maximise effective learning by providing a functional learning environment for all.

Organisation, preparation and time management

Possessing skills in time management, being organised and well prepared were highlighted by all HODs and three of the front-line educators as being key teacher competencies. HODs suggested that they were looking for these skills when hiring VET educators. For an educator to provide effective learning for their students, it is necessary to plan and prepare in advance. Effective delivery and timing in the classroom is also essential. An educator must have sufficient and varied learning opportunities planned to engage students in the content of the lesson. Fully prepared educators must be able to adapt and moderate their delivery to meet the needs of the learners. When an educator is organised and well prepared for their lesson delivery they project a demeanour of self confidence and this confidence influences the attitudes of their students.

Research skills

The ability to conduct research was mentioned by both Mark and Jack, two HODs. They pointed out that a VET educator must be able to research and reflect upon current industry and educational advances. To keep abreast of current practices, educators must be able to identify new resources and incorporate them into the classroom environment. Contemporary VET educators are expected to continually reflect on and up-date their skills and content knowledge using appropriate research processes.

Delivery and assessment strategies

The ability to develop delivery and assessment strategies relevant to the learning context were skills identified as essential educator competencies. Without these teaching and learning skills it would be difficult to function effectively as an educator. Educators have "to be able to identify the objectives of the class and translate them into learning outcomes for the students" (Interview, James, August 2004). An educator is required to prepare material for the classroom and then

develop appropriate strategies to assess the students' learning and competency standard. Armitage et al., (2003) indicated that an educator needs the skills and knowledge to produce assessment strategies that measure student learning outcomes and are valid and reliable. Lynne had serious concerns about the lack of focus on the development of assessment material as a component of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. She felt there was a need to strengthen this area within the Certificate with particular emphasis on validation, validity and reliability and confirming what knowledge needs to be assessed (Armitage et al., 2003).

C. VET

The VET construct is concerned with VET-specific skills and knowledge required by an educator to effectively work within this education sector. Participants discussed a range of issues concerning areas of competence. The VET construct has been categorised in the following competencies: understanding curriculum and Training Packages; possessing an understanding of VET in the "big picture" context, and processing a working knowledge of the current AQTF requirements.

Curriculum and Training Packages

Participants from each educator category indicated that a VET educator is required to understand and be able to interpret the relevant Training Package for their industry. The Training Package provides the guidelines to prepare, deliver and assess each course unit of study. "A VET educator has to have a good understanding of the curriculum so that he/she can plan what has to be covered in the course" (Interview, Sarah-Anne, November 2004). The Training Package is the blueprint detailing the elements and performance criteria to be covered in the delivery. It is the guide book of the educator.

VET: the big picture

"VET: the big picture" refers to where the VET sector is positioned in the current educational environment. VET is a component of the post secondary education arena. With the growth in the economy in the last decade there are greater

demands for skilled employees. The VET sector is able to assist in producing these workers:

> Each year, the publicly funded training system educates more than 1.7 million Australians, an increase of half a million people since 1995. The system has grown in sophistication and prestige…and is increasingly a first choice for many of the 70% of young Australians who do not go directly from school to university (Department of Education and Training, 2005, p. IV).

It is this growth that has altered the educational focus of state and federal government to view the VET system more favourably when deciding on funding initiatives. The current political climate has recognised that there are many industry skill gaps in the Australian workforce and the VET system must be responsive to the ever changing needs of industry by providing high quality vocational training.

None of the front-line staff mentioned the "big picture of VET" in their interview discussion, while three of the HODs suggested that an educator should understand the "big picture of VET". Mark suggested that acquainting staff with the "bigger picture of VET" was important. He indicated that educators possessed a lack of knowledge in this area.

There is scope to improve the image of VET through relevant PD that informs VET educators about the importance and relevance of vocational education and training in the present growing economy. Educators can also value where the VET sector is positioned in the larger educational arena.

Australian Quality Training Framework

All the HODs indicated that an understanding of the AQTF requirements was important. However, only two of the front-line educators mentioned this requirement in their interview. This difference might be explained by the fact that the HODs had a greater focus on making sure that all policies and procedures, especially government compliance standards, were followed. The institute and the educator have a responsibility for VET educational compliance. For example, staff must maintain a current attendance register and itemised results as they are

obtained. All assessment tasks are required to reflect a specific element or elements of competency. The educator is required to provide a breakdown of results to reflect each element of competency not just provide one final grade.

D. Content

The content construct is aligned with the technical competencies of VET educators discussed earlier in this chapter. The concept of content is concerned with the industry technical skills and knowledge which a VET educator typically acquires prior to commencing a teaching career. Educators in the hospitality and tourism sector are expected to have worked and/or studied in their field prior to commencing a teaching career. Acknowledging that industry is rarely static, an educator is required to continually keep conversant with changes and innovations of that industry. The educator is providing skills and knowledge to the next generation of industry skilled graduates and thus there is a responsibility for them to facilitate suitable learning that will equip the students with current and future insights into industry practices.

The AQTF 2007 standards require a trainer or assessor to be able to demonstrate vocational competencies at least to the level of those being delivered and assessed. There is no minimum years of experience denoted. One HOD indicated that "a minimum of five years industry experience was required" before starting a teaching position (Interview, Mark, August 2005).

Mark proposed there was a need to include PD activities that could assist the educator in returning to industry and familiarising themselves with current industry trends. The PD activity would enable the educator to spend time back in an industry work place. This type of PD updates educators about current industry trends and developments and Williams (2000) argues this should be on a regular basis.

Mark further recommended that a returning to industry experience could fulfil the PD requirements listed in the 2003 MECA or could be included in the next

workplace agreement due to be finalised in 2008. In this way a formal structured program as described could be linked to the 30 hours of PD access.

E. Administration

The administration construct is concerned with the administrative duties that VET educators are required to perform as part of their position descriptions. Three interview participants indicated the necessity to understand the administrative functions required in their institute. One HOD pinpointed occupational health and safety issues as an important area to fully understand and the others spoke of attendance registers and other institute specific policies and procedures. The administration requirements of educators have increased over the past decade. AQTF requirements have expanded the quantity of required paperwork and compliance within the VET sector. Therefore educators must have access to relevant PD that enables them to not only be aware of the requirements but also to be able to meet the compliance requirements as stated.

F. Information technology

The information technology construct is concerned with information technology being used by an educator in their day-to-day operations. Many of the participants indicated that a good working knowledge of computers and being computer literate were essential in their working environment. At the simplest level, educators are expected to prepare classroom material and provide handouts that are generated via computer technology. Three of the HODs indicated a sound understanding of computers was a skill they looked for when hiring staff. "An educator is required to have competent computer skills" (Interview, Jack, June 2005). Lynne agreed, indicating that educators should "possess current technology and industry techniques" (Interview Lynne, July 2005).

In recent years, there has been a move to provide more flexible learning delivery for tertiary students. The expansion of the Internet has made the World Wide Web more accessible to all and provided another platform for learning. Students can now access their education via e-learning tools in a virtual classroom. Sigala

(2002) explained that tourism and hospitality educators will need to examine how online learning can be best facilitated and managed. Knowledge of online learning strategies will require the continual up-skilling of educators in order for them to apply these new technologies to enhance student learning.

VET teaching qualifications

One of the objectives of this study was to identify what educators perceived as an appropriate teaching qualification for a VET educator. This objective related directly to determining the essential professional teaching/training competencies required for effective practice within the VET sector.

Analysis in this category focused on the following 2 typologies: Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, and an education diploma or degree.

Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training or an education diploma or degree

At the time of study, the minimum teaching qualification for a VET educator was the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, (TAA40104) which superseded BSZ98. All full-time educators in this study perceived this qualification to only be a starting point for an educator in the VET sector. Words expressed by these educators were "not enough", "not sufficient", "not good enough" when they discussed the Certificate IV. Jane stated:

> I think it is very basic and there has been a de-skilling of teachers in TAFE. The Certificate IV might be acceptable as an entry point but it should be strongly encouraged that educators continue their education training from the point of entry (Interview, Jane, October 2004).

Seddon, Penna, and Dart (2002) revealed in their study that teacher respondents considered the Graduate Diploma in Education and the Bachelor of Education to be the most beneficial qualifications to build teaching capabilities. Their findings indicated that "the greatest diversity of views about the usefulness in relation to capability was recorded in relation to the Certificate IV in Assessment and

Workplace Training" (p. 9). This finding is reflected in the views of this study's participants.

The full-time educators revealed that an education diploma was a appropriate qualification for a VET educator. Many education diplomas contain a compulsory practicum component. This practicum requires the participant to actively perform teaching duties while being observed and evaluated by a supervisor or colleague (Cort et al., 2004). An alternative to being observed in the classroom was the development of a mentor/supervisor relationship which enabled the trainee educator and a more experienced mentor to participate in professional discussions, typically without classroom observation taking place. Both processes provided time for professional reflection by the trainee and feedback from the mentor or supervisor. Both Jane and Richard experienced a practicum component while they were completing their educational diploma. They found the experience very rewarding. Richard explained:

> You had a supervisor observing your classes and coming up with ideas. They say you seem to be ok with that but I want you to come up with some sort of alternative teaching strategy. Work on it over the next couple of weeks and I will come in and we will talk about it before-hand. You can then go and do the class and then we will have a post session briefing (Interview, Richard, November 2004).

Observation and feedback given by the supervisor after the completion of the classes provided a learning in the workplace encounter. Dewey (1963), Rogers (1969) and Jarvis (1987) believed that learning comes from experience. A practicum teaching experience in the workplace provided a real life learning experience. The Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training does not contain a mentor or practicum experience and educators perceived this deficiency to be a shortfall of this qualification.

The full-time educators perceived the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training did not provide adequate information concerning the fundamentals of how to learn to teach. There was insufficient time and focus for students undertaking the Certificate IV to explore teaching and learning theory and how it relates to

practice. School leavers typically possess limited professional knowledge and have often acquired patterns of behavior which inhibit learning. The Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training provided limited time for discussion and engagement on a range of fundamental issues including different learning styles and effective classroom management.

All the full-time participants possessed a diploma or higher qualification in education. This situation reinforced the notion that the study participants perceived that a qualification higher than the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training is required to be a VET educator, especially in a full-time position. Three sessional staff members: Elizabeth, James and Jenny revealed similar views. Jenny commented:

> I think it is great shame that Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training is meant to be a suitable qualification to be involved with education. I think it is just a real short cut and it is economically driven and I think it is a waste of time (Interview, Jenny, April 2005).

Contradicting this assertion, Mary and Natasha suggested that the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training offers an "excellent start" and provides a link between industry and education. Both, however, suggested that additional education qualifications should be sought upon commencing to teach. The educators suggested that the Certificate IV was not sufficiently rigorous and the quality of delivery varied depending on where you obtained the qualification. Jenny indicated that the course was economically driven and for this reason was too short in duration.

Mary and Phillipa expressed concerns about qualification standards in VET. Mary believed that at least Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training would improve the calibre of education candidates, while Phillipa stated:

> I think it is time that educational qualifications became mandatory for all teachers and by that I don't mean a Certificate IV. That could be a starting point but educators should upgrade that qualification while working. We wouldn't accept a nurse without a qualification

why should we accept our educators without one (Email, Phillipa, May, 2006).

The discussions with the HODs revealed similar perspectives concerning what was an appropriate teaching qualification for a VET educator. Jack indicated that an education diploma provided time for learning, application and reflection. Lynne had grave concerns that assessment was not covered adequately in the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training and Joanne suggested that the minimum national standard should be a diploma of teaching. Mark considered the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training qualification provided insufficient opportunities for educators to practice their classroom delivery techniques and thus ensure they were fully prepared for the teaching in a classroom environment. He suggested that practice and reflection upon teaching practice should be introduced as an essential component of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training (Fenwick and Tennant, 2004).

The majority of educators interviewed revealed that an educator who desires to have a career in teaching should be contemplating further studies in education and not be satisfied with the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. Seddon et al., (2002) discovered that a significant number of their survey respondents expressed strong support for an entry qualification at Certificate IV or above, but further indicated that it was important to encourage the educator to undertake additional education studies above a Certificate IV during their teaching career. This finding, if implemented would have significant PD implications.

Professional development and the relationship to effective teaching and learning outcomes for students

This last section of this chapter examines whether there is a relationship between PD/PL experiences and improved student learning outcomes. The HODs were asked to comment if they perceived there to be any relationship between PD activities and learning outcomes for students. The participants were able to supply examples of educators attending a PD activity which translated in PL because

there was a flow on effect into the classroom. Joanne revealed that she had approved a considerable amount of PD related to flexible delivery and that the skills and knowledge obtained at these learning activities had assisted the educators to produce flexible learning resources which were applied in teaching and learning delivery.

Mark was cautious when he reflected if there was a possible relationship between PD activities undertaken by educators and effective teaching and learning outcomes for students. He indicated that there was not always an immediate application of the skills and knowledge acquired at a PD activity especially in terms of the impact on students' learning. PL is not always immediately evident, but can develop over time once the educator has had time to reflect on and implement the newly acquired knowledge. Therefore changes in workplace behaviour and practice may be gradual and subtle in nature but nevertheless provide professional growth and satisfaction for the educator. If the educator is professionally fulfilled and has an increased sense of job satisfaction then they are more likely to motivate their students in the learning process (Stoll and Fink, 1996).

Jane believed the value of PD also extended beyond the session aims to the incidental learning exchange between participants. This incidental learning could indicate that a PD activity can provide a learning experience which extends beyond the initial training activity. Sharing and discussing ideas, experiences and teaching and learning strategise at a PD activity is a vital component of learning. This incidental learning is an informal learning pathway.

Jack explained that he found PD allocation a challenge because staff members did not always respond enthusiastically to participation. He felt some educators viewed PD as an increase in workload, rather than something that they gain benefit from. In contrast, Joanne revealed that PD participation was currently working well at her institute because staff members were enrolling in institute-based programs in increasing numbers. The difference between the two institutes could be due to a difference in departmental learning culture. Joanne's institute and department were

more proactive to PD activities than Jack's.

Educators invest quite a considerable amount of time and, often, personal money into PD activities as was explained in an earlier section in this chapter. It was presumed by Joanne, for example, that if there was a personal investment in PD then the activity chosen was usually associated with skills and knowledge to be applied in their classroom delivery or into a specific aspect of their workplace practices. One of the reasons educators do self directed PD is to enhance their professional practice. Knapper and Cropley (2000) reinforced this concept and suggested that it is essential for an educator to display passion and curiosity for their professional practice thus exhibiting characteristics of a lifelong learner. PD opportunities can provide an educator with the time and space to stop and examine their work practices. Positive PD activities that can generate enthusiasm for teaching and learning innovations are valued by most VET educators.

Conclusion

Chapter 5 has examined the links between the specific objectives raised in the study and the findings presented in the portraits. This chapter examined each category and uncovered themes and patterns within the category to construct meaning and connections which relate to the research objectives (Esterberg, 2002). Comparisons and variations in the participants' perceptions of PD were identified and discussed. The framework derived from the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 was applied to guide the discussion and analysis.

Chapter 6 provides recommendations and conclusions to this research study. The chapter will discuss each research objective in turn providing recommendations for future implementation.

Chapter 6   Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

This study commenced with a series of key objectives to explore the practice of professional development (PD) within the VET tourism and hospitality sector. The major focus was to investigate how PD provision for a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector had equipped them with both the technical competence of their discipline and teacher/training competence. My intention was to develop a set of recommendations which could be implemented for future training and development of VET educators at a local or national level.

This last chapter will draw its conclusions from the findings in Chapter 5 in a number of distinct areas. The results are firstly reported here according to the main research objectives.

Objective 1

To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the technical competence needed to conduct effective teaching/training programs

Technical competency is obtained prior to and also during an educator's teaching career. The technical skills and knowledge refer to industry specific expertise and proficiency in the educator's discipline area. Many of the participants in this study suggested it was important to possess a sound background in the specific discipline of hospitality and tourism. A wide breadth of industry skills and knowledge are essential for a VET educator. The educator is required to understand and interpret the Hospitality and Tourism Training Package so that they are able to produce training and assessment strategies which become the foundation for specific learning outcomes. As part of this process, an educator must be able to translate their industry experiences into appropriate workplace

examples which assist in illuminating the hospitality and tourism context. These industry examples become part of the classroom discussion and enliven the context of the topics being reviewed by the educator and the students.

The HOD study participants suggested that an educator should be required to have a minimum of 5 years of industry experience prior to entering a career in the VET sector. In addition to this, a VET educator should have the same or a superior qualification to the level of qualification they are delivering and assessing, or have obtained vocational competencies to this level. For example, an educator delivering units at a Certificate III level should have completed a qualification at Certificate III or above or have equivalent industry experience.

It was indicated that educators should continually up-date their industry knowledge and keep abreast of innovations and changes in their industry. This may be achieved via effective PD activities that take the educator back to the industry for short periods of time to obtain and refine their industry skills and knowledge. One of the HODs suggested that a structured return-to-industry activity could be a vehicle to achieve this outcome (Williams, 2000).

Objective 2

To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the professional teaching/training competencies required for effective practice

The study participants indicated that there was a large range of professional teaching and training competencies required by VET educators. These competencies can be obtained progressively during the career of a VET educator. Some may be via a formal qualification others competencies are gained while completing other PD activities and some competencies are gained on-the-job through practical experience. Specific constructs were developed and then refined into educator competencies. The constructs included the following: students, teaching and learning, VET, content, administration and information technology.

Each of these constructs will be examined in this section.

A. Students

An important competency to consider when exploring the construct of students is the ability to engage students in learning activities. The educator is required to understand the theory that underpins the strategies that facilitate effective learning. Engaged students are more likely to have the desire and motivation to learn.

Possessing the skills and knowledge to provide student welfare advice was another competency indicated by the study participants. An educator needs to have the ability to empathise with the personal difficulties and career challenges experienced by students in the 21st century. Fundamental counselling skills are now required by front-line educators.

Educators also need to be aware of the different learning requirements of individuals and student groups. The VET educator must be able to adapt the learning environment to meet the needs of a range of students such as international students; an increased mix of migrant students and students that may be suffering from a broad range of disabilities. To assist in providing a favourable learning environment, an understanding of international students' needs in respect to English as a Second Language (ESL) would be of great benefit.

B. Teaching and learning

An important competency to consider when exploring the construct teaching and learning is the ability to manage a classroom and provide a suitable environment for all students to engage in the process of learning. The skills required for effective classroom management can include dealing with difficult students, changing delivery techniques to keep the learning interesting, and fostering an inclusive learning culture which addresses access and equity components for all students.

Educators require organisational skills which assist in providing effective delivery and assessment. VET educators must be organised and have teaching and

training duties planned and prepared for their weekly timetabled classes. The VET educator is engaged in the learning environment for at least 21 hours a week and therefore must possess efficient time management skills to facilitate effective student learning.

A fundamental skill required by all educators is a sound knowledge of delivery and assessment strategies. An educator should be required to use knowledge of learning styles to support the development of classroom materials that enhance students' learning capacities. In addition to this, a VET educator must be able to develop assessment materials which are valid, reliable, equitable and consistent with the assessment requirements which are detailed in the industry training package. VET educators must also be able to research topic areas which they teach. An educator needs to have the skills to source and find up-to-date data and information about their teaching areas.

C. VET

The construct VET explores the competencies required by a VET educator to work effectively within the VET sector. Educators need to possess a sound understanding of curriculum and training packages. A training package is a nationally endorsed, integrated set of competency standards, assessment guidelines and the Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise. Educators must be able to effectively translate the information provided in these industry training packages or curriculum documents into delivery and assessment strategies which comply with all the regulatory requirements.

A sound knowledge of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF, 2007) is required by all VET educators. A VET educator must be able to follow the guidelines and regulatory requirements addressed at a national level. A VET educator must be able to appreciate where VET is located in the larger tertiary sector. Vocational education is very important in providing skills and knowledge to the expanding Australian workforce.

D. Content

The content construct refers to the possession of an excellent knowledge of the subject content in which each educator is required to teach. This construct refers also to the ability to maintain a current view and understanding of innovation and change within their particular industry. This may be supported with time spent back in the industry; attendance at industry conferences or researching new initiatives while building industry networks.

E. Administration

The administration construct refers to an educator possessing a consistent understanding of administration duties required at a national level (AQTF, 2007) and at a local institutional level. Educators are required to maintain accurate records of student attendance including the breakdown of assessment in each unit of study. Educators are also faced with institute specific policies and procedures with which they must comply.

F. Information technology

The information technology construct refers to an educator possessing sound computer literacy skills and knowledge. A VET educator is required to develop delivery and assessment materials that can be used to full advantage in the learning environments. A VET educator must be able to operate the student record management system and communicate to students and colleagues via electronic mediums. Educators need to keep abreast of emerging industry and educational technologies. A VET educator is required to apply classroom technologies including laptop computers, LCD projectors and multimedia and also understand technological changes and developments in their industry.

Objective 3

To apply the VET educators' perceptions in the construction of a detailed taxonomy of teaching/training competencies in the VET tourism and hospitality sector

This objective focussed on the construction of a taxonomy of teaching/training competencies. Taxonomy is defined as the practice of classification. Kinds of things are arranged by what is called a parent-child relationship. For this study a set of constructs (parent) were sub classified into a set of educator competencies (child).

This taxonomy was developed from the information provided in Objective 2 above. The taxonomy provides a summary of the key teaching and training competencies a VET educator needs to acquire during their career journey (Refer to table 2).

The acquisition of these skills and knowledge may commence at the initial teacher training stage, while completing the Certificate IV in Assessment and Training and further refine when completing a diploma or degree of education. Effective PD practices will also assist an educator to gradually develop further comprehension and deeper understanding in specific aspects of these teaching competencies.

The taxonomy proposed by the study participants is generic in nature and could be applied across most discipline areas in the VET teaching sector and also has application for the higher education sector.

Constructs	Teaching Competencies
A. Students	Student engagement
	Student welfare and counselling
	Teaching international students
B. Teaching and learning	Classroom management skills
	Organisation, preparation and time management
	Research skills
	Delivery and assessment strategies
C. VET	Understanding curriculum and Training Packages
	Possessing an understanding of the VET: big picture
	Possessing a working knowledge of AQTF requirements and identifying compliance regulations
D. Content	A sound knowledge of the subject area – industry skills and knowledge
E. Administration	Knowledge of institute procedures and policies
F. Information technology	Computer literacy – e.g. developing online delivery, developing classroom resources, email communication, entering results

Table 2   Constructs and teaching competencies

Objective 4

To apply the VET educators' perceptions in determining the appropriate qualification requirements for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector

In analysing the responses provided by the study participants, there was a clear indication that the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training is only suitable as an entry level qualification. The Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training raised a number of concerns for VET educators.

The focus of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training is to provide instruction for individuals to train and assess in an industry location. The focus is on "training and assessing" in the workplace rather than "teaching and evaluating" in the traditional institutional classroom environment. A proficient VET educator requires theory, skills and knowledge about teaching and learning as well the capacity to apply them effectively in both institutional and industry surroundings.

The study participants identified that the topic content of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training contained inadequate information concerning fundamental teaching and learning principles. The qualification provides very limited information concerning individual learning styles. The duration of delivery of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training is a maximum 210 government funded hours and this does not allow for any depth of dialogue concerning teaching and learning principles. Another deficiency was an insufficient focus on classroom management theory and implementation of strategies to deal with difficult students.

In some instances participants held the view that the Certificate IV qualification's assessment component lacked rigour. The study participants indicated that the assessment conducted at some institutes was very superficial and did not challenge the educator. There were variations between institutes as to what assessment was required to qualify for the qualification. The study participants also identified a variation in length of delivery duration. While acknowledging that the qualification is a maximum of 210 government funded hours, institutes that deliver the course in a fee for service mode (user pays), are able to determine the number of hours. Finally the ability of a teacher to provide the training was also questioned. Some study participants queried the depth of teaching and learning knowledge and experience of teachers delivering the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. They also argued that career VET educator should demonstrate a commitment to professionalism by completing a diploma or a degree in the higher education sector. All full-time study participants held a diploma or above, reinforcing their belief in the higher qualification.

When the study participants reflected on their own education diploma or degree studies, they felt the absence of a practicum and the related mentor relationship was a significant flaw in the Certificate IV. Having qualified and experienced educators observe the delivery of the teacher trainee and provide feedback and advice should be an essential feature of teacher education programs.

Diploma or degree qualifications are typically delivered over a 2 to 3 year period. This allows for an increased depth of discussion and research about key teaching aspects such as learning styles, classroom management and delivery methods. There is sufficient time for feedback and reflection over a number of years rather than weeks. Students have the opportunity to develop collegial relationships and professional networks while undertaking a longer qualification. This provides a source of professional support to share and discuss teaching and learning issues and to acquire additional personal and professional confidence in their own educational practices.

Objective 5

To propose specific recommendations for the improvement of PD practices for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector

This study revealed a number of important concerns and issues arising from current PD practice in the VET sector. These concerns need to be taken into consideration when developing future PD strategies at a local and national level. In the following section, the implications of these concerns will be discussed and recommendations made to address them.

The essential elements to assist a professional development activity to translate into professional learning experience

It is important to identify the essential elements to assist a PD activity to translate into a PL experience. The criteria for selection of PD should be based on the ability for the newly acquired skill and/or knowledge to be applied in the workplace at the completion of the activity. There should be a link between the PD activity and the

educator's professional work practice. PD experiences that are personally relevant and are applied in the workplace can be defined as PL. Typically PD is more effective for participants when they have high motivation and desire to acquire the new learning. Self driven PD can facilitate greater motivation and job satisfaction levels and thus increase the possibility of the PD translating into PL (Knowles, 1984). It was highlighted by the study participants that PD can be ineffective if participants are required to attend or the teacher/trainer delivery is ineffectual.

The key to undertaking a PD activity should be relevance. The skills and knowledge obtained at a PD activity needs to have professional relevance for the participant. The participant should perceive a workplace application as a result of completing the PD that will assist in improving their work practices and enhancing their students' learning. Relevance can equate to increased motivation. A highly motivated educator is able to motivate others including their colleagues and ultimately their students. Traditional PD does not guarantee PL. VET educators should attempt to ensure that all PD selected has the capacity to translate into a PL experience.

For this research study, based on the participants' contributions, PD was defined as learning opportunities which improve an individual's competence making him or her more valuable to their workplace team and organisation. PD is obtained throughout an individual's life-time, via formal and informal learning pathways.

As a professional, VET educators should develop lifelong learning skills and assist in creating a workplace culture to foster lifelong learning behaviours. Educators need to exhibit a commitment to their own development.

Reducing the inequality between full-time and sessional educators' access to institutionally funded professional development activities

The study participants indicated that there was inequality between full-time and sessional staff in accessing institutionally funded PD activities. A number of factors for this inequality were identified including the fact that sessional staff were often

not invited to the PD activities or were not available at the time of the PD activity. Many sessional staff possessed a misconception that they were not able to obtain or participate in PD activities in their institutions. They exhibited a sense of not belonging to the institute and not being valued in the same way as full-time educators. Some sessional staff considered themselves to be a marginalised workforce and who could thus not acquire PD.

In the future, all VET staff should receive adequate PD. The provision, timing and funding of PD activities must be considered within each institution if there is to be an improvement in the teaching and learning skills of VET educators. Effective strategies for the inclusion of sessional educators in appropriate PD activities require investigation and implementation at a department level.

Improving institute professional development procedures and policies

The study data confirmed the Harris et al., (2001) research that planning for many PD activities is completed in an ad-hoc fashion at various institutes. Many full-time staff struggle to obtain appropriate time release to attend PD activities. If they are successful in obtaining approval to attend, then issues concerning back-filling become a major impediment. Many educators can only complete PD activities in non-teaching times, thus limiting their choice of PD available at that time.

The study findings indicated that HODs require a better understanding of the skills required at the front line to be able to assist with the selection and approval of the most appropriate PD when conducting annual work-plan discussions. Front-line educators recognised that it is important to possess a fundamental knowledge of counselling skills while none of the HODs mentioned this as a teaching competency. This potential lack of awareness of required front-line skills may become a barrier to approval of necessary PD for VET educators.

To reduce the barriers to PD, RTOs should conduct a training needs analysis with their staff on an annual basis to identify skill gaps. Appropriate PD can then be selected and a learning contract negotiated between the educator and the HOD for

the coming year. PD could be linked to a reward system, which does not necessarily need to be monetary based. VET management should encourage educators to improve their teaching qualifications and foster a lifelong learning culture. Institutes can incorporate PD practices as an important aspect of the overall long-term strategic plan of the business to build and develop a culture to embrace the continual development of VET educators. A culture of lifelong learning should provide a support mechanism that encourages staff to be proactive in their PD pursuits (Senge, 1990; Robinson, 1999). This culture could assist sessional and full-time educators to complete PD activities that improve their knowledge and skills as professional educators. The introduction of a mandatory national qualification requirement could improve the calibre of potential VET educators. From the findings presented in Objective 4, there is a strong indication that a VET educator should obtain a diploma or degree in education. The diploma or degree should feature content to develop the competency skills and knowledge detailed in the taxonomy listed in Objective 3 and described in Objective 2.

Effective dissemination of professional development information
The HOD study participants indicated that if the intention was for all staff to obtain the skills and knowledge of a PD activity then it was better if all the staff attended the PD activity. This attendance allows for the best possible acquisition of learning to be achieved. In reality however, financial considerations can become the main selection criteria and attendance may have to be limited. If this occurs it is important to devise effective ways of disseminating the learning to other colleagues. Institutes need to develop a PD dissemination plan to assist in spreading the PD learning more effectively to staff within their department. It was suggested that a train-the-trainer model could be successfully applied rather than the frequently used method of taking a few minutes to report back on a PD activity in a departmental meeting. The train the trainer model is a formal presentation where the content of the PD is presented in a contextually relevant environment to those colleagues who have an interest in the topic area.

Financial constraints

PD funding was a major consideration for study participants. To obtain funding approval, an educator may have to obtain approval at a number of authority levels. This can cause frustration and can become a barrier to access. Approval levels should be streamlined and kept to a minimum. In many instances, payment for a PD activity was the educator's responsibility rather than the institute's. Clearer and more equitable funding arrangements need to be in place. Costs associated in conducting more relevant and effective PD activities should be included in the department's annual budget. At the present time, access can depend on the associated costs of the PD and whether or not the department perceives it will have a return for this investment. A structured cost-to-benefit analysis for PD over $500 in associated costs could be conducted prior to PD approval to determine the actual merit of the PD activity. Using a cost to benefit analysis for a PD activity decreases the likelihood of ad hoc PD approval for PD with little merit for the department or the individual. VET management must explore a range of funding and support options to provide adequate PD access for both full-time and sessional educators.

VET educators should take responsibility for their own PD in consultation and negotiation with their departmental heads. Funding should be made available by the institute to support participation in PD activities that will be of mutual benefit for both the educator and their institute. In the current workplace agreement, PD of up to 30 hours per year is supported by the institute. Funding of PD in excess of 30 hours could become the responsibility of the individual. A budget for PD activities should be incorporated in the institute's annual operating budget and there should be equitable access to PD funding and participation for both full-time and sessional educators on a merit basis.

Recommendations for further research

While this study has attempted to provide an insight into professional development practices of hospitality and tourism educators, it is recognised that the data collected is not without limitations. The sample size was limited to 14 participants

and the study was conducted in one state in Australia. Therefore conclusions drawn offer indications, not generalisations.

Further study in the following areas will assist in strengthening and reinforcing the research findings concerning PD which have emerged from this preliminary investigation:

- A nation wide study of PD practices in the VET sector - could examine similar objectives to those in this research at the national level.

- This research could be extended to include PD practices for educators in a regional area. What are the similarities and differences between PD practices in metropolitan RTOs and regional RTOs in Victoria?

- A study of current PD practices of higher education educators in the hospitality and tourism could be conducted. Do higher education educators experience similar issues and barriers to PD as those in the VET sector?

- PD practice in private RTOs at a state, regional or national level could be studied. Are PD practices different from those conducted in the public RTO, TAFE?

- A comparative study of PD practices across other VET disciplines could be undertaken. Do some teaching disciplines apply or require different PD practices?

- A study of the willingness of the hospitality and tourism industry to facilitate PD experiences for VET educators in an industry workplace setting could be conducted. Is the hospitality and tourism industry willing to assist VET educators to up-skill and re-skill themselves?

- A study of the implications of PD practices on student outcomes from the student perspective could be carried out. Do students perceive and value an educator who has recently participated in a PD activity? Do students observe any changes in the behaviour or motivation levels of their teacher after a PD activity?

Personal reflection on learning achieved

From a personal perspective, this study has provided a vehicle for my own PD experience. I have been able to conduct independent research in a topic area that I am very passionate about. This study has been supported by my institute and a certain amount of time-release was provided for me to complete the study project.

The study has allowed me to gain a greater and deeper understanding of the processes involved with the implementation of PD within the VET sector. This research has provided me with important insights into front-line educators' and management views about the key research questions. At the time of the study I am faced with the challenges being a Program Manager who also has a teaching allocation. A greater understanding in this area will equip me with renewed confidence to challenge the traditional organisation structures concerning access and support for PD and the current approval and funding arrangements. VET managers, including myself, must provide leadership in developing streamlined and equitable arrangement; for PD so that all VET educators, full-time, contract and sessional, are able to improve their professional practice.

The journey of completing this doctoral research has been enormous and very challenging. The personal satisfaction of accomplishing such a task has been exceptionally nourishing for academic and personal reasons. I have a sense that I have grown and developed as a manager during this time and now have a better understanding of PD practices within the VET sector. On a personal level, I am proud to possess the personal discipline to finalise this journey and look forward to what comes next.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Australian Quality Training Framework 2007 (AQTF)

Essential Standards for Registration

Standard 1: The Registered Training Organisation provides quality training and assessment across all its operations.

Elements

1.1 The RTO collects, analyses and acts on relevant data for continuous improvement of training and assessment.

1.2 Strategies for training and assessment meet the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course and are developed in consultation with the industry stakeholders.

1.3 Staff, facilities. equipment and training and assessment materials used by the RTO are consistent with the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course and the RTO's own training and assessment strategies.

1.4 Training and assessment are conducted by trainers and assessors who:

a) have the training and assessment competencies determined by the National Quality Council or its successors
b) have relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed, and
c) continue to develop their vocational and training and assessment competencies to support continuous improvement in the delivery of RTO services.

1.5 Assessment, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):

a) meets the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course.

b) is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.

c) meets workplace and, where relevant, regulatory requirements.

Standard 2: The Registered Training Organisation adheres to the principles **of access** and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients

Elements

2.1 The RTO continuously improves client services by collecting, analyzing and acting on relevant data.

2.2 Before clients enroll or enter into a contract, the RTO informs them about the training, assessment and support services to be provided, and about their rights and obligations.

2.3 Employers and other parties who contribute to each learner's training and assessment are engaged in the development, delivery and monitoring of training and assessment.

2.4 Learners receive training, assessment and support services that meet their individual needs.

2.5 Learners have timely access to current and accurate records of their participation and progress.

2.6 Complaints and appeals are addressed efficiently and effectively.

Standard 3: Management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the Registered Training Organisation operates.

Elements

3.1 The RTO uses a systematic and continuous improvement approach to the management of operations.

3.2 The RTO monitors training and/or assessment services provided on its behalf to ensure that they comply with all aspects of the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration.*

3.3 The RTO manages records to ensure their accuracy and integrity.

(Department of Education Science and Training, 2007, pp. 4-5)

Appendix 2

Australian Quality Training Framework 2007 (AQTF) – Standard 1 Element 4

Standard 1: The RTO provides quality training and assessment across all its operations

Element 1.4 Training and assessment is conducted by trainers and assessors who:

a) have the training and assessment competencies determined by the National Quality Council or its successors
b) have a relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed, and
c) continue to develop their vocational and training and assessment competencies to support continuous improvement in the delivery of RTO services.

The current National Quality Council policy in relation to Standard 1.4 (a) is shown below.

Trainers must:

I. hold the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104) from the Training and Assessment Package , or
II. be able to demonstrate equivalent competencies, or
III. hold the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training from the superseded Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ98), or
IV. be able to demonstrate that prior to 23 November 2005 they had been assessed as holding equivalent competencies to the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ98), or work under the direct supervision of a person who has the competencies specified in (I) or (II) or (III) or (IV) above, and
V. be able to demonstrate vocational competencies at least to the level of those being delivered (DEST, 2007 p.55).

Note: Direct supervision is achieved when a person delivering training on behalf of the RTO has regular guidance, support and direction from a person designated by the RTO who has the trainer competencies in (i), (ii), (iii) or (iv) above and who monitors and is accountable for the training delivery. It is not necessary for the supervising person to be present during all training delivery.

Assessors must:

  I.   hold the following three competencies from the Training and Assessment Package (TAA04):
   A. TAAASS401A Plan and organise assessment
   B. TAAASS402A Assess competence
   C. TAAASS404A Participate in assessment validation, or

  II. be able to demonstrate equivalent competencies to all three units of competency listed in (i), or

  III. hold the following competencies from the superseded Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ98):

   BSZ401A Plan assessment, BSZ402A Conduct assessment, and BSZ403A Review assessment, or

  IV. be able to demonstrate that prior to 23 November 2005 they had been asses as holding equivalent competencies to all these units of competency listed in (iii) above.

Note: If a person does not have the assessment competencies as defined in (i), (ii), (iii) or (iv) above and the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed, one person with all the assessment competencies listed in (i), (ii), (iii) or (iv) above and one or more persons who have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed may work together to conduct the assessments.

(Department of Education Science and Training, 2007, pp. 55-56)

Appendix 3

Email information

Initial Contact Email for VISTA, ACPET, HOD - Hospitality and Tourism Departments to be distributed via email.

Victoria University

PO Box 14428
MELBOURNE CITY MC VIC 8001
Australia

Telephone:
(03) 9688 4000
Facsimile:
(03) 9689 4069

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Footscray Park Campus

Ballarat Road
Footscray

DATE

Dear

My name is Kim Williams and I am undertaking research as part of my Doctor of Education degree at Victoria University.

This study examines professional development within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. More specifically, the project is designed to investigate how professional development provision for a selected group of Vocational Education and Training educators in the tourism and hospitality sector has equipped them with technical competence of their discipline as well as with competence in teaching/training.
The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the technical competence needed to conduct effective teaching/training programs;
2. To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the professional teaching/training competencies required for effective practice;
3. To apply the VET educators' perceptions in the construction of a detailed taxonomy of teaching/training competencies in the VET tourism and hospitality sector;
4. To apply the VET educators' perceptions in determining the entry qualification requirements for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector; and
5. To propose specific recommendations for the improvement of PD practices for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector.

I will be utilising a case study methodology and the selected case will be Tourism and Hospitality educators in the Melbourne metropolitan region. Participants will be drawn from three subdivisions of a training institute's hierarchy: head of department, full-time educators and sessional/casual educators.

I require a number of voluntary participants (approx 25) to participate in a semi-structured individual interview and a group interview discussion (Not all participants will be required to participate in the group interview). I would greatly appreciate if you would be able to circulate via your email data-base an expression of interest to your members. I would supply you with an information letter explaining the study and details regarding an expression of interest form and contact details for those that might be interested.

I will also be contacting other appropriate organisations and individual Heads of Department to seek further assistance in this matter. I would request confirmation via email that this may be a possible avenue for participant recruitment. If you would like to discuss this with me I can be contacted on 9479 2945

Thank you for your assistance with this matter
Yours sincerely
Kim Williams

Appendix 4
Information for Participants including expression of interest form

Victoria University

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Australia

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VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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DATE

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1.   To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the technical competence needed to conduct effective teaching/training programs;

2.   To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the professional teaching/training competencies required for effective practice;

3.   To apply the VET educators' perceptions in the construction of a detailed taxonomy of teaching/training competencies in the VET tourism and hospitality sector;

4.   To apply the VET educators' perceptions in determining the entry qualification requirements for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector; and

5   To propose specific recommendations for the improvement of PD practices for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector.

The investigation will be conducted utilising a case study methodology. The case study context will be educators currently working within a department of tourism and hospitality at a VET registered training organisation in the Melbourne metropolitan region. The study will be operationalised by using two phases of data collection, beginning with individual interviews followed by a group interview. Three subdivisions of employment will be utilised: operational manager (head of department level), full-time employees and sessional employees. In the first phase five individual interviews will be conducted within each subdivision. The second phase of the investigation will utilise one group interview of eight participants, comprising of a mixed group from each subdivision. The group interview will

be used to provide validation of the initial findings and to further probe themes and issues obtained from phase one of data collection.

Participation is voluntary and participants will be able to withdraw from the study at any stage and unprocessed information provided will not be used. The group interview will involve a review and validation of data collected at the individual interview phase. Data will be kept under lock and key at the office of the researcher.

A voluntary sample of Vocational Education and Training hospitality and tourism educators are invited to participant in the first phase of individual interview discussion. The interviews will consist of a time commitment of approximately one hour. The discussion will be tape recorded and later transcribed for detailed analysis. If you consider yourself suitable and would like to express interest in being involved with this research project please return the attached expression of interest slip (see below) indicating four suitable dates in the month of …………………that you would be able to attend an individual interview at a place of mutual convenience. If you have any queries concerning participation please do not hesitate to contact me directly on 9479 2945.

Thank you again for your interest in this research project.

Yours sincerely

Kim Williams

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

I _____ **wish to express interest in participating in the research titled:**
An investigation of the professional development practices of Vocational Education and Training educators in the Tourism and Hospitality sector.

Please complete the details below:

Contact Details

Name: _____

Ph: _____

Email: _____

Work location: _____

Suitable dates for interview:

1. _____**2.** _____**3.** _____ **4.** _____

Please return this expression of interest to:
Kim Williams
Victoria University
Hospitality & Tourism Department
Werribee Campus
P.O. Box 14428
Melbourne City MC   8001

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher (Name: Kim Williams
ph. 9479 2945 or Supervisor: Dr. Bill Eckersley ph 97477453). If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Technology, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (telephone no: 03-9688 4710).

Appendix 5
Consent Form

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Consent Form for Subjects Involved in Research

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

I, Kim Williams would like to invite you to be a part of a study investigating the professional development of vocational education and training educators. The aim of the research is to examine professional development activities within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Tourism and Hospitality sector. More specifically, the project is designed to investigate how professional development provision for a selected group of Vocational Education and Training educators in the tourism and hospitality sector has equipped them with technical competence of their discipline as well as with competence in teaching/training.

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:
1. To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the technical competence needed to conduct effective teaching/training programs;
2. To gain the perceptions held by a selected group of VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector of the professional teaching/training competencies required for effective practice;
3. To apply the VET educators' perceptions in the construction of a detailed taxonomy of teaching/training competencies in the VET tourism and hospitality sector;
4. To apply the VET educators' perceptions in determining the entry qualification requirements for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector; and
5. To propose specific recommendations for the improvement of PD practices for VET educators in the tourism and hospitality sector.

The investigation will be conducted utilising a case study methodology. The case study context will be educators currently working with in a department of tourism and hospitality at a VET registered training organisation in the Melbourne metropolitan region. The study will be operationalised by using two phases of data collection, beginning with individual interviews followed by a group interviews. Three subdivision of employment will be utilised, operational manager (head of department level), full-time employees and sessional employees. In the first phase, five individual semi-structured interviews will be conducted with each subdivision. The second phase of the investigation will utilise one group interview of eight participants, comprising of a mixed group from each subdivision. The group interview will be used to provide validation of the initial findings and to further probe themes and issues obtained from phase one of data collection.

Participation is voluntary and participants will be able to withdraw from the study at any stage and unprocessed information provided will not be used. The group interview will involve a review and validation of data collected at the interview phase. Data will be kept under lock and key at the office of the researcher.
Thank you again for your willingness to participate as we recognise your time is valuable.

CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT

I, ………………………………………………………..of…………………………………… certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the research study titled: An investigation of the professional development practices of Vocational Education and Training educators in the Tourism and Hospitality sector, being conducted at Victoria University of Technology by Kim Williams and Dr. Bill Eckersley

I certify that the objectives of the research, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by:
Kim Williams

and that I freely consent to participation involving the use on me of these procedures.

Procedures: individual interview and group interview

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this research at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed: **...**   **}**

Witness other than the researcher………………………..:   **}Date: ....**

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher (Name: Kim Williams ph. 9479 2945or Supervisor: Dr. Bill Eckersley ph 97477453). If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Technology, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (telephone no: 03-9688 4710).

[*please note: where the subject/s is aged under 18, separate parental consent is required; where the subject is unable to answer for themselves due to mental illness or disability, parental or guardian consent may be required.]

Appendix 6
Revocation of consent form

Victoria University

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Footscray Park Campus

Ballarat Road
Footscray

Revocation of Consent Form for Participants in Research
Used for participants who wish to withdraw from the project

I, ...

of (address), ...

....

hereby wish to WITHDRAW my consent to participate in the research proposal described in the Plain Language Statement to investigate the professional development practices of vocational education and training **educators in the tourism and hospitality sector and I understand that such withdrawal WILL NOT** jeopardise my relationship with Victoria University.

Any data already collected may/may not be included in the research project.

Signature: .... **Date:** ....

Appendix 7
Stage one interview schedule

Front-line - sessional and full-time educators

- Please explain or define the meaning of PD for you
- What PD have you undertaken prior to commencing a teaching teaching/training career?
  - Who provided the funding?
- What has been your PD history since starting teaching/training?
  - Who provided the funding?
- Explain PD activities that you have undertaken. Provide an example of a positive and a negative experience.
- In your opinion did this translate into effective teaching and learning outcomes for your students and yourself?
- What entry qualification did you have when you entered the VET sector?
- Was this qualification appropriate?
- Was this qualification adequate to provide you with the skills and knowledge required to deliver teaching/training programs?
- What other qualification would you recommend at entry level?
- What PD activity would you recommend to another colleague?
- What are some of the essential technical competencies needed to teach/train in the VET tourism and hospitality sector?
- What in your opinion are some of the essential competencies to conduct effective teaching/training programs?
- What are the vital teaching/training competencies required for effective educational practices?
- Do you have any final thoughts you would like to add?

Appendix 8

Stage two interview schedule

Management - HOD

- Please explain or define the meaning of PD for you.
- Are you responsible for the allocation of PD activities?
- How do you make teachers aware of the PD activities available in this department?
- In your opinion does PD translate into effective teaching/learning outcomes for your students?
- Are there any strategies in place that enable the learner to disseminate new learning (based on the PD) to others in the workplace?
- What entry qualification do you require for staff to be employed in this dept?
- In your opinion is this qualification appropriate?
- Does this qualification adequately provide a staff member with the skills and knowledge required to deliver teaching/training programs?
- What is your opinion about the fact that that VET teachers have different levels of qualifications when comparing to the secondary and primary sector? What qualification do you believe are desirable?
- What PD activity would you recommend to another colleague? What were the features of the PD activity that you valued? (eg content, the way it was delivered, the sharing opportunities with other colleagues etc)
- What are some of the essential technical competencies needed to teach/train in the VET tourism and hospitality sector?
- What in your opinion are some of the essential competencies to conduct effective teaching/training programs?
- What are the vital teaching/training competencies required for effective educational practice?
- How does your department involve staff in PD activities
  - Full-time

- o Sessional – Does this dept try to make sessionals feel as though they belong to the workplace?
- What are the PD funding sources?
- How does the department allocate funding?
- Who is responsible for the planning or coordinating of PD in your department?
- Is there a departmental strategy for PD activities?
- How do the staff in this department find out about the AQTF requirements?
- Do you think sessional teachers are disadvantaged in PD in the current VET sector? Please explain.
- Do you have any final thoughts to add?

Appendix 9

Study categories, constructs and discussion points

Appendix 10

Summary of participant responses to VET teaching competencies

TABLE 1 - SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

KEY TOPICS	FINDINGS
DEFINITIONS - **Professional Development**	*Literature (sample):* Loucks-Horsley (1996) in Loveder (2005) defined staff development SD and by extension PD as: 'Opportunities offered to educators to develop knowledge skills, approaches and dispositions to improve their effectiveness in their classrooms and organisations' (p.4). The Centre for Education Research and Innovation (CERI) in Loveder (2004) defines PD as: 'any activity that develops an individual's skills, knowledge and other characteristics as a teacher/educator. These include personal study and reflection as well as formal courses' (p.4).
	Participants (sample): 'a range of things…that contributed to you being competent in your profession…' (Interview, Phillipa, August, 2004). 'enhancing the skills and knowledge you have already…continuous development of the person' (Interview, Elizabeth, June 2004). 'equipping the individual and the team with the skill to be able to do the job adequately' (Interview, Jack, June 2005).
EXPERIENCES - **Professional Development and** **Professional Learning**	For this study **Professional Learning** has been defined as any **Profession Development** that subsequently translates into effective outcomes for the participant involved in the learning process. **PD** is a learning activity that may not necessarily translate into applied learning and direct application in the workplace.
	PD activity was valuable, many indicated that it was dependant upon the relevance of the activity and whether it translated into**PL**. **Relevance** is an essential ingredient for any **PD** to be effective.
	Phillipa and Richard indicated that they had attended activities that were viewed as being rather pointless or**de-motivating.** Richard was told that he would attend occupational health and safety training and that he was now also more responsible in this area. Richard stated that he 'walked away from the training feeling uncomfortable with this added responsibility' (Interview, Richard, November 2004). This was a very de-motivating experience and Richard had viewed this PD activity as a**negative experience.**
	If a participant experiences too many of these **disappointing PD a**ctivities it is likely that a **negative or de-motivating attitude** will develop and the participant become **reluctant to participate** in any further PD in the future. However, for this study many of the frontline educators were able to reflect on a **PD** activity that was **beneficial** and relevant and had translated into a significant PL experience.
VET Teaching Qualifications	**Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training**. All full time educators' perceived this qualification to only be a starting point for an educator in the VET sector. Words expressed by these educators were 'not enough', 'not sufficient', not good enough'.
	Full-time educator revealed that a **Diploma of Education** was more appropriate especially if there was a**practicum component** or if there was a mentor and supervisor relationship developed between the trainee teacher and a more mature educator.
	The majority of educators questioned revealed that an educator who desires to have a**long term career** in teaching should be contemplating **further studies in education** and not be satisfied with the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace
Being employed as a sessional staff member	Jenny, a sessional, who also described sessionals main purpose is to fill the gaps and**not to be developed** in any way that makes them useful for the longer term.
	Access to PD by sessional employees is **very limited** and in some cases non existent.
	There are **considerable discrepancies** with regard to sessional access to PD between institutes across the VET system. Sessional educators do seem to be **disadvantaged** when it comes to PD activities access in the VET sector. This could cause **significant inconsistency** across the VET system, especially when it is considered that sessional staff members comprise a substantial percentage of the current VET workforce.
TAXONOMY - **VET Teaching Competencies**	Subject Area – Industry Discipline Knowledge & Skills - at least 5 years
	Curriculum & Training Packages- understanding
	Classroom Management skills -conflict management, dealing with problem students
	Engaging or Connecting with Students - motivation
	Delivery and Assessment Strategies for the classroom and the workplace
	Australian Quality Training Framework - understanding
	Administration procedures & policies
	Being organised, prpared and possessing time management skills - personal & classroom
	International Student - empathy & understanding of the cohort
	VET the Big Picture
	Computer Skills
	Care for Student Learning and Welfare- counselling, pastoral
	Research Skills

KEY TOPICS	FINDINGS
Responsibility for Professional Development	Participants' indicated that the responsibility for PD was **shared** by both the individual and the employer. Attending PD activities displayed a commitment to professionalism for the staff to enhance and develop their educational practice.
	The full-time educators had an **expectation** that the employer had a percentage of PD responsibility while the sessional educators indicated that institute support was a **bonus** rather than an expectation.
	Educators in consultation with the HOD determines and negotiates PD activities usually on a **departmental needs** and **individual wants** basis that people have identified in their yearly work-plan.
The process, procedure and funding for PD within VET Institute.	Multi Enterprise Employee Certified Agreement (MECA) there is a **thirty hour requirement** for all full time staff to have access to complete appropriate PD activities.
	The **HODs** all had differing degrees of responsibility for the PD activities at the department level. They were able to approve **PD** that was financially inexpensive and could come from the **limited Department budget.**
	Funding can also be at the School or faculty level. This **funding** is at the discretion of the **Associate Director** and an educator must apply and validate the need for this training via the HOD.
	Funding can be **centrally controlled** for all institute staff members. There may be a Staff College or at other institutes there is a Training and Development division within the Human Resources Department
	At a private provider the funding is generated from fees paid by students and small amounts of government allocation. PD approval is at the discretion of the **Institute Director**
	Findings are congruence with the findings of Harris et al. (2001) and supports the assertion 'currently most **staff development** is conducted **ad hoc** with little or no consistency' (p.23). This means that there is a reduced chance that PD would be converted into PL.
PD and the relationship to effective teaching/learning outcomes for students	**PL** opportunities provided an educator the time to stop their day to day operational tasks and examine their work practices from an outside or alternative perspective. PL activities **generate enthusiasm** about teaching practices and approaches by introducing innovations **into the program delivery**.
	A **PD** activity which translated in **PL** because there was a **flow on** effect into the classroom.
Dissemination of skills and knowledge gained via PD	Each institutes endeavoured to disseminate PD **in theory,** but this does **not necessarily translate into effective practice**. Educators' meetings are the usually mechanism or forum to discuss recent PD activities undertaken by the members.
	It is **better** to try and send a number of participants rather than have an individual conduct a second hand report after the PD activity.
Access to PD for sessional educators	Sessionals are **disadvantaged** due to a number of reasons; time, availability, motivation, interest and funding constraints.
	PD becomes an issue, especially for sessionals if the **PD** is delivered **off campus.**
	it is very difficult to allow sessionals to go away for a conference or attend an extended PD session due to **financial constraints**. Plus the sessional may be unable to attend due to **other work commitments** with other employers.
Participants' Final Thoughts	**Relevance** is important for PD to become PL
	Training need analysis for all staff could be completed prior to PD approval
	Some staff members are not always response enthusiastically to participatioin **PD**, while others are always wanting more.
	Include PD on **VET big picture**
	Return to Industry training for PD to allow compliance to AQTF

Appendix 9 - Summary of Analysis

CATEGORIES	TYPOLOGIES
Professional Development A definition	Individual competence
	Formal / Informal learning pathways
	Lifelong Learning
	Team / organisation
Professional Development (PD) is a learning activity that may not necessarily translate into applied learning and direct application in the workplace. **Professional Learning (PL)** is defined as any PD that subsequently translates into effective outcomes for the participant involved in the learning process.	Motivating or De-motivating
	Relevance
	Dissemination of PD information
	Responsibility for undertaking PD
VET Teaching Qualifications	Certificate IV
	Diploma
Access to Professional Development	Sessional
	Full-time
	Processes, procedures and funding sources

CATEGORIES	TYPOLOGIES
Technichal competencies for VET educators	Type of experience
	Additional Quals
	Length of experience
VET Teaching Competencies	Students
	Teaching & Learning
	VET
	Content
	Administration
	Information Technology

DISCUSSION POINTS
Personal interest or focus - individual wants. Being able to do your job
Acredited Courses / collegue discussions, workshops, research etc…
Developing skills over a life time
Eenhancement of the team & Institute requirements
Assists in the translation of PD to PL
Assists in PL translating to increased student outcomes
Can produce reluctance to participate in PD the future
Reduces the possibility of PD becoming PL
Frustration increases / satisfaction decreases
Essential aspect for PD to be considered rewarding
PD to PL and then converted to better student outcomes
Catalyst to convert PD to PL
Theory (inform other in meetings or via a report etc…) or Practice (limited info given others may not be interested in attending or reading report)
Better to send a number of participants rather than have an individual conduct a second hand report after the PD activity.
Shared - individual and institution
Balance between Individual wants & institute or departmental requirements
Expectation from Full-time and a bonus for Sessional
Suitable as an entry point only
Lacks rigour
Delivery not long enough in duration
Discrepancies between delivery quality
Should and does includes a Practicum component
Required for long term career in VET
Includes Mentor or supervisor arrangement
Provides time for reflection
Builds networking and collegial arrangements
lack of time , availability, motivation, interest
very limited if there is a cost involved
No cost some access is provided
Most PD self funded
MECA - 30 hours of PD
Back fill provide at times
Many have funded own PD
Funding can be very limited on a Departmental level - due to funding restrictions
Central control - HR or Staff college - generic training
PD at many institutes is conducted on an ad hoc basis
Authority and approval for PD differs at each institute - HOD , AD , Director
Ad hoc approval via HOD AD, Director
Training needs analysis should be conducted prior to Annual PD evaluation
Return to Industry should be a PD activity

DISCUSSION POINTS
Depth or breadth of experience
5 years & diploma / 10 years & certificate / 15 years no qual
Number of years of experience
Engaging or Connecting with Students - motivating the student
Care for Student Learning and Welfare- counselling, pastoral
International Student - empathy & understanding of the cohort
Classroom Management skills -conflict management, dealing with problem students & students with problems
Being organised, prepared and possessing time management skills - personal & classroom
Research skills for the development of classroom resources
Delivery and Assessment Strategies for the classroom and the workplace
Curriculum & Training Packages - understanding of and how to implement
VET the Big Picture
Australian Quality Training Framework - understanding of the compliance requirements
Subject Area – Industry Knowledge & Skills - at least 5 years
Administration procedures & policies - AQTF requirements
Computer Skills - results, attendance, delivery resources, communication

APPENDIX 10 - Summary of participant responses to VET teaching competencies.

Emlpoyment Tenure	SUBJECT AREA INDUSTRY DISCIPLINE	CURRICULUM TRAINING PACKAGES	CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	ENGAGING WITH STUDENTS	DELIVERY & ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE CLASSROOM
Sessional					
Elizabeth	Subject content knowledge is required		Understand counselling or handling students with difficulties would be valuable.	Having the ability to engage students and motivate them to learn.	Understanding of different learning styles,
			Having classroom management skills		
			Possess strategies to assess students and dealing with difficult situations		
James	Having a good understanding of their subject area			Being able to communicate verbally and also to be able to listen to what their students are requesting.	An awareness of the students' backgrounds and their cultural environments.and modifing your delivery mode according to what the students
					Being able to identify the objectives of the class and translate them into learning outcomes for the students.
					Being to make allowances and factor in individual considerations.
Jenny		Knowing how to interpret the Training Package	Having the skills to deal with personality and human behaviour in the classrooms.		
Mary				Students need to be 'engaged, keeping a group engaged … is the single greatest challenge for a teacher… making it interesting	
Natasha	Possess good skills and knowledge in their area of expertise		Being able to operate in a challenging classroom environment.	Having strong interpersonal skills.	Being able to understanding how people learn
				Keeping a group engaged	

Emlpoyment Tenure	SUBJECT AREA INDUSTRY DISCIPLINE	CURRICULUM TRAINING PACKAGES	CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	ENGAGING WITH STUDENTS	DELIVERY & ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE CLASSROOM
Full-time					
Phillipa	You need technical skills to be a good teacher	You need to able to read a curriculum & understand a Training Package			
Jane			Being able to manage different types of challenging behaviours & having strategies to managing these behaviours		
Richard			Being able to manage the learning environment	A teacher needs to connect with their students to be able to impart their skills and knowledge.	Beng able to provide lots of variety in their classroom delivery.
Sarah-Anne	Teacher gains more respect from their students if they have a depth of experience from industry	Have a good understanding of the curriculum so that he/she can plan what has to be covered in the course.	Being able to manage the learning environment, Being able to deal with classrom difficulties as they arise	The learning environment has to be stimulating to encourage learning.	
Giuseppe			Classroom management and in particular being flexible, adaptable and being able to manage a changing teaching environment		Being able to change their teaching style quite easily and rapidly, because you are dealing with young and old students whose motivation levels can vary. 'Flexibility is the key'

Emlpoyment Tenure	SUBJECT AREA INDUSTRY DISCIPLINE	CURRICULUM TRAINING PACKAGES	CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	ENGAGING WITH STUDENTS	DELIVERY & ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE CLASSROOM
HOD					
Jack	Educator with at least five years of industry experience	Understanding curriculum or the Training Package.	Classroom and people management experience is required		Being able to develop strategies to meet the needs of different adult learning styles.
Lynne	Broad experience in the Tourism industry			Being a good communicator	Have an understanding of assessment strategies and how to produce appropriate assessment tools. '
Joanne	Technical industry skills as well as their people skills.				Possessing a sense of humour, because learning has to be 'fun'
	Being able to supervised staff in an industry setting				being are able to teach the students skills and knowledge that is 'aiming for the top, teaching the students the highest skills
Mark	Being able to operate and comprehend new technology that is being employed in the education and hospitality industry,			A high proficiency in English is important.	Being able to understand how to write an assignment which is appropriate and can be understood by the student.
	Minimum of 5 years experiencein their industry				Being able to provide adequate feedback to the students on their performance.

Emlpoyment Tenure	AQTF	ADMINISTRATION	BEING ORGANISED & TIME MANAGEMENT	INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS	VET THE BIG PICTURE	COMPUTER SKILLS	STUDENT LEARNING & WELFARE	RESEARCH SKILLS
Sessional								
Elizabeth								
James			Being able to plan					
Jenny	Having an understanding of the Australian Quality Training Framework					Computer skills are a requirement.		
Mary			Possessing good time management skills which includes time mgt in delivery. big overview of the program You must be very organised				They just have to have the students' interests at heart	
Natasha				International students now attending the VET sector English as a Second Language skills		Strong skills in the areas of using technologies to support learning.	You have to be interested in people's learning and you have to be interested in the outcomes'	

Emlpoyment Tenure	AQTF	ADMINISTRATION	BEING ORGANISED & TIME MANAGEMENT	INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS	VET THE BIG PICTURE	COMPUTER SKILLS	STUDENT LEARNING & WELFARE	RESEARCH SKILLS
Full-time								
Phillipa								
Jane								
Richard	Having a good understanding of the Australian Quality Training Framework	Following the compulsory policy and procedures is essential.						
Sarah-Anne		Being administratively organised. roll keeping, assessment recording, notes on the various students' progress and notes on attendance etc....	Being organised, the timing of training has to be pre-planned				Knowing how the students are going	
Giuseppe								

Emlpoyment Tenure	AQTF	ADMINISTRATION	BEING ORGANISED & TIME MANAGEMENT	INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS	VET THE BIG PICTURE	COMPUTER SKILLS	STUDENT LEARNING & WELFARE	RESEARCH SKILLS
HOD								
Jack	Having a working knowledge of the AQTF requirements.		Having personal organisation skills		Understanding the larger picture of the VET system. Where they and the institute fit into that	Having competent computer skills		Being able to resource any required information,
Lynne	Having a good understanding of the relevant sections of the Australian Quality Training Framework requirements.		Having organisational proficiency		Having a good understanding of the VET system	Being computer literate / Possessing current technology and industry		
Joanne	Having an understanding of Australian Quality Training Framework standards		Being able to meet deadlines and have good time management skills'					
Mark	Understandimg AQTF	Understanding occupational health and safety standards	Having good time management skills	Understanding International students as well the multi cultural cross cultural issues	Having a background to the VET sector and an appreciation of the bigger picture and where they may fit in that picture.	Having computer literacy skills		Being able to research learning styles and thus be able to deal with the learning differences within his/her / Being able to search for new resources that can be adapted and utilise in the classroom to enhance the