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R.G. (Dick) Roebuck
Conference Manager
Envisioning Practice — Implementing Change

Calls for innovation and change within the post-compulsory education and training sector are sourced to factors such as the press to marketise educational services, the convergence of digital communications and information technologies, new forms of accountability governing educational resources, developments in our knowledge of learning and learning practices, and so on. These pressures for change, which have increased over the last decade, have important implications for the way professionals within the education and training community go about their work and how they envision their practice. The overarching theme of this proceedings is growth in critical understanding surrounding the implementation of contemporary changes in post-compulsory education practice. Topic areas which serve as focus points for papers include:

• flexible learning
• access and equity
• use of technology to solve educational problems
• critiquing concepts of change
• citizenship and concepts of community
• identity formation
• overcoming critical barriers to advancing research on learning and work

As in previous years, this year’s conference has attracted a large number of high quality research papers from researchers, practitioners and policy makers from Australia and overseas; papers draw together a wide range of disciplines, content material, and theoretical perspectives and many have been anonymously refereed by peer reviewers.

Members of the Centre for Learning and Work Research would like to thank sponsors and supporters.

Clive Kanes
Director, Centre for Learning and Work Research
Griffith University
November, 2002
Never Mind the Width, Feel the Quantity

Michael Osborne
Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning, University of Stirling, Scotland

Widening Participation to Higher Education is central to lifelong learning policies in the UK, but there has been limited success in changing the composition, especially of elite institutions. A plethora of interventions are currently in place that can be classified within a three-fold typology of in-reach, out-reach and flexibility, and government is supporting a range of initiatives through various forms of financial interventions. Access as in-reach refers to those programmes that prioritise recruiting potential students into the institution; examples include adult Access Courses and certain Summer School provision for school-leavers. Access as out-reach is typified by efforts to widen participation and involve partnerships with one or more of employers, schools and the wider community. Alongside in-reach and out-reach exist a number of initiatives that can neither be categorised primarily as either of these, but focus on transformations and adjustments to the structure, administration and delivery of HE programmes. The third category of Access as flexibility refers to systematic as against discrete provision and includes such structural arrangements such as the use of Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), Open and Distance Learning and the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT). In this presentation I consider to what extent such initiatives have improved equity as against simply increasing participation. Do particular forms of intervention create new demand and unlock latent demand more so than others? Do certain forms of intervention merely assist meeting government and institutional targets, but do little to provide real prospects in the labour market for participants? Using evidence gathered through a number of research projects both nationally in the UK, and internationally from comparator countries, this presentation assesses the success of widening participation policy and practice in the UK and beyond. It considers the extent to which the three-fold typology of access has applicability internationally. What might the implications of policies and practices of individual nations have for others with concerns in the domain of access of HE?

In the UK, from the mid-1990s onwards, a systematic set of initiatives in improving access to HE have emerged, and since the election of the Labour government of 1997 widening participation has almost become the prescribed mantra for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to rehearse. However, it is important to note that the issue of widening access, or more generally the issue of educational inequality, did not suddenly appear in the 1990s. There is a long history of institutional, governmental and extra mural initiatives designed to increase participation in post compulsory education for the socially excluded. Within the UK, there have historically been comparable practices of widening participation within each of its constituent countries, but for brevity's sake only the position in England is described in this paper.

It was in England that the most significant early developments occurred of what would now be described as widening participation. The 'adult access movement' developed from the late 1970s onwards and was originally conceived as a means of attracting mature students, particularly from ethnic minority groups into certain professions. Access Courses were for some time the subject of criticism from those
concerned with supposed dilution of standards, but eventually were accepted as a 'third route' into Higher Education.

A variety of concerns at national and institutional level related to factors including economic competitiveness, demographic change and institutional survival from the late 1980s onwards have seen widening participation to HE become increasingly fore-grounded in policy. Most recently, a set of British Green Papers (DfEE, 1998, SOEID, 1998, WO, 1998,) echoed many of the themes found in a previous European White Paper (EC 1995), which had identified a number of challenges for education and training including,

- The impact of the information society.
- The impact of internationalisation.
- The impact of the scientific world.

These challenges were to be met by emphasising the merits of a broad base of knowledge and by building up employability. The focus in the White Paper on both economic challenges and the need for both a socially cohesive and socially inclusive society were reflected in a variety of British policy documents on post compulsory education and training, including the Dearing (NCIHE, 1997) and Kennedy reports (FEFC, 1997). The Dearing report offered an inclusive vision of a learning society which embraces people at all levels of achievement, envisaging expansion of HE provision with particular emphasis on sub degree level and reiterates the need to address the under-representation in higher education of particular social groups. The Kennedy report Learning Works (FEFC, 1997) argues that the Further Education (FE) sector is the key to widening participation given its diversity and the potential progression opportunities it can offer. And it is the case that in the UK, almost uniquely in Europe there has been a strong impetus to link the vocational education and training (VET) sector to universities though a Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS). The nearest equivalents in Europe are the Regional Technical Colleges in Ireland and the recently developed polytechnic sector in Finland. However, it is further afield in parts of Australia (primarily in the State of Victoria with its dual sector universities), and in the Community Colleges of Canada and the USA that close approximations of this model are found. A forthcoming publication, Osborne et al. (2002) deals with the role of FE in the context of short cycle HE, and includes descriptions of a range of international models.

In England, at institutional level HEIs have been variously rewarded for engagement in widening participation. This has included earmarked funding (HEFCE 1995) and later a 'combination of funding approaches: through mainstream formula funding, the allocation of additional student numbers, a special funding programme', with the balance of funds available lying "more towards mainstream formula funding rather than special funding" (HEFCE 1999, p. 3). Mainstream funding mechanisms involve an adjustment in the block grant for teaching given to HEIs, essentially offering them extra funds for recruiting students from particular target groups; these include the disabled, part-time students, mature students, and those from areas with below average participation (the 'postcode' premium). Special funding of a developmental nature for 'widening provision' was initiated in 1995 as fall-out from the removal of historic funding streams for non-accredited liberal adult education in universities (Osborne, 1997). This has led to the development of a range of institutional practices of widening participation (UACE 1997). Many of these as Field (2002) suggests build upon initiatives already started in the early 1990s. However, it is significant to see that as in other parts of the UK, a shift in emphasis from mature students to school pupils is evident. In terms of initiatives this has meant inter alia the development of a range of strategies to raise awareness of Higher Education.
amongst poorer school pupils as young as 12 and the creation of Access Summer Schools to give second chances to pupils who narrowly fail to achieve examination grades needed for entry to university.

Government has also supported a number of structural initiatives, notably the introduction of Foundation degrees. These are two year HE qualifications offered by partnerships of FECs, HEIs and employers and are best described as being akin to US Associate Degrees offered by Community Colleges. The emphasis on offering short-cycle HE is also reflected in the efforts being put into encouraging FECs more generally to play a stronger role in widening participation. In the most recent policy documents produced by HEFCE (2001), the focus has shifted further towards partnership between the FE, schools and HEIs to meet the target of achieving 50% participation of the school-leaving cohort within Higher Education by 2010 that was set out in the 1998 White Paper (DfEE, 1998). The focus of policy is to raise attainment at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) levels 2 and 3, and to encourage more and better-prepared students to stay on in education at age 16 and go on to HE. Indeed there is little prospect of this target being met otherwise, although it is not clear why it rather than any other is being obsessively pursued by government.

At an individual level, the thrust for widening participation has, however, received some setbacks due to the changes in ways in which students are being financially supported in HE. The introduction for the first time of fees for full-time undergraduate Higher Education and the replacement of student grants with loans in the late 1990s has provided some evidence for individuals being discouraged from applying to Higher Education throughout the UK. This has particularly been the case for mature students (Davies et al., 2002).

The International Context

It is important to place developments within the UK within an international context. Throughout the world, a range of functional modifications are evident in HE as new tasks and purposes emerge, and irrespective of historical traditions of institutions, most have changed in the light of the political pressures to admit a more diverse student body. There have been world wide concerns expressed by both international bodies and national governments that there are strong economic reasons for increasing access, and for widening the constituency that Higher Education serves by including those groups who have traditionally been excluded. It must be said, however, that it is the economic concerns that have been the most significant driver of change.

Certainly, improving access to post-compulsory education, particularly for disadvantaged groups, has surfaced as a major topic of discussion in Europe in the last decade with a number of recent publications indicating the importance of equity issues for individual states. Examples include, Murphy and Inglis (2000) (Ireland); De Rudder (1999) (Germany); Dundar and Lewis, (1999) (Turkey); Grünberg (1999) (Eastern and Central Europe); Koutsky (1996) (Czech Republic); Margues and Miranda (1996) (Portugal) Sultana (1995) (Malta). The thrust to increase and, to a lesser or greater degree to widen participation to Higher Education in particular, in most European societies, is associated with a number of themes within the larger banner of lifelong learning. They include ‘the economic imperatives created by global competition, technological change and the challenge of the knowledge economy, individual responsibility and self-improvement, employability, flexibility of institutions and individuals, social inclusion and citizenship’ (Osborne, 2003a).

This concern is also evident at a European supranational level, and was expressed most explicitly in a European White Paper (European Commission, 1995), in which the combating of social exclusion through "second chances" is one
of five main guidelines for action in striving for a knowledge-based society. The *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (European Commission, 2001a) re-iterates and re-states the EC’s concerns of 1995. The recent document, *Lifelong Learning — the European wide consultation* (EC, 2001b) produced national responses that stress the importance of equality of opportunity, both in terms of gender and making learning genuinely available for all because of the way in which knowledge and competences impact on citizens’ life opportunities.

Outside of Europe the closest comparable set of initiatives to those in the UK have perhaps been those that were established in Australia’s positive action programmes of the 1990s that were closely associated with the government’s equity and access policies (Postle et al., 1996). The thrust of *A Fair Chance for All* (DEET, 1990) to establish recruitment targets for those groups typically under-represented in HE has parallels with current UK concerns. The relative impact of these two attempts to influence the composition of HE will undoubtedly be worthy of further investigation as the UK increases the pressure on institutions in this area of policy.

There is also much evidence to suggest that an emphasis on widening participation for previously excluded groups has taken hold in other parts of the world as a variety of national studies indicate (Abu-Saad, 1996; Baker & Velez, 1996; Barro, 1999; Eisemon & Slami, 1995; Gale, 1999; Guri-Rosenblit, 1996; HEA, 2000; Kerr, 1994; Lee, 1998; Mehrotra, 1998; Naidoo, 1998; Valadez, 1996; Trow, 1999; Winkler, 1990). To an extent, the prominence of these concerns reflects an international climate sympathetic to exclusion. Most prominently evident in the *Mumbai Statement on lifelong learning, citizenship, and the reform of higher education* to the 1998 World Conference on Higher Education in Paris (UNESCO, 1998a). The final report from the Conference (UNESCO, 1998b) makes it clear that facilitating equality of access is a crucial component in shaping a new vision for higher education.

Access to higher education for members of some special target groups such as indigenous peoples, cultural and linguistic minorities, disadvantaged groups, peoples living under occupation and those who suffer from disabilities, must be actively facilitated ... Special help and educational solutions can help overcome the obstacles that these groups face, both in accessing a, p. 22)

**Increasing but Not Widening**

A recent OECD study of 22 of its member countries demonstrates the extent to which there has been massification of HE systems. On average four out of ten school leavers enter Tertiary A Higher Education (provision with a minimum of 3 years full-time equivalent study), and in some countries such as New Zealand two out of three participate. In Martin Trow’s (1973) terms we have moved in many societies through a mass system to a universal one. However, whilst there has been rapid expansion in HE numbers in most of these countries, this has not generally resulted in a parallel increase in participation by underrepresented groups. In the case of Western Europe, for example, the Council of Europe found that

[T]here is no evidence to suggest that the expansion of higher education in Western Europe over the last decade has been accompanied by any significant change in the relationship between educational opportunity and socio-economic status ... In this respect the term 'mass higher education' which is often used to describe participation rates of 30 per cent and over is misleading. Higher education, in terms of its accessibility by all socio-economic groups, is clearly not for the masses. (Council of Europe, 1996, p. 55)

Recent international reports that we commissioned recently as part of a Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning project
funded by the Scottish Executive (Murphy et al.2002) provide confirmation of this under-representation at an international level. In Finland, for instance, although widening participation and achieving greater educational equality are said to be indispensable to the Nordic welfare state, it appears that “not a great deal of levelling out” has occurred between social groups. “The chances of offspring of parents with higher education participating in HE are nine times greater than the chance of the offspring of parents who have only completed basic education”.

International studies (Schuetze & Slowey, 2000; Murphy et al., 2002) also identify some issues relating to institutional policy in particular countries. For example, in France, although there has been major expansion in student numbers since the 1980s (in 1980 there were approximately 1m students in HE; in 1995–1996 this had expanded to 2.2m), some sectors of HE, such as the state-run public universities, are more accessible than others. There are therefore number of key issues to debate in moves to widen participation. Firstly, even though there is considerable activity in this arena and a plethora of interventions, there is still considerable inequity internationally. This will be manifested in different ways in different countries and in the UK where the aim of widening access as an aim of government is heavily embedded in policy and practice, there is still massive skewing of participation by social class. Secondly there is clear evidence that it is those more recently established universities and non-university HE (i.e., in FECs) that accommodate most readily the ‘non-traditional’ student. Whilst we can find almost universal commitment to the social justice agenda implicit within lifelong learning headlined in mission statements and prospectuses of institutions, in reality these reflect very different practices on the ground (Davies, 1996) and is an arena for considerable conflict. In the UK for example, differentiated levels of commitment to widening access are shown by different institutions, and one of the key drivers in such work is the desire to secure institutional survival.

Most importantly this differential commitment will be reflected in the opportunities that are available for individuals. Clearly not every aspiring candidate for HE wishes to enter the most elite of institutions, and it is quite likely that the benefits that these institutions can afford certain individuals may be no greater than other choices they might make. Indeed for many adults, a one or two year short-cycle HE qualification in a vocational field such as Information Technology or Business Studies at a VET college is by far the most rational route to take especially if, as is most often the case, their primary motivation is employment-related. However, narrow channels of opportunity disguised as broad-based programmes of equity will do little to change the fundamental elitism of large tranches of the HE sector.

A Map of Widening Participation Initiatives in Higher Education

Many of the concepts used in post-compulsory education are rather slippery with fundamental terms like ‘lifelong learning’ subject to considerable debate and contestation. Widening participation is a straightforward idea, but with the multiplicity of practices evident across all sectors, it is difficult to provide an overview of the field internationally without framing the range of initiatives that exist. The issue is not so much related to the quantity of work taking place, although it is becoming increasingly difficult to identify this due to the vast number of organisations involved. The issue is more qualitative. First of all, how are widening participation initiatives defined? For instance, could the UK extra-mural/liberal adult education be considered an access route into HE? Extra-mural courses are designed to facilitate access to higher education curriculum, for those who have an interest in academic knowledge.
Their purpose is not directly related to facilitating access to HE qualifications. It should be noted, however, that evidence from Ireland suggests extra-mural provision can act as an informal 'first step' for many mature students, either by allowing them to 'test' the waters in HE, or increasing their interest in progression (Inglis & Murphy, 1999).

The second qualitative issue is, how best to conceptualise and categorise widening participation initiatives to make them more amenable to further analysis. A recent report from Universities Scotland (2001) on access in Scottish HEIs is useful in this regard. Institutional developments are described in terms of how they address three issues affecting access and retention: Academic (raising entry qualifications); Cultural (raising awareness); and Internal (changing institutional structures). For instance, Summer Schools are viewed as a means of addressing the academic issue of raising students’ qualifications prior to entry, while credit accumulation and transfer addresses an internal issue of facilitating progression through the institution.

A distinction provided by Toyne (1990, pp. 63–65) is useful. According to him, there are two broad types of access initiative — initiatives that focus on people “getting in” to HE, and access initiatives that emphasise “getting out” to people underrepresented in HE. Access Courses for adults and Summer Schools are concerned about people “getting in” to HE via non-standard means. Partnerships with schools, communities and employers, on the other hand, are much more to do with institutions “getting out” to underrepresented groups and the socially excluded. In our work in Scotland we have defined these two types of access initiatives as ‘in-reach’ and ‘out-reach’ respectively.

Toyne does not allow room in his distinction for a crucial category, addressing internal issues affecting access and retention. Alongside in-reach and out-reach exist a number of initiatives that can neither be categorised primarily as in- or out-reach, and have more to do with transformations and adjustments to the structure, administration and delivery of HE programmes. These include part-time provision, open and distance learning and links between vocational education training (VET) colleges and higher education institutions, which broadly are described as ‘flexible’ access initiatives. This three-part map of access is illustrated in Figure 1. The provision of these different types of initiative is affected by issues of supply and demand and institutional policy responses. It also relates to different perceptions of the individual, situational and institutional barriers to access. These that have been well described by McGivney (1993, pp. 26-30), and, whilst beyond the scope of this paper, provide an important component of the overall picture.

In the next section, I will consider in more detail on an international scale how this model might be operationalised. A more extensive exposition will be found in a forthcoming article (Osborne 2003b).

### In-reach

The category of forms described as in-reach refer to those actions of Higher Education associated with improving supply, by creating new ways for students to access existing provision. These include alternative entry tests for adults, customised courses and other procedures that allow a second opportunity to demonstrate potential often accompanied by relaxation of entry requirements. The degree to which these arrangements represent radical departures from standard practices and a real commitment to openness is quite variable. For example, in France there have existed since 1969 mechanisms such as Special University Entrance Examination (Examen Spécial d'Entrée à l'Université (l'ESEU)), and later the Diplôme d'Accès aux Études Universitaires (DAEU), introduced for adults who did not complete the Baccalauréat at school (Feutrie 1996, Davies 1999). Such systems are also a feature of the
Spanish system with its *Prueba de acceso a la universidad para mayores de 25 años* (Ortega & Camara, 2001). Although many thousands of students in Spain have achieved access through this route and many state and private centres of adult education have been set up to provide preparatory programmes for the examination, many more have failed it. This form of 'second chance' is largely a replication of the traditional school-leaving examinations, is culturally specific (Bourgeois & Frenay, 2001) and has not been attuned to the needs of adult aspirants. Other countries focus less upon a demonstration of a body of knowledge, but more on tests of aptitude, as is the case in Sweden through municipal adult education (*Komvux*) or Folk High Schools (Bron & Agélii, 2000). The potential merits of selection using indicators other than academic knowledge as traditionally construed have also entered debates around entry to elite professions. In the UK, following very public discussions about entry to medicine have led to the consideration of the supplementing tradition academic grades as a selection criteria with a range of psychometric tests based on Australian models (Rolfe & Powis, 1997). These include the assessment of problem solving skills, moral and ethical reasoning as well as personality characteristics such as empathy, self-confidence, aloofness and narcissism.

**Out-reach**

Widening participation in the out-reach mode is concerned with collaboration and partnership. Emerging university partnerships with schools, communities and employers refer to those schemes whereby HEIs actively engage with underrepresented groups and the socially excluded outside their own boundaries. The primary objective of such out-reach initiatives is to target individuals who believe HE is 'not for them'. A strong element therefore in out-reach is the attempt to counter dispositional barriers by creating greater awareness.
of what might be possible, and thereby stimulating new demand.

The forms that such collaborations take are multi-faceted, and are described and analysed in an international context in a number of recent publications (Thomas et al., 2002; Woodrow, 2002; Murphy et al., 2002; Osborne 2003b). Woodrow and Thomas (2002) present a four-fold typology of collaboration based on studies from Australia, Ireland, the Netherlands and the US in which they describe as the vertical, longitudinal, all-embracing and integrated versions. The vertical model refers to strategies that better facilitate direct entry from a particular sector to HE, as is exemplified in the links between Further Education Colleges and universities in the UK and various models of workplace learning. The longitudinal model does not sharply focus solely on HE as an outcome, but seeks ‘to achieve for its target group a continuum of cross-sector learning opportunities stretching from primary education into employment’ (Woodrow & Thomas, 2002, p. 13). Eggink (2002) describes a regional strategy of this form in Holland to tackle the low participation rates of minority groups that is based on co-operation between three sectors around Utrecht. Here the Regional Opleidengen Centrum Utrecht, the Hogeschool van Utrecht and the Universiteit van Utrecht have created what is described as the ‘Utrecht Bridge’ to improve the educational infrastructure. Woodrow and Thomas’ all-embracing model, exemplified by Bermingham’s (2002) case study from Cork in Ireland describes a regional strategy that encompasses multiple players and many dimensions from primary schools through to universities. It is distinguished from previous models not only by the breadth of partnership, but also by the extent of the involvement of all stakeholders including those seeking access in the process itself and by seeking to change the nature of supply. Integration refers to those models where institutional barriers have (at least ostensibly) been dissolved, and most obviously these are evident in those countries where Vocational Education and Training (VET) colleges and universities have been integrated to form a common post-16 dual-mode system such as in certain Australian universities (Wheelahan, 2002). There are obvious advantages to such strategies since much evidence points to substantial barriers existing at points of institutional transition.

**Flexibility**

Flexible arrangements are not completely distinguishable from out-reach activity as is evident in links between VET and universities. Flexibility implies significant structural modification in systems, which may or may not be accompanied by collaboration, although in many cases it is a facilitating mechanism. Flexibility in the context of widening participation refers to both spatial and temporal matters, namely changes that allow students access to education in locations and modes, and at times that to at least a certain degree are of their rather than institutions’ choosing. It also refers to those mechanisms that challenge constructions of what constitutes knowledge at Higher Education level and the means by which knowledge can be acquired and demonstrated.

The move to modular forms of higher education in many countries, in which distinct elements of credit can be accumulated both horizontally at a given level and vertically through levels, provides an obvious form that flexibility takes. Increasingly there is tendency that degrees may be constructed more readily in part-time mode, in workplaces and other off-campus locations and though distance education, often using new forms of digital technologies. In some cases schemes may consist of a multiplicity of these elements.

However, as Trow (1999, p. 315) comments, when comparing US and European universities, the latter ‘move slowly towards modular courses and the accumulation of course credits, and even more slowly to credit transfer’. Nonetheless
credit accumulation and transfer schemes are becoming more commonplace across Europe and form a template for much of institutional flexibility (e.g., in Norway (Moe, 2003)). Tendencies in this direction are clearly being driven through the Bologna Declaration of 1999, which seeks inter alia the development of a credit system to improve student mobility within the framework of the European Credit and Transfer System (ECTS).

The creation of distance education universities as a means of combating lack of educational opportunity for reasons including of geographical location, disability (CEDEFOP, 2001), and employment and home circumstances has a long history. Numerous examples exist of this form of provision being used as a strategy for securing 'second chances', and include the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya in Spain (Sangra, 2001), the Dutch Open University (Dijkstra, 2001) and the Finnish Open University structure. Certain forms of accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) and work-based learning such as La Validation D'Acquis de la Experience (VAE) in France present fundamental challenges to the structure of traditional higher education qualifications such the Diplôme (Davies, 1999). However, schemes of APEL have largely failed in their assault on traditional structures, and there have been many disappointments in the success of work-based schemes with considerable lack of commitment from companies.

Concluding Remarks

The arguments around widening participation generally lie within the twin domains of equity and social justice on the one hand and economic considerations on the other. The two areas are not of course mutually exclusive, particularly at an individual level since, as a series of studies show, the primary motivation of those wishing to gain entry to HE is economic.

In what can be described as a transformed arena of access, distinctions can be seen between well established programmes, such as adult Access courses and Summer Schools, that cater for an existing, but so far unmet demand for entry to HE, and more recent forms of provision, such as Work-based and School-links programmes that are specifically designed to stimulate new demand for HE. This development entails somewhat of a shift in the policy agenda surrounding widening participation and social inclusion, from a fairly strong focus on institutional and financial disincentives to participation, to more cultural and dispositional barriers.

The notion of 'reaching-out' to the socially excluded is about making concerted efforts backed by a focussed strategy to engineer demand. Such attempts to reduce the apparently insurmountable elitism of some HE institutions, read on paper like an essential part of any definition of a learning society committed to social justice and equality. Such interventionist approaches, however, carry with them a variety of question marks about their efficacy, particularly in regards to issues of supply and demand, the relationship between recruitment and access, the place of partnership/integrated approaches in the widening participation agenda and the sometimes conflicting definitions of what counts as access.

It would be trite to say that Access is 'solved', but the plethora of initiatives that exist internationally suggest that a number of workable models that can broaden participation to groups that have been systematically disadvantaged exist. Furthermore, it is also dangerous to talk about transferability of models internationally because of the historical and cultural specificity of many practices. Nonetheless, there is sufficient commonality of purpose and practice in a number of education systems to offer solutions that may have applicability beyond national borders. The greatest danger is that simply increasing participation becomes the primary goal, irrespective of the outcome of that participation, and that governments
become obsessed by achieving quantitative targets that have little logical basis except in party manifestos.

References


Enacting a Self

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It has been argued that producing and regulating identities are major aims for today's global companies, and that, more than ever before, workplaces influence the social identities that workers develop. In this paper I explore the process of what I call "enacting a self," as well as the roles of literacy within it, using data drawn from ethnographic studies of new capitalist workplaces. In particular, I examine performative moments during which individuals seemed especially attuned to articulating newly honed senses of self. These enactments took place within shifting social scenes: companies intent on constructing a particular kind of employee — self-directed team-players, problem-solvers, symbol analysts. The process was neither simple nor clean-cut. Frontline workers demonstrated different degrees of involvement and identification with their company's model of the ideal worker. Some rejected or ignored the model, others embraced it, and others turned it to their own purposes — all according to their backgrounds, present realities, and hopes for the future. I conclude by asking how attention paid to identity and enacting a self, as played out in the examples from this research, might inform our thinking about learning and development and our conceptions of practice in adult education.

Introduction

A person's sense of self, the particular knowledge of who "I" am, within a general cultural framework, is re-created from moment to moment in all the signifying acts of all the relations in all the events that make up a person's life. There are moments in relationships that are especially performative in this respect, moments of intense creation or realization of self (Urciuoli 1995, p. 202).

In this paper I explore the process of what I have come to call "enacting a self," as well as the role of literacy within it. In particular I examine, following linguistic anthropologist Bonnie Urciuoli (1995), certain "performative moments," occasions during which workers in new capitalist companies seemed especially attuned to articulating newly honed senses of themselves — as corporate player, competent technologist, as advocate for fellow workers. It has been argued that producing and regulating identities are major aims for today's global companies and that, more than ever before, workplaces influence the social identities that workers develop (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996). In my research I have examined certain of those companies in ethnographic detail, looking to see how workers responded to their employers' attempts to refashion them into people with particular kinds of dispositions, skills, values, and practices (e.g., Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; Hull, 2000). Here I revisit these studies in order to theorise identity and to illustrate the enactment of self in ways that I hope will be useful to adult and vocational educators.

The theme of agency will thread throughout (cf. Billett, 2001). In much recent literature on identity, theorists give a nod toward the possibility of agency — which Jerome Bruner helpfully defines in psychological terms as "the initiation of relatively autonomous acts governed by our intentional states — our wishes, desires, beliefs, and expectancies" (p. 41), and what
others frame more politically as a belief in and the activity around remaking one’s world (cf. Freire, 1970). But in most of the structure/agency debates, even in recent years, the possibility of agency is given just a nod, while the force of dominant ideologies in constraining a person’s sense of self retains its traditional power. Dorothy Holland and colleagues in their book, *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds* (1998), go some distance with their synthesis of the contributions of Russian theorists Vygotsky (1978; cf. Wertsch, 1991) and Bakhtin (1981, 1986) in claiming a space for agency in the construction of self. Their work has been pivotal for mine.

Holland and colleagues explain how people are positioned by discourses, to be sure, but are simultaneously able to recreate their own positions: “It is not impossible,” they cautiously observe, “for people to figure and remake the conditions of their lives” (1998, p. 45). I would agree, and in fact, witnessed this remaking, as have most adult educators, of self and life course over and over again by workers and vocational students. The remaking occurs sometimes in opposition to the goals of the workplace or vocational program, sometimes in concert with them, and almost always in the face of tall obstacles. I am especially interested, for the purposes of this paper, in revealing the enabling role that literacy played in this process of assuming agency for some participants. In other work (Hull & Zacher, 2002) I have documented how the ability to render one’s world as changeable can for many adult learners be integrally linked to acts of self-representation through writing and other semiotic systems.

*Theorising Identity*

A concern with the nature of personal identity has been a leitmotiv of the twentieth century and has assumed a special importance during its last two decades. In the words of social psychologist Kenneth Gergen, “Under postmodern conditions persons exist in a state of continuous construction and reconstruction. Each reality of self gives way to reflexive questionings, irony, and ultimately the playful probing of yet another reality” (1991, pp. 5–6). There is a massive literature on identity ranging from psychologist Erikson’s (1963) stage model of development formulated in the US a half century ago, to perspectives from anthropology, sociology, and most recently, from interdisciplinary fields such as cultural studies (cf. Hall & Du Gay, 1996). While earlier views of self privileged coherence, unity, consistency, and permanence, it has become commonplace to characterise identity as shifting, multiple, contradictory (Weedon, 1997), and reflexive. Thus, Giddens can write of late modernity’s “reflexive project of the self” and its “continuously revised, biographical narratives” (1991, p. 5).

Drawing from ethnographies of personhood, social theory, and socio-historical literature on human development, I conceptualise identity as:

- enacted through and mediated by language and other cultural artifacts;
- amalgamated from past experiences, available cultural resources, and possible subject positions in the present and future;
- indexing social positions or one’s privilege or lack thereof in relation to that of others;
- inseparable from learning and especially mastery or the acquisition of expertise;
- allowing the possibility of agency or the capacity to direct or influence one’s own behavior and life path;
- “continuously revised” (Giddens, 1991, p. 5); and
- enacted most intensely during “performative moments” (Urciuoli, 1998).

As I discuss next, this framework pointed me in certain directions in terms of research on workplaces considered to be exemplars of the “new capitalism” in a global economy.
and vocational programs designed to prepare those people for those workplaces.

Since at its heart, identity formation is intertwined with language use, other forms of signification, and the deployment of other cultural tools, I have attempted to listen carefully to talk in my research on shop floors and vocational programs and to take note of what conversations reveal about working selves. People find ways through speech, but also through dress, uses of space, and action, to tell others who they are and who they would like to be, as well as who they do not want to become. In tandem with this focus on language, I have also tried to be alert to the roles played by other “psychological tools” (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986) or cultural artifacts (Cole, 1996). New workplaces in an age of information technology place a premium on a variety of types of representation and new technological means. In fact, the proliferation of documentation, and its use in standardising procedures across companies and national borders, is an important means of shaping and regulating working identities. In the electronics factories that I studied, written instructions, templated forms, and an avalanche of reporting requirements were the order of the day; in the vocational programs, technical tomes required for certifications were daunting to both students and instructors.

Understanding how these artifacts direct workers’ activities and shape and constrain their senses of themselves as employees can be very instructive, I have found, as well as detailing workers’ sometimes inventive appropriation of these symbolic means.

Identities are claimed, Bakhtin (1981) would remind us, in something like a war of voices and their words. To understand identity formation, especially in the “figured worlds” (Holland and colleagues 1998) of new workplaces where particular models of working selves are explicitly promoted, or even imposed, we should expect signs of conflict, resistance, and hybridity, or perhaps the simultaneous adoption of multiple voices. The working identities and attendant discourses that companies and corporations value and promote will no doubt be most noticeable. But identities are fashioned, not only from dominant cultural models and available subject positions — “self-directed worker,” “team member,” “symbol analyst” — they derive as well from individuals’ past experiences and current resources and their goals and plans for who they might become in the future. As Farrell notes, “The process of identity formation is not... a straightforward process of ‘colonisation’ and it does not produce a homogenised ‘autonomous worker’” (2000, p. 34).

All identities, but most especially working identities, include a sense of self as positioned hierarchically in relation to others. Indeed, Bakhtinian competing voices, which we must learn to orchestrate, are themselves filled with ideological overtones, indexing social position, privilege, entitlement, or the lack thereof. Acquiring an identity thus involves acquiring a sense of social position and attendant appropriate ways of representing self. One may alternately develop “dispositions to voice opinions or to silence oneself, to enter into activities or to refrain and self-censor” (Holland & colleagues, 1998, p. 137).

Historically, factories have been among the most socially stratified of spaces, with rigid hierarchies and clearly defined and enforced rights, responsibilities, and dispositions. Yet the “new work order” has promised an interruption of sorts in this traditional stratification, as frontline workers are encouraged to assume greater authority on and off the shop floor. Thus, I have found it helpful to trace the fulfillment of this promise and to document the extent to which frontline employees, long denied access to certain authoritative voices, spaces, activities, and artifacts in the factory, are able to claim identities that position them as entitled.

In the workplaces that I studied, the push to take on a new identity was most
visible when frontline workers were asked to perform in a public venue before management and their co-workers. These occasions included simple presentations at meetings, more formal monthly reports to groups of workers and supervisors about team projects, and elaborate contests in which teams of workers competed against other teams through the presentation of their group efforts at increasing productivity and improving quality. While many scholars who theorise identity focus on the way in which we construct ourselves continually through language and other forms of signification, I have found Urciuoli’s (1998) emphasis on the pivotal role of performance in identity construction to be provocative. That is, while acknowledging that one’s sense of self is continually recreated from moment to moment throughout one’s life, she also claims that some moments are more significant than others and take on a special intensity. I think of the team meetings described above as such performative moments, and I am interested in discovering how conceptions of performativity, of enabling students to consciously enact new versions of working selves, might play a role in vocational programs.

In the new workplaces and in the vocational programs that prepare people for them, the linchpin for claiming identities that position one as entitled is the mastery and display of new and newly valued types of expertise and skill, knowledge, and know-how. Companies want to acquire or develop the correctly skilled and dispositioned worker — the continuous learner, the versatile problem-solver, the flexible thinker who is at home with a variety of symbol systems and technologies, and is smoothly versed in an array of textual practices, and willing to continuously acquire even more. In Zuboff’s words, “learning is the new form of labor” (1988, p. 395). As a student of socio-historical theory I am intrigued by the interplay of expertise and identity. In fact, from such a perspective, identity takes center stage in learning, serving as a prime mover as people progress from novice to expert, from outsider to insider. As Eisenhart notes: “Developing a sense of oneself as an actor in a context is what compels a person to desire and pursue increasing mastery of the skills, knowledge, and emotions associated with a particular social practice” (1995, p. 4; cf. Lave & Wenger, 1991) It follows, too, that a certain level of competence may foster an increased identification with a skill or practice, which may, in turn, boost the acquisition of an increased level of competence.

Many of the immigrant workers that I came to know in my research in the Silicon Valley of Northern California had little formal schooling; for many others, certificates and degrees from their home countries were discounted; still others faced the challenge of learning a new language in the context of their jobs. Many of the students with whom I worked in vocational programs — African Americans and other ethnic minorities born in the US — had had dismal experiences during compulsory schooling. For all of these workers and students, claiming an identity which supported the acquisition of new skills and knowledge — in a new workplace, a new community, and a new discourse, and for some, in a new language in a new country — was a Herculean task indeed, one that ought to make us all, to paraphrase Emerson, stand wistful and admiring before their ingenuity and perseverance. I turn now to the question of these workers and would-be workers fared. In particular, I ask: what identities, in response to the images of the ideal employee promoted by their company and their vocational programs, did they fashion?

Electronics Factories in the Silicon Valley of Northern California

Teamco, a pseudonym for the company I report on here, does circuit board assembly, its workers responsible for mounting and testing the circuits which run computers,
appliances, airplanes, and other electronic devices. By the mid-90's, when I conducted my field work, this company had reached a sales figure of well over a billion dollars. Since then it has experienced feast and famine. Its stocks sky-rocketed at the peak of dot-com mania in the late 90's, and then, when the national economy went south during the first year of the new century, it laid off hundreds of workers. Through these changes in fortune, Teamco has maintained its reputation as one of the "hottest" manufacturers in the Silicon Valley, as suggested by its scores of customer awards as well as noteworthy state, national, and international recognition, and its investment in numerous quality enhancement studies. During my fieldwork Teamco reorganised its workforce around "self-directed work teams," then one of the calling cards of the new capitalism. After mandatory company-wide training, workers were divided into approximately two hundred teams corresponding to their work areas, and compensation was partially linked to team performance, determined by whether individual teams had been able to meet their productivity and quality goals for the quarter.

Accompanying Teamco's commitment to quality enhancement programs was its participation in less admirable labor practices that are also a part of the new capitalism and the global economy. It hired all of its workers as temporaries, awarding permanent status, and with it certain perquisites such as benefits and eligibility for bonuses and training, after the employee had passed a probationary period of about six months. Lay-offs and enforced overtime, depending on the rhythms of customer demand, were the norm, practices I saw wreak havoc on some workers' morale and their economic welfare. No Silicon Valley factories were then unionised, nor are they presently, though some of the workers were affiliated with labor-related non-profits in the Valley. Wages were relatively low — from six to ten dollars an hour — though for some a welcome step-up from jobs in fast-food and much retail. Certain workers viewed their entry-level jobs as a way into better paying work in the high tech world, and I did witness a few examples of frontline workers being promoted up the production ladder, from line-worker to lead or quality control to supervisor.

Methods
The data reported in the following sections come from a larger ethnographic study (Hull, Jury, Ziv, & Katz, 1996) of two Northern California Silicon Valley factories over a period of three years. In particular, we aimed to develop a view of how workplaces were changing under the pressures of global competition by examining the textual practices that play such a prominent role in the new work. At Teamco my research team and I made over two hundred visits between September 1994 and November 1995. Observations and interviews were recorded in field notes. We also audio-taped almost all interviews and, and more rarely, video-taped events in the workplace which demonstrated the literacies that people employed as they conducted their work and participated in training. In addition to such field work, we researched the history and development of the circuit board assembly industry, information which allowed us to understand current policies in their local and global social, economic, and historical contexts.

In this paper I focus especially on the data collected around "public performances", of which there were many in this restructured factory. At weekly team meetings workers were expected to solve problems collaboratively and to rotate the responsibility for chairing, setting the agenda, and recording minutes. At monthly building-wide meetings, team leaders met with supervisors and engineers and were regularly called upon to make presentations about their team's activities, including setting goals and measuring productivity and solving a range of production problems.
On more infrequent company-wide occasions, team representatives made presentations to upper-level management on the results of their and their co-workers' problem-solving efforts, and they also competed, one group against the other, for "team of the year" honors. These public performances, especially the building-wide and company-wide meetings, were prime occasions for enacting working identities.

By reviewing transcripts and field notes, I identified several categories of engagement and identification in relation to the company's model. These ranged from "unengaged and unidentified," to "engaged and resistant," to "engaged and transformative," to "engaged and identified." I next chose one worker or group of workers from each of these categories who could serve as cases for closer analysis. I wanted to bring to bear information on workers' school and work backgrounds, their current situations and cultural resources, and their plans and goals for the future, including the subject positions and social roles they saw as desirable, possible, and available. For each case, data included at least one public performance, as well as interviews and observations at work and during team meetings.

In constructing the cases, I was guided by the theoretical framework on identity presented earlier. I first characterised each worker's response to the company's model of self-directed worker. To do this, I looked for mismatches and points of convergence between the language of self-directed work teams and the worker's own utterances (cf. Bakhtin, 1986). In keeping with notions of multiple and hybrid identities, I stayed alert to traces of a variety of "voices" (Bakhtin, 1981) which reflected a range of "Discourses" (Gee, 1996) in those utterances. Second, I wanted to characterise the working self being enacted by each worker in his or her public performance(s) and to account for its features, as far as was possible, by bringing to bear what I knew of that person's past experiences, present concerns, and future possibilities. Throughout, of special concern to me was the degree to which workers evidenced dispositions as entitled or unentitled in the workplace; the relationship between conceptions of self as worker and opportunities to learn or to develop expertise in the course of work; and the extent to which workers considered themselves agents, as able to exert direction and control over their working lives.

**Findings**

Individuals actively construct their personal goals, beliefs about themselves, and images of self from their past experiences, their current resources and circumstances, including the cultural models and socialisation processes to which they are exposed, and their dreams and plans for the future. At Teamco, I saw evidence that workers invented a hundred ways, big and small, to both adapt to and transform the definitions of self and worker that were being promoted and to shape or influence literacy requirements and work practices. They often were creative in interpreting the functions of teams and literate activities in ways that fulfilled their work obligations but diverged from the corporate notion. And they were sometimes ingenious at turning teams and corporate notions of literacy requirements and public performances of problem-solving to their own purposes. Their choices were influenced by how they positioned themselves as individuals or groups in a given situation, how they felt about what was happening, and how their past experiences were connected to possible present and future selves within the context of work.

Although space limitations prevent the presentation of full cases here, I illustrate each of the four categories of engagement and identification by introducing a worker or work group who embodied that category. I begin with "engaged and identified" and recreate a performative moment in which an employee attempted to be exactly the type of worker the company wanted. As described earlier, at Teamco self-directed work teams competed against each other for monetary prizes. And each
month the winning team from each of the company’s five buildings presented before the highest levels of company management, including at times the CEO. Below are excerpts from a speech by Ester, an immigrant to the US from the Phillipines, who was a quality assurance person in a “handload” line, the lowest-prestige area in the factory. She had been with Teamco since its beginnings. Like many Filipinos at the factory, Ester had the advantage of being a comparatively fluid speaker of English in a company where most frontline workers spoke Chinese, Vietnamese, or Korean as their first languages and were newcomers to English. As we shall see, during her presentation Ester showcased her flare for public speaking and her talent for the dramatic. She attempted valiantly to embody her interpretation — largely accurate — of the company’s model for an ideal worker: a seven-step problem-solver who knows her paperwork and whose mind is like a computer. So completely did she embrace this working identity that her performance could be seen as an example of willing “ventriloquation,” in Bakhtin’s (1981) sense of being spoken by others’ words.

The following excerpts are drawn from a transcript made from a video of her presentation. In recreating that performative moment, I hope to give a vivid sense of Ester as she enacted a working self, her voice(s), and the genre of team presentation, as well as to illustrate the kind of data that was available for analysis. Subsequent cases illustrating the remaining three categories of identification and engagement are presented in less detail. (The transcript of Ester’s presentation numbered 367 lines. Transcription conventions here include overlapping speech [=]; explanatory information is provided in brackets, while empty parentheses are used to indicate indecipherable speech.)

“I’m really an expert. It’s guaranteed!”
Embracing Teams

In a well-appointed conference room at Teamco headquarters, Ester walked toward the microphone and into the spotlight, overheads in hand, and turned to view her audience. Here she was, opening on Broadway, as one manager described these command performances before the “suits”. Ester’s team members were seated together in a row towards the back, and a variety of engineers, and managers, and corporate executives were spread out about the darkened room, including Teamco’s CEO. With a smile, Ester looked around, making eye-contact, and then spoke slowly, punctuating her words with hand gestures and pauses, as if she were reciting a well practiced speech:

ESTER: Good morning, everyone

People: [in chorus] Good morning

ESTER: My name is Ester Bonafacio, representing Building 1, Team 17. Before the technical stuff, I would like you to get a glimpse of us [brings hands to chest] as a team and the project we are working in...okay? [smiles]

People: (murmurs of agreement)

Using the terminology of manufacturing — it’s a “high mix, low volume project” — Ester then described her team’s “Applied Materials project” and suggested the demands such work placed on employees: “Just imagine, we have more than three hundred (high pitch) fifty assemblies [smiles].” She next segued to her own area of expertise, Quality Control, and then set about directly characterising herself as an expert:

ESTER And now [walking right, to other side of overhead] let’s go to my area, over here. QA. I’m a QA myself [touches hands to chest]. In my mind [points finger to head] there’s the computerised drawing of each assembly I’m working. I’m really an expert [smiles].
[smiles and nods] It’s guaranteed. But=

People: ==(Laughs)==

ESTER: =It’s guaranteed [gestures hands forward; chest pushed forward; smiling] yeah=

People: ==(Laughter)==

ESTER: ==[Smiling, moving hands] It’s like a piece of cake== I’m real proud of that. It’s true.

Ester received a big laugh from the audience when she claimed that she easily carried all of the computerized drawings in her head. Having succeeded in lessening social distance through humor, she then recalled the history of the Applied Materials Project, reminding individual managers in the audience of its chronology and singling them out by calling their names, another communicative strategy that reverses hierarchical roles:

ESTER: [Normal speaking voice] I’ve been working with Applied Materials five years ago. Yeah, five years. We were only in a small room [tilts head]. Imagine? Small room in [points left] Building..12. You remember that Mr. Sousa?

Mr. Sousa: Hm-huh

People: (Laughter)

Ester completed her introduction of herself by assuring her audience that, despite the fact that she carries the drawings in her head, she also has the required paperwork at hand, a major concern for this ISO 9000 company:

ESTER: So, anyway, don’t you worry, because when I do the inspection, I have my paperwork in front of me. You could [walks towards right, motions with hand right] go to Building 1 right now, and we have dif-

perhaps gathering steam and confidence from the enjoyment the audience’s laughter implies, Ester launched a small, daring joke about what she and her co-workers know as opposed to what they are told:

ESTER: And I’m very proud. Very proud. [Walks left, smiling] Because Applied Materials is one of the biggest accounts. They don’t tell you, but it’s true [smiles].

People: (Laughter)

Ester turned then to the “technical stuff.” Relying on overheads, she walked through a company-mandated “7-Step Problem-Solving Process,” illustrating how her team had used this heuristic to guide their project. But throughout the second half of her presentation, Ester digressed from accounts of her team’s responsibilities and technical matters, such as the calculations used to determine quality and productivity scores — another signal that she was attempting to bend this performance to her own ends. Here is one example, a digression interjected just as she was about to display the results of her team’s work for the past quarter. She playfully chastised the CEO for failing to visit her area, as had been rumored that he would do:

ESTER: So you gonna see the results [places transparency on overhead] from my last for-from the last quarter. In Building One, they really help
People: Ester:

ESTER: Each one, and they really working hard in trying to achieve what their goals. [High pitch] Each one. Sometimes it a little bit boring already, but you should go there [high pitch] every Monday, pull out your chart, each team, we’re really very proud of that. One time they say, [high pitch] Mr. Walt Wilson is coming, and then he wasn’t able to come, [smiling] I have a speech all ready [gestures arms outward]=

People: [Laugh]=

ESTER: =I missed that part. But I didn’t so- get so excited, you know?

People: [Laughter]

ESTER: I cannot get excited by- I have something in my mind already [points to head]. Something [gestures with hands]. To welcome Mr. Hussein- Uh, Mr. Walt Wilson, in the morning. But then, [higher pitched] he did not come.

People: [Laughter]

ESTER: It’s okay. Now here I am.

People: [Laughter]

To paraphrase her: “Our work is sometimes boring, but we get very excited when we hear the big cheese will be coming round! We have our speeches all ready — and then — he doesn’t show! But not matter, I’m here now.”

To end her presentation, Ester entertained questions, and the first came from the CEO, who asked her to compare her work before and after the advent of self-directed work teams. After a bit of a false start and a joke about her team’s common goal — ”to make money” — which didn’t get a laugh, Ester summarised what she saw as the advantages of teams:

ESTER: So each team, they have their own goal. And in that also meeting, they can talk about their problems. And then, of course they go to the higher like management if they have problem, they could ask for help. So, that’s one benefit. And what else? Very important thing, [counting on fingers] they make their goals, they come to be close to each other, and then they could be recognised, I think sel dir- self directed working teams are all right.

Ester’s parting words, as she gathered her papers and transparencies:

“I enjoy being here.”

Of the formal presentations my research team and I observed, this one by Ester was the most theatrical. Most workers were clearly nervous and ill at ease as they went through their prescribed paces on “Broadway” — identifying their teams, explaining their prescribed seven-step problem-solving process, displaying their data on quality and productivity, and fielding questions at the end — many of them coping valiantly with less than perfect English. But Ester took pride (and took risks) in making her part of the presentation entertaining. Interjecting humor throughout, gesturing and making full use of body language, she even interacted with members of the audience, calling them by name and asking them rhetorical questions as she went along, communicative strategies designed to decrease social distance as well as to reverse power relations. She thereby used a company-structured moment to her own advantage, daring to construct and promote a positive, collegial view of herself, re-voicing company language with her own accents.
We learned in interviews with Ester that she wanted desperately to move off the assembly line and up to a supervisory position. She felt that management’s focus on teams and team competitions was a bit of good fortune, for it allowed her to draw on her own hidden background and experiences (she was currently a part of a Toastmaster’s group, and she had been an elementary school teacher in the Phillippines). She hoped, then, to call attention to herself and thereby find a new niche; simultaneously, she intended to proclaim her commitment to the company’s goals. Yet, for the period that we conducted field work at Teamco, Ester wasn’t able to achieve her goals, and in fact, had some wrenching moments as she pursued the limelight afforded by team competitions. At the end of the fiscal year, Teamco sponsored a company-wide competition for the best team presentations; this festive but intensely competitive occasion took place at a hotel in the nearby city of San Francisco. Finalists were bused there from the factory and treated to dinner and accommodations for the evening. Alas, Ester and her team did not fare well, and Ester herself was inconsolable and spent hours after the competition in tears.

I did not know many workers who adopted the company-promoted identity of self-directed team member so thoroughly as did Ester, but it is important to note that even she re-accented the company’s discourse, creatively turning a scripted company moment into an occasion to display her own skills and reverse power relations, at least momentarily. Her case also provides a vivid sense of the advantages and perils associated such a stance. Ester did come to the attention of higher-ups at Teamco, and she was most certainly able to use and develop linguistic and presentational skills to promote a positive image of herself and, to a lesser extent, her team. Yet, this willingness to identify with the company, to fashion herself in the image of the Teamco self-directed problem-solver, did not suffice to advance her own personal goals, and she was left puzzled and more than a bit discouraged.

“Study is an act of extreme pressure”: The Rejection of Teams

Some workers vigorously resisted the company-promoted identity as member of a self-directed team. Such was the case for Loi, a Vietnamese woman in her 50’s, who had come to the United States five years earlier. During her first four years in California, she had worked in a nursing home in the Silicon Valley. Then she landed a job at Teamco in the wave solder area, catching boards as they came out of the wave solder machine, inspecting them, putting them on trays and carrying the trays to the wash machine. She said she preferred work in electronics to work in the nursing home because it was easier and because there was overtime.

The following excerpt comes from a section of a transcribed and translated interview between Loi and Craig, a member of my research team who was fluent in Vietnamese. When Craig first asked Loi what she thought about self-directed work teams, she adopted the party line, claiming teams are good not only for the product, but for the company and “for everyone.” Asked whether she saw any drawbacks in the program, she offered an interesting hedge: “No ... but there could be.” Then, after again stating that she had no opinions on self-directed work teams, she offered this account of other people’s opinions:

Loi: But the majority of the people don’t like this.
Craig: Don’t like what?
Loi: The majority, most of the workers here don’t like “SDWT” [self-directed work teams]
C: Oh, the majority don’t like “SDWT”?
L: “They, they look like Communists. Yeah, they look like” — almost all the people say like that.

C: Aah!

L: Yeah! A majority, the great majority, everywhere, in every building I hear the same thing. Study, making them study is an act of extreme pressure, forcing them to study. They study because they are forced to. They don’t like it. So they don’t think it is something they should put any effort into.

C: That is, before, in Vietnam, this had already happened to people.

L: It had already happened to them.

C: Then they came here and they have to study==

L: ==In Vietnam, because of fear of communists they ran over here.

C: And then they met up with the Viet Cong’s teacher! [laughs]

Loi’s history as an immigrant from Vietnam who had had negative experiences with communism and attendant ideas of collective study and work clearly shaped her present notion of being a worker at Teamco. Loi attended the weekly meetings of her self-directed work team, but was silent throughout them. When asked during meetings if she had anything to say, any opinions to add, her standard response was “I have no problem in my area.” She avoided performative moments, not wanting to embody the company model even momentarily. And if by chance a meeting was cancelled, she would smile broadly, clap and almost skip back to her work station, spreading the good news to her co-workers on the way. Unfortunately, Loi’s silence, as well as the silences of others in team meetings, was often taken by supervisors and team coordinators as a sign that she and her teammates had not “grasped” the concept of teams due to their lack of formal education. Unfortunate, too, was the fact that her lack of identification meant that she didn’t acquire certain of the skills and social practices associated with teams that could have increased her expertise and embellished her sense of self as competent worker.

Loi, then, represents a segment of workers at Teamco who, for a variety of reasons, distanced themselves from the identity of self-directed worker and therefore took part in team-related activities only peripherally. She steeled herself against anything that would in any way compromise her view of herself as a person free from imposed ideologies. This very resistant stance enacted by Loi was paralleled by other workers’ rather total rejection of the team concept, though the situations surrounding their choices were not always so dramatic. Many of the workers I personally came to know at Teamco were wives and mothers with families; they left the factory each day to rush home and take care of children and extended households. Their dominant senses of self were tied to family, home, and sometimes ethnic community, and they drew boundaries around their work lives that circumscribed the mental and emotional energy they were willing to put out. At one team meeting I heard a young supervisor, an ethnic Chinese woman who, like Loi, had emigrated from Vietnam, encourage — indeed admonish — the members of her team to think about the goals they wanted their team to accomplish after they went home from work. One woman on the team told me afterwards, in tones that indicated the strong offense she had taken, that she had no intention of thinking about her job at home, where work for Teamco should have ended, no intention whatsoever of
allowing this factory world to trespass into her familial personal space. Other workers in this factory resented having to take on additional responsibilities, often connected to literacy, in order to organise themselves as management wished into self-directed work teams. Others were skeptical about the company's motives, questioning whether management actually did intend to put some supervisory functions into the hands of frontline workers. Other workers saw their jobs as stop-gap, as temporary sojourns until better jobs came along.

"You Have to Make a Note": Resisting Authority through the Literacy of Teamwork

More common than the stances of Loi and Ester were those of workers who participated in teams but simultaneously and successfully used team-related practices to their own advantage. Thus, the working identities they constructed partook to some extent of the company model, but they were fashioned also in productive opposition to it. One of the teams that I followed most closely consisted of a group of women who worked (as did Ester) on a hand-load line (this case is presented in more detail in Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996). This team, representing a low-prestige, and relatively low-skilled area of the plant, met weekly around a table in the company's cafeteria rather than in the well-equipped training room. Their procedures for running a meeting were decidedly unconventional, at least by the company's standards. With much simultaneous speech and little in the way of order or apparent attention, this group perhaps epitomised the company's worries about its immigrant workforce. Yet, these women not only found ways to accomplish the work of teams, they also appropriated certain reporting requirements to their own advantage. The working identities they constructed thus tread a middle ground.

The young leader of this team, Xuan, had grown up in Vietnam and spoke Vietnamese as well as Cantonese, but lacked confidence in her English. Nonetheless, she took on many responsibilities regarding teams and their reporting requirements, and she became very adept at the growing paperwork surrounding goal-setting. Eva, another member of the cafeteria group and an immigrant from the Philippines, spoke excellent English and thereby became the informal spokesperson of the team. This was despite the fact that she was its most recent hire and still a temporary worker and therefore not entitled to certain privileges such as formal team training. In one of their team meetings, the group of women who comprised this team jointly constructed — with much over-lapping talk — an explanation for their low productivity on a particular day. They mentioned, for example, the fact that the circuit board they were working on was new to them, it required them to load many components, and their line was short the requisite workers to boot. And then they went on to discuss how to document these extenuating circumstances so as not to be penalised on their productivity record and ultimately their team-based bonus.

Here is a bit of that conversation featuring Xuan and Eva. There are hints in this excerpt of the tension growing from Eva's increasing and often domineering participation in team-related activities.

Eva: Then you have to make a note at the back and tell tell them the reason why is our productivity is so low that day. So they will give us credit for that==

Xuan: ==I know, yeah, this time I forgot.

Eva: Ay-yai-ya! Ohhhhh

[much laughter all around]

Eva: Did you see every time, did you see every time we have a meeting or something else I put a note on my paper?
Xuan: Yeah==
Eva: ==Yeah you have to do that all the time.

(17 turns omitted)
Xuan: I write a note already.
Researcher: Good.
Xuan: But that Acuson I forget [laugh].
Researcher: [laugh] You forgot the Acuson.

[Much laughter]
Researcher: Okay [.02 pause]
Eva: You'll remember the bonus ( ).

[Much laughter]
Eva: [teasingly] Maybe we don’t receive any.

[Much laughter]

Thus, temporary worker Eva chastised team leader Xuan for failing to document in writing the extenuating circumstances for the team’s failure to meet a productivity goal. “You will remember to do this if we don’t receive our bonus!” Eva teased somewhat sharply. And Xuan softly defended herself, pointing out that she usually kept such records.

Over the course of my fieldwork I saw both women learn how to use literacy to their own and their team’s advantage through the creation of written records and through taking advantage of the authority that often attends putting something in writing. Circuit board assembly, once a “sentient” job, to use a distinction coined by Zuboff (1988), has become in recent years much more intertwined with textuality and accompanying intellective skills. Employees had to become adept at and comfortable around the paperwork that is part and parcel of everyone’s work now on the manufacturing floor; they had to learn to conceptualise their work in terms of its written representations; they had to be able to master and manipulate the social and institutional rules that govern literate activities in the factory. Put another way, workers were asked to conceive of themselves, not just as employees who performed the physical act of placing components on a board, but also as thinkers, as people who monitored their own hand-loading rates, reflected on and analysed their problems, and reported the same through print and through presentations.

Eva and Xuan did all of this, but they also engaged in what might be termed sub rosa literacy practices. Xuan, for example, began to keep a little black notebook of work-related information and strategies. Eva pushed at the company’s policies regarding temporary workers by writing a letter in which she complained that an oral promise to bypass her probationary period as a temporary worker had been broken—a letter that infuriated her supervisor, but had positive results for Eva. In the above transcript, we see the women learning not only to fill out the innumerable forms, to track and report their quality and productivity each week, but also to document problems in ways that protected themselves. I termed this type of literacy “using texts to exercise or resist authority” (cf. Hull, Jury, Ziv & Katz, 1996; Hull, 2000).

Thus, Eva and Xuan complied with team-related rules and fashioned themselves according to the company model for self-directed workers. But they also, albeit in different ways, found spaces in which to try out alternate models of working selves that were neither entirely resistant, as was the case for Loi, nor mostly compliant, as was the case for Ester. These selves were especially visible through to me through their uses of literacy.

“Too fast, too Fast!”: The Appropriation of Teams

The last worker I will introduce fashioned a working self that, like the working identities
of Eva and Xuan, allowed him to fulfill the company's expectations about teamwork, increased productivity, and improved quality, and simultaneously, in small ways, to influence or resist those expectations (this case is reported in more detail in Hull, 2000). What is distinctive about this worker, however, was the public and transformative nature of his resistance and his influence. An immigrant from the Phillipines, Mr. San (as he referred to himself) said he had retired from his first profession in order to come to the US. He was rumored to once have been a doctor, to still be rich, and to work in this Silicon Valley factory only as a hobby. These things I don't know for certain, although I doubt circuit board assembly ranks high on anyone's list of hobbies. Mr. San's reputation among his co-workers as someone who didn't need to work may have been influenced by his apparent willingness to risk his job in this non-union workplace by regularly voicing complaints and, in general, by looking out for his own and his co-workers' rights and well-being. It indeed may have seemed that he didn't need to work, because he seemed willing to risk losing his job.

The following transcript of talk is taken from a meeting of what was called the "Goal Review Board." Made up of production workers and supervisors representing the plant's eight functional areas, this Board's initial purpose was, as its name suggests, to evaluate the appropriateness of the quarterly goals that teams were required to set for productivity and quality. But gradually the Board expanded its focus and began to serve as well as a forum where workers could be encouraged to learn about teamwork and the goal-setting process by being required to present various kinds of information to the group.

On the occasion described here the board had asked team representatives to stand up before the group and explain how their areas calculated productivity and quality. Each representative had been given the same template of questions about the calculation of quality and productivity scores and the computation of "standard time". Worker after worker was reluctantly urged to the front of the room, and in rote fashion or sometimes with nervous laughter, read off their answers. They assiduously avoided eye contact and above all tried to duck questions from the group. One young woman began her presentation by announcing to a fellow worker, "Andy, you ask a question, you gonna die!"

Then Mr. San took his turn in front of the room, and he began this way:

MS: Okay. (Puts transparency on the overhead projector) Our team name is uh Turbo, Team number 31, and the area is First Mechanical and Handload. Shift day, and my coach is Engineer Kartano. Okay. Quality. First Mechanical and Handload. We're not yet ready, we'll start soon. Why? Because I just received the Standard Time from the office. I could not base my calculation without the Standard Time. But I'll show you later on the table of Standard Time that you can base it on.

A few seconds later Mr. San returned to the issue of Standard Time, reiterating that he was unable to provide answers to the questions on the overhead because his team had not been privy to the correct Standard Times:

Okay, any questions so far? Maria is one of my people and I have assigned her to gather all the uh data and records. Again, we have not entered any data because of the availability of the Standard Time. But we'll start this coming Monday. And what is Standard Time? I'll show you later.

And finally the dramatic moment arrived: Mr. San displayed on the projector an overhead consisting of a mass of numbers in a grid, far too small to read, but unmistakable in import. He revealed, that is, a new set of Standard Times, or the times allotted to workers for completing their various production tasks. His pride was unmistakable:
And how is productivity calculated? Standard Time again. We have the Standard Time. We have to base it on that. Divided by actual time times 100 you get the percentage. This is, now I just got this, that's why we are delayed in entering our data, {puts a new transparency up on the overhead projector} here is the Standard Time. Wow! (laughter) They're trying to modify the Standard Time because I complained all the data that we got on the actual uh time that we finish one board doesn't count in the Standard Time. So they're trying to modify and that's why we have to wait for this new set of Standard Time to be able to enter in the data in the computer. So, right now I hope those figures are correct, and we can improve our PPM [quality] and the productivity. Any questions?

Mr. San next deflected a suggestion by the engineer who was in charge of the meeting that he base Standard Time temporarily on old data, saying that's neither "practical" nor "realistic". And he took up a more sympathetic question from a supervisor about the direction of the error. That is, were the old Standard Times too slow or too fast? He overlapped her speech in his desire to emphasise that the old Standard Times had required workers to perform their tasks much too quickly:

S: Were their times over or or under. Like were they expecting 10 boards/MS: Too fast/to be built? Yeah. (((xx))) maybe six?

MS: Too fast! Not even not even uh we're not even close. Fifty percent.

S: Yeah. Okay

MS: And yet we're doing it as fast as we could, and could not compare them. So now they realise it/Supervisor: Yeah/ the engineer I talked to the engineer I come back to the engineer and he agreed. That's why they're trying to modify all this uh Standard Time now. So now we can enter it in the computer based on this usage of Standard Time.

Then Mr. San gathered his papers and took his seat to the sound of applause.

The issue of speed at work is of course a theme that runs throughout the history of labor relations; how fast work gets done, or the "standard time" as it's called in this example, has been contested over and over again. In this most recent example in that long history, Mr. San appropriated a company meeting at which workers were expected just to practice, merely to get their feet wet with public presentations of data by reading off their responses to pre-fab questions in a rote fashion. These were practice sessions for enacting new working identities, if you will. Yet he chose not to be part of the dog-and-pony show, just as he had refused even before this meeting took place, to complete elaborate graphs and charts and to provide a discursive rationale for his team's quality and productivity goals. "How can we write goals," he had argued, "if our Standard Times are incorrect!" Pressing his point with an engineer, he eventually succeeded in having the company's time-study experts recalculate the Standard Times. The Goal Review Board meeting had been set up so that workers could gain practice in basic literate functions, such as completing forms and providing documentation, and in conveying information about such texts to fellow employees, supervisors, and engineers. Yet Mr. San commandeered this practice session to demonstrate how he had solved a very important literacy-related work problem — the correction of the Standard Time record.

As the transcript of Mr. San's speech suggests, this frontline factory worker was quite skilled rhetorically. Watching and listening to the videotape of the meeting makes clear his terrific sense of rhetorical rhythm, his effective use of rhetorical
questions and lexical repetition, and his equally effective plays with wait times. But most impressive of all is the import of his performance — in effect, his ability to appropriate a meeting designed for the purpose of school-like practice and to use it as his own forum. Mr. San turned the tables on his own company, calling attention to a problem that had been ignored and that had great consequences for frontline workers, and highlighting his solution to that problem.

I suggest that Mr. San’s performance in the meeting, and his concomitant expert use of literacy to exercise critical judgement and to resist and influence authority, had everything to do with the working identity that he had constructed for himself on the factory floor. He viewed himself as a kind of father figure, a protector, an advocate. He felt it was his duty to look after his co-workers, his team — “my people” he called them. He had found a space for participating in the work of teams, as the company desired, and for shaping teamwork toward the collective good.

Conclusion
With the contours of vast economic and social change an ever-present backdrop — what Giddens (2000) has aptly termed our “runaway world” — I have examined how frontline workers in the Silicon Valley, recent immigrants all, made sense of their working lives by enacting working selves within shifting social scenes. The local context for these enactments, a new capitalist company intent on fostering a “culture change” on the factory floor and a new kind of frontline worker — a self-directed problem-solver and team-player — made the workers’ stories and their representations of self especially visible and often poignant. Thus, I sometimes think that the dramatic physical transformation of the Valley — from the orchards of apricots and walnuts of the 1940’s to the thousands of electronics and internet-related companies in the 1990’s — are being mirrored by equally dramatic interior changes for people.

Teamco, in attempting to manufacture a new kind of worker, one with a working identity as a self-directed problem-solver, positioned workers discursively as powerful agents, and gave them access to time and space (in the form of team meetings) and processes (such as collaboration, heuristics for problem-solving, use of technologies, and multiple forms of representation) and new genres (such as presentations to management and protocols for team meetings). But at the same time, the company positioned workers as unentitled. And it did so by two major means: workers, despite the advent of teams were still hired initially as temporary workers, at-will employees without health care benefits and at a low wage. In addition, Teamco circumscribed workers’ activities through the imposition of particular artifacts, such as the heavy burden of documentation and reporting requirements. Workers were self-monitoring, not self-directed. Other discursive means of controlling workers included the scripting of problem-solving heuristics and forms of participation in meetings. Thus, Teamco sent very contradictory messages.

For their part, workers demonstrated different degrees of involvement and identification with the company model of self-directed workers. Like the accounts of self-fashioning reported by Holland and colleagues (1998), these cases “belie any simplistic notion that identities are internalised in a sort of faxing process that unproblematically reproduces the collective upon the individual, the social upon the body” (p. 169).

People participating in the same social practice informed by the same company model developed different identities and different areas and types and levels of expertise. They evidenced different levels of expertise, for example, in terms of mastering the discourse of teams and different degrees of agency in claiming or rejecting
or modifying or transforming that discourse and the social practices associated with it. Some people rejected or ignored the identity of literate team member; others embraced it; others turned it to their own purposes — all in line with their own backgrounds, present realities, and hopes and dreams for the future. It was the hybrid space provided via team-related activities — to discuss problems, to plan solutions, to set goals, to reflect on the work process, to perform new selves, if you will — these discursive spaces mediated the development of new identities.

Virtually all workers constructed what Holland and colleagues (1998) called "positional identities," whereby they located themselves rather precisely in relation to others in the workplace in terms of privilege, influence, and power. Notions of themselves as less privileged — despite company proclamations that they were now self-directed — were enacted by many workers in their reluctance to take part in team-related activities, to take the floor, to voice particular emotions to voice themselves at all. An identity as unentitled often occurred along with lack of engagement in team-related activities. Thus, workers' participation or lack thereof was much more complicated than the simple notion of skill or ability would suggest.

And then there was Mr. San — who "populated [others' words] with his own intentions, his own accent," to borrow once more from Bakhtin (1981, p. 294). To be sure, a variety of workers resisted the discourse of teams on a daily basis. The "weapons of the weak," to use the sociologist James Scott's (1985), terms are many, varied, and inventive. But Mr. San, unlike most others, made claim to an identity as entitled, daring to take the floor in the goal review board, to demonstrate his disgruntlement with managers who imposed incorrect standard times and his co-workers who didn’t question them, to reposition himself and others in relation to one of the most powerful artifacts in the factory, the document that determined how quickly people had to work and that measured productivity. He demonstrated a stable authorial voice or stance (Bakhtin, 1981; cf. Holland & colleagues, 1998), and through his mediation of team meetings, where he enacted this stance, and especially through this performative moment, he modeled a way of envisioning a different working world.

This study contributes to a growing literature on personhood and demonstrates how individuals respond variously to available models of self. It departs from the theoretical literature that sees virtually no possibility for agency — no chance of directing one's own behavior or fashioning a self even partly of one's choosing — and promotes a view of identity that focuses on potentiality, continual enactment, and performativity. I hope the conceptions of self that are illustrated here also suggest fruitful ways for thinking about adult development. How might we cultivate a view of adult learning that keeps the fashioning of identity at its center and acknowledges the crucial role that images of future selves can play in motivating the acquisition of skills and knowledge as parts of new social practices?

References


Trumpets of Change: Are the Jericho Walls of VET Standing Firm, Tumbling or Leaning?

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The structures of vocational education and training (VET), like those of Jericho, have been built and those who live within feel safe and content. Or do they? For when the trumpets of change sound, the issue is not so much the robustness or imperviousness of the walls as the hearts and minds of the people — both inside and out. Any number of subsidiary questions could be posed in relation to the title, and this paper both asks and attempts to respond to some of them. In so doing, it refers to a number of research studies undertaken both within and outside the Centre for Research in Education, Equity and Work, University of South Australia (where the speaker resides). The main focus is the VET practitioner, the key to the locked gates of the Jericho walls of VET. Success in most aspects of current VET Strategy hinges on quality of provision and continuing formation of a learning culture in all establishments within these walls, and the VET practitioner is arguably the pivotal player in helping to achieve these goals. So what does this mean for those working in VET — living within the walls? How are they coping with the trumpets of change? What may help to prevent the walls from tumbling or leaning?

Genghis Khan once said, in reference to the Great Wall of China, that ‘The strength of a wall depends on the courage of those who defend it’. Human-made structures, whatever their size and however formidable, do not last. Like the Jericho Wall, Tower of Babel, Hadrian’s Wall and the Berlin Wall, they are wonders for a while but eventually tumble for one reason or another. Their physical presence is really no match for the hearts and minds and souls of the people inside and outside them. Ultimately, it is the concept that lasts, not the physical structure itself.

This paper examines the Jericho walls of Australian vocational education and training (VET). It focuses on key policy changes that have been mandated by reform leaders from above and how these changes have impacted on ‘ordinary folk’, and then comes to a judgement on the condition of those walls and where restorative work may be required. In grappling with the question in the title, I acknowledge that I cannot embrace the detail; rather, my role is more one of the building inspector examining the VET walls and provoking ideas and possible directions, than as the tradesperson restoring the walls and suggesting strategies and practical remedies.

What Are Some of the Key Changes to VET?
In Australia, there has been unprecedented reform over the past twelve years in VET. Four key reforms of most relevance to the theme of this conference paper are summarised below.

Shift to an Industry-led VET System
One of the most common proclamations about the VET system is that it is ‘industry-led’. This has occurred at several levels (NCVER, 2000, p. 27). The swing from a supply- to a demand-led training system is
very significant, and underlies many of the key issues in training reform. A prime effect of this reform has been a power shift away from training institutions towards industry. *User Choice* policy and training adhering to Training Packages developed by industry have added to this tilt in power relations and have meant a privileging of employers *vis-à-vis* providers. The shift has also implied that the needs of the individual are subservient to the needs of the economy. This shift in emphasis represents a dramatic swing from the spirit of the Kangan Report (1974) which emphasised the philosophy of lifelong education and priority on the needs of individuals.

**Introduction of an Open Training Market**

A hallmark of VET has been governmental policies to create an effective public system of vocational training. In the mid-1990s, however, an open 'training market' was initiated, where not only public but also private providers, including enterprises across a range of industries, are now able to deliver VET. As a result, VET has increasingly become characterised by more intensive competition between providers, calls for greater accountability and the need to develop cooperative and flexible responses to clients. The introduction of an open training market has been contentious (Robinson & Kenyon, 1998; Anderson, 1998). Some argue that it has led to a reduction in quality because of its focus on cost of delivery, and dispersal of funds that were once directed to the enhancement of the public TAFE system (NCVER 2000, p.28). Recent moves to tighten registration requirements for training providers suggest that these criticisms have not been without foundation.

**Adoption of Competency-Based Frameworks**

Arguably the linchpin, as well as the most enduring feature, in the reform process has been competency-based training (CBT). The current policy of Training Packages, as distinct from national curricula, continues to hold competency standards in central position. There have been, however, strenuous debates about the efficacy of CBT in promoting the goals of training reform (e.g., Billett, McKavanagh, Bevan, Lawrence, Seddon, Gough, Hayes & Robertson, 1999; Mulcahy & James, 1999). These debates derive predominantly from individual frames of reference and from confusion over definition. Discussion on the efficacy of such an educational approach frequently generates more heat than light, as CBT has meant and will continue to mean different things to different people; in addition, the ever-changing nature of CBT programs has contributed to the difficulty of understanding the approach (Harris, Guthrie, Hobart & Lundberg, 1995, pp. 4–5). Many significant questions remain. Is it really the type of training system to generate the flexible, thinking skilled workers that the knowledge economy of the future will require? How can CBT best reconcile the often conflicting demands of organisations and individuals? How can CBT be humanised by the application of empowering, learner-driven concepts in its implementation? How can competency-based assessment be most effectively implemented? Can equity and access be secured in a CBT system? Such questions are as vibrant now as they ever were.

**Reform of Entry-Level Training**

Apprenticeships have a long history of serving traditional trade areas in Australia. However, this system has recently undergone considerable change (Robinson, 2001). Under *New Apprenticeships* policy, employers and new apprentices can now select from a diversity of developmental pathways and from a range of providers. New apprenticeships are no longer solely confined to young people entering the workforce for the first time, nor to the small number of traditional, largely
male-dominated industries. While strong support for these arrangements remains, some authors have raised a number of issues relating to their efficacy as forms of entry-level training (Keating, 1995; Sweet, 1998; Schofield, 1999a). The crux of the issue is the capacity of the VET system to provide learners with high quality learning pathways. Relatively little notice, however, has been directed at what actually happens to new apprentices and how they experience their training processes.

These four major reforms to Australia’s VET policy have generated considerable ferment in the lives of the ‘ordinary folk’ in the VET sector. So within this policy context, what are perceived to be the changes impacting on these folk?

There are any number of ‘big-picture’ documents written on changes affecting VET. These changes embrace the rise of the global economy, the new competitive state, economic rationalism, corporate managerialism, changes of governments, technological advances, economic imperatives, moves towards the knowledge society and so on. So to ‘ground’ my response in VET research, I will refer to two studies that will give voice to two groups of VET players — key stakeholders and teachers/trainers.

In a recent national study on the changing role of VET staff development (Harris, Simons, Hill, Smith, Pearce, Blakeley, Choy & Snewin, 2001), one component was a Delphi survey of 31 key stakeholders, nationally significant figures in VET staff development and VET policy. They were asked to identify and then rank major challenges that they believed VET teachers and trainers faced over the next five to seven years. In a second study, these same challenges were presented as fixed choices in interviews with 67 VET teachers and trainers across three States/Territories (Harris, Simons, Clayton & Symons, 2002). The results from both studies are displayed in Table 1.

It is interesting to note that most of these challenges relate directly to compliance with changes that are already in the workplace. Thus, the key stakeholders are assuming that such challenges will remain current for some years. Furthermore, there is little difference between the two groups — both highly rank competition and keeping up with changes, though practitioners noticeably place more importance on understandings of their changing educational work, work in general and their role than do stakeholders.

The changes that have had the greatest impact on the VET practitioners’ work over the past five years (from an open-ended question) were Training Packages, technology, competency-based training and flexible delivery. All of these innovations go to the heart of pedagogical practices and have been shown in other research to make significant demands on teachers and trainers (e.g., Smith, Lowrie, Hill, Bush & Lobegier,

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1997; Simons, 2001; Schofield, Walsh & Melville, 2001). Teachers and trainers have also keenly felt the changing policy environment, particularly in relation to funding, competition, the introduction of user choice along with the impact of restructuring within their own organisations, arguably in response to these external forces.

In relation to what changes would have the greatest impact over the next five years, technology, the competitive environment and flexible delivery were ranked as the areas most likely to impact on their work. Collectively, these three areas reinforce the importance of the competitive environment in the minds of respondents and the (potential) ways in which technology, especially as applied through expansion in the use of flexible delivery, might be used to lever further advantage in the marketplace.

What has Been the Impact of These Changes on Teachers, Trainers and Learners?

In the reform process, many VET structures have been built — organisations, policies, funding mechanisms. They have been necessary and important, as they have helped to guide directions and facilitate processes. But what is really important are the hearts and minds of those involved in VET work. I do not believe we can genuinely conclude that they have been a significant consideration in the VET change process — yet we cannot any longer tolerate the use of ‘ordinary folk’ as fillers in the walls when they drop, as supposedly happened with the Great Wall of China! Within our VET walls, what has happened to (a) access and equity? (b) quality of teaching, learning, training, assessment? (c) learning cultures and learning environments? and (d) the professional skills of VET educators? These are significant questions.

We know that what is intended is not what is always enacted. Any study of the different notions of ‘curriculum’ can remind us of that. For example, what is intended to be taught (the ‘written curriculum’) is not necessarily what is taught (the ‘taught curriculum’), nor what is heard and digested by learners (the ‘received curriculum’), nor acted upon (the ‘enacted curriculum’). Furthermore, underlying all these problematic processes are the prime motivations of the various actors, usually diverse and often not in harmony (the ‘hidden curriculum’). Recognising this, then, do we know enough about change and its effects on the ‘ordinary folk’ of VET? How do VET teachers sieve VET policy and enact it at the local level? To what extent do VET trainers comprehend government decrees on training and translate them into practice within their workplaces? How do VET learners experience their training and what exactly do they learn and put into action?

Policy changes have substantially affected the texture of Australian VET. In particular, they have significantly altered the roles of VET teachers, workplace trainers and learners. In terms of this conference paper’s focus, these three groups of ‘ordinary folk’ lie at the heart of our interest in the VET system, and it is from their perspectives that we can begin to examine more closely the walls of VET.

VET Teachers

The first group of ‘ordinary folk’ are the VET teachers. They occupy a unique position, as they are both subject to the dramatic changes that have impacted on the Australian workforce in the past decade, while also being expected to support and facilitate the change process (Waterhouse, Wilson & Ewer, 1999, p. 1). Caught in this bind, they face many issues and dilemmas.

Preparedness?

One is the extent to which VET practitioners are prepared for the challenges ahead. The Delphi study (Harris et al., 2001, pp. 14–19) revealed that key VET stakeholders believe only around half of the current
VET teaching and training workforce have the necessary skills, knowledge and capabilities to cope with the challenges that lie ahead. These capabilities were not seen to be uniformly distributed in the workforce, with groups such as part-time, older and casual staff often perceived as having less expertise. Moreover, slightly less than half the current teachers/trainers were considered to possess the attributes, skills and knowledge required to improve the quality of VET provision. To the extent that these perceptions are valid, they have significant implications for staff development.

**Increasing Differentiation and Precariousness**

Another issue is increasing differentiation in the VET workforce. Employment trends support the notion of an emerging differentiated VET workforce that comprises a smaller core of permanent practitioners alongside a growing 'peripheral' group of contract and casual staff with varying degrees of attachment to the VET sector (Harris et al., 2001). The casualisation of the VET workforce (e.g., Malley Hill, Putland, Shah & McKenzie, 1999; Kronemann, 2001) and increasing 'precariousness' in employment (Campbell, 2000) are also noted in other studies. Further evidence of the differentiated VET workforce can be found in the growing numbers of private providers, particularly those that are based in enterprises, and the consequent large numbers of VET practitioners whose primary occupation is not that of a teacher or trainer. Many of these new VET practitioners are people who have a range of qualifications and are working under a variety of non-teaching awards and conditions (ACIRRT, 1998, p. 8).

The implications of this differentiation are significant. For many, it will mean that career paths will be varied and possibly non-existent in any one organisation. Entry-level requirements will vary according to the level of the position being filled. This trend is most obvious in industry sectors where there is rapid technological change and 'buying-in' of skills is seen as the most cost-effective way of gaining needed expertise. This could result in a loss of morale and loyalty within the organisation. Staff development requirements will also vary — those with higher responsibilities are most likely to have greater access, and those who deliver prepared material are likely to have lesser opportunities for staff development and these opportunities will be narrowly defined.

**De-professionalisation or Re-professionalisation?**

The changing scope and construction of VET teachers' work has given rise to considerable debate regarding the 'professional' nature of that work, how it has been affected by the reforms, and subsequent predictions for how that work may be conceived in the future.

The adoption of competency-based frameworks has given rise to arguments (both in Australia and overseas) that the role of the VET teacher is being de-professionalised (Waterhouse & Sefton, 1997; Hyland, 1998). Teaching in post-school institutions, Hyland (1998, p. 9) claims, has been 'standardised, commodified, pre-packaged to meet accountability and other needs', even 'McDonaldised'. Through the 1990s, tight economic conditions, government rationalist policies and a changing labour market altered the role of the VET teacher dramatically. One report boldly pronounced it “a paradigm shift... in the profile of the TAFE teacher’s professional relationship with the TAFE enterprise” (OTFE, 1997, Vol. 1, p. 6). Changes have fundamentally transformed VET's orientation from education to business and service, and shifted the VET teacher along a continuum from an emphasis on teaching and creating curriculum more towards entrepreneurial brokering and delivery of competencies within pre-packaged modules in a climate of intense market competition (Angwin, 1997). The knowledge and skills
of the broad-based teacher are being supplanted by a ‘middle-person’ role of, on the one hand, interpreting written competencies developed by non-educational ‘others’, and on the other, checking performance on these competencies.

Other researchers do not agree with the grim picture of a shrinking role for VET practitioners. They prefer to paint a more optimistic picture where teachers’ work is being re-shaped and ‘re-professionalised’ in new ways that are in keeping with the emerging demands for knowledge workers in globalised economies. Avis (1999, p. 245), for example, refutes the notion of de-professionalisation, arguing that a transformation of teaching and learning is taking place, which, in turn, “opens up new forms of practice and identities” for practitioners. He asserts that teachers’ work is a labour process that has always been subject to alteration as ideas about teaching and learning have changed. Attwell (1997) argues that changes to the nature of work require workers to be learners and represent a convergence in the interests of human resource development (HRD) and VET practitioners. Reporting on the outcomes of a large study across 14 European countries, Attwell (1997) and his colleagues report that VET teachers and trainers would (a) lead the way in the opening up of new learning process, placing greater emphasis on learning by doing and a deeper understanding of the knowledge components of all jobs (Papadopoulos, 1994 cited in Atwell, 1997), and (b) be responsible for promoting productive learning through work by attention to the growing body of knowledge of situational learning (Engenburg, 1994).

In a study on the changing nature of TAFE teachers’ work in Victoria, Brown, Seddon, Angus & Rushbrook (1996, p. 312) noted that the changes are at once both ‘empowering and disempowering’. The impact of training reforms have been welcomed by some teachers and resisted by others. Many are able to ‘create spaces’ in which they can independently interpret the curriculum and even co-opt the curriculum to achieve alternative outcomes (Brown et al., 1996; Mucayh, 1996). Within these environments, teachers’ relationships and ways of working are being re-shaped, with the result that new professional cultures become possible. Seddon (1999a, p. 5) asserts that the reforms challenge the long-held notion of TAFE teachers’ work being controlled and regulated by centralised authorities, an historical legacy contributing to a ‘sense of learned helplessness’. She contends that within the current context a new form of teacher professionalism needs to emerge.

‘Dumbing Down’ of VET Teaching?

Some practitioners claim that there has been a major shift from what VET staff were originally employed to do, namely, vocational teaching and training. Funding now has a large effect on redirecting efforts away from teaching and into other areas. Such dilution of training effort has become a significant cause for concern for some teachers and an increasingly articulated warning about the quality of VET. These concerns have been further fuelled by significant changes in the types of educational qualifications teachers and trainers are required to have. It could be argued that there has also been a ‘dumbing-down’ of the VET teaching workforce, as a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training is now generally regarded as the de facto qualification for VET teaching (Harris et al., 2001, p. 30) and less staff are taking on education/teaching degrees. Many practitioners believe this situation is not conducive to ‘lifting professionalism’ and can therefore be interpreted as contributing to tensions around the status and functions of VET teachers.

Re-ordering of Relationships with Industry

Simons’ (2001) doctoral Study of teachers’ experiences in implementing a competency-based training framework across a range of program areas in TAFE institutes
in South Australia highlighted that educational reform of that nature and scope is a complex and dilemma ridden process. The introduction of such a framework not only required teachers to adopt new ways of working in relation to the conception, delivery and assessment of their programs, but also carried with it the imperative that the philosophy embedded in the Kangan reforms in the 1970s be reworked. As such, the reforms also sought to re-order the relationship between teachers and industry.

Devalued and Disillusioned Teachers?

Significant national committees on VET since the early 1990s have been dominated by industry representatives, and educators have been 'driven from the seats of power at the centre ten years ago... victims of the new mood' (Moran, 1998, pp. 183–185). As a consequence, VET teachers have felt devalued and disempowered (as do many in small business and private providers).

A number of research studies have illustrated the impact of training reforms on educational practice (Robinson, 1993; Sanguinetti, 1994; Mulcahy, 1996; Harper, 1996; Smith, Lowrie, Hill, Bush & Lobegerie, 1997; Billett, McKavanagh, Bevan, Lawrence, Seddon, Gough, Hayes & Robertson, 1999; Mulcahy & James, 1999). All point to the varying impacts that educational reforms have had on teachers’ work. Billett et al. (1999, pp. 11, 164) noted that the implementation of a unified curriculum framework, imposed during the early years of training reform, undermined teacher autonomy, and resulted in a number of changes to teaching practices. Others have also argued that the training reforms 'disturbed the distinctive organisational cultures of TAFE' (Chappell, 2001, p. 7) and thus raised considerable issues for the 'shifting identity' (Avis, 1999, p. 245) of VET practitioners.

Change has Substantially Altered VET Teachers’ Roles and Work

Writers have critiqued the training reforms as resulting in significant decentralisation, the assertion of customer choice and the increasing centralised regulation through the use of purchase / provider agreements (Kell, Baletti, Hill, & Muspratt, 1997; Forward, 1999; Rowe, 1999; Seddon, 1999b). These conditions, in turn have altered the nature of work that VET teachers and managers are asked to undertake including an increasing emphasis on ‘fee-for-service’ work both in workplaces and offshore. New work practices arising from corporatisation and regulation have contributed to the diversification and intensification of teachers’ work. New technologies and curriculum frameworks have significantly altered what is valued in terms of pedagogical practices.

Expansion and diversification of work responsibilities has led to changes in role balance for VET practitioners. Teachers perceive that there has been a shift in emphasis from processes of learning to an increased emphasis on assessment. An accompanying shift has been a decreasing emphasis on VET practitioners as creators of curriculum and an increasing focus on them as receivers and interpreters of the wishes of industry within received training frameworks (in the form of Training Packages). Arguably, interpretation of the requirements of these training frameworks requires teachers and trainers to hold certain capabilities in learning theory, curriculum development and content expertise. However, in a context where resources are scarce and outcomes paramount, teachers are often faced with ethical dilemmas as they wrestle with decisions that require them to juxtapose issues such as ensuring a sufficient base of underpinning knowledge or breadth of experience against efficiency considerations.

Another of our studies on VET practitioners furnishes evidence that their role has been rapidly changing, in space, time and function (Harris et al., 2002; also Kell, Hill & Blakeley, 1998). It is clear that many VET practitioners have been challenged to deal with changes that have fundamentally altered their ideas about learning.
and how they might work to facilitate that learning across a broader range of contexts using more diverse methodologies. The walls of VET institutions have become increasingly permeable and practitioners’ arenas of practice now extend into a wide range of workplaces as well as the virtual learning environment. This broadening of sites for practitioners’ work is not merely an issue of geography. The broadening of workspaces has also challenged VET practitioners’ notions of their role as teachers, as well as their attitudes, values and beliefs about their role, their employing organisation and their relationships with learners and industries. These practitioners make numerous references to work intensification, unrealistic expectations, resource impoverished work environments and an increasing sense of dislocation between those who deliver VET and those who manage it.

Our research indicates that the ways in which VET practitioners’ work has changed in response to national reform are most clearly exemplified in the re-working of relationships (Harris et al., 2002). When asked to gauge the extent of change on various aspects of their working lives, by far the greatest change was on work responsibilities, where 63% reported that these had changed ‘a lot’. Forty percent reported this degree of change on their relationships with industry, while around one-third said this for changes in relationships with other teachers/trainers (35%), other providers (35%) and students (33%). The least change was in their relationships with unions and other professional bodies (9%). The nature and quality of their relationships with industry are shifting in fundamental ways, and are clearly having ‘flow-on’ effects also on their other relationships. These suggest a shifting of allegiances that potentially impact on how VET practitioners might develop their own personal networks and ways of navigating their working lives within the sector.

Staff Development Adequacy?

Staff development to help practitioners cope with these changes appears to be inadequate to meet demands at the present time, such that the potential contribution of staff development to improving the quality of VET provision is unlikely to be realised (Harris et al., 2001; Kronemann, 2001). With the ever-present threat of staff leaving or being poached, and rising costs, VET employers have been less inclined to support staff development. It has therefore become, somewhat paradoxically, far more a personal than a systemic responsibility, and yet far more focused on corporate than individual concerns.

There are substantial barriers to participation in staff development, and where there is support, it is far more readily available in public than private providers and for permanent than part-time or casual staff (Harris et al., 2001). A significant barrier appears to be the view that staff development is a ‘bolt-on’ activity — part of a communication strategy rather than an integral component of the strategic responsibilities of organisations. Another issue is the extent to which current national models of staff development are constrained both in their penetration and effectiveness by the requirement for matching funds. Yet another is the need to improve the quality of and participation rate in existing staff development programs. The difficulties are especially critical for providers in regional and remote locations. Our research on VET staff development found that pressure of work was easily the most highly rated reason why VET teachers were not engaging in more staff development activity (Harris et al., 2001, pp. 39–40). Kronemann (2001, p. 93) also concluded that ‘too many teachers are on the edge. They are stressed and overworked’. There is a need for teachers to go beyond compliance and be reflective, reflexive, sceptical (not cynical) and look towards new ways of working and marketing VET and themselves. It is highly likely
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that the level to which such outcomes are achieved will determine the quality of VET provision in the future.

The scope and nature of the reforms that VET practitioners have been asked to implement are not simply a matter of substituting one set of pedagogical practices for others. Changes to the VET system have required shifts in practitioners' norms, habits, beliefs, values, skills and knowledge. This required a quantitatively different form of change process to that which might be used to foster the adoption of a single teaching innovation such as a new instructional strategy. Our findings, like others (e.g., Mulcahy, 1996; Mulcahy & James, 1999; Simons, 2001), illustrate the important place that VET practitioners hold in the policy-making and implementation processes. Attempts to 'teacher proof' the system ignore the reality of the change process which can include resistance, conflict and action to co-opt changes to meet alternative outcomes. Put simply, the political actions of those central to the change process — that is, the VET practitioners — are a key factor in shaping the outcomes of any change process. In the context of several studies, practitioners seem to be alerting policy-makers and managers to their perceptions of the very real issues and concerns they are facing in their daily working lives.

Workplace Trainers/Coaches
A second group of 'ordinary folk' in the VET system are those in the workplace who help others learn. Given the training reforms outlined above, and the consequent de-institutionalisation of learning, the workplace 'trainer' is assuming an increasingly critical position in the provision of training opportunities.

Are They Prepared/Equipped?
The critical issue is to what extent trainers and coaches in the workplace are ready, willing and able to meet this enhanced expectation and demand for training. One of our studies, *Rethinking the role of the workplace trainer* (Harris, Simons & Bone, 2000), highlighted the critical role that informal trainers or coaches play in promoting learning. The study revealed that unstructured training, through the helping hand of colleagues in the regular course of the working day in spontaneous ways, is of central importance in workplaces.

This group of people, who have a part to play in the learning of fellow workers and whose work is integral to the provision of work-based learning opportunities, are often the unseen VET practitioner (Harris et al., 2000). The role of these practitioners can vary considerably depending on such factors as the nature of work in that enterprise, and the character of and interplay between that enterprise's work and learning networks. The VET practitioner in this context operates in ways that are quite removed from the formal training environments of institutionalised providers and is usually required to juggle the twin demands of worker/employer/business owner and trainer/coach. Smith (2000) and Johnston and Chappell (2001) also support the emergence of a 'new species' of workplace trainer that includes employees whose job involves some responsibility for helping colleagues learn at work. Particularly in small businesses, trainers' ways of helping people to learn often do not bear any resemblance to formal approaches to training that might be observed in institutional settings. Learning is usually not shaped by objectives, assessment processes or structured opportunities for practice. Rather, learning emerges idiosyncratically from work structures, processes and content, and is shaped by workplace climate and relationships between workers.

Relevance of Current Competency Standards?
The specific findings, therefore, on the nature of these trainers' work raise critical questions about the relevance of the current
workplace trainer competency standards. Critical analysis of these standards, for example, uncovers a number of assumptions that reflect a particular view of workplace trainers (Harris et al., 2000, pp. 88-90). Yet the experiences reported by the workplace trainers in our research challenge many of these assumptions, and call for a re-conceptualising of the role of the person who helps others learn in the workplace (and we are pleased to see this happening in the current review of these standards).

VET Learners
The third group of ‘ordinary folk’ are the VET learners who, within the current VET policy environment, experience a number of issues relating to their learning. The following discussion identifies some of the more significant ones.

Pre-eminence of Assessment Vis-à-vis Learning
VET learning is embodied in Training Packages, in the structure of which learning is relegated to the status of a ‘non-endorsed’ or ‘support’ component. The endorsed components are the competency standards and qualifications — the bookends of Training Packages — enveloping assessment in the centre. So while assessment used to be the tail wagged by the dog of learning, in the present VET system, it is the other way around. The ‘demise’ of curriculum in favour of Training Packages has contributed to this shift in emphasis. Thus, the imperative of a competency framework in the latest guise of Training Packages has tended to promote further a rather lopsided emphasis on assessing as distinct from learning, and perhaps more disturbingly, a tacit acceptance of ‘tick and flick’ assessing to the neglect of more holistic processes of assessment.

Learning has Become Increasingly Commodified and can Become Restricted
VET learning has become increasingly just-in-time, shorter and packaged in digestible chunks, involving the compartmentalising of what used to be longer courses based on curriculum into shorter programs based around clusters of competencies. Learning can thus become merely a commodity — sometimes unconnected in meaning with other parts of a program, often treated as a discrete artefact to be gathered and stored towards a piece of paper sometime in the future. The outcomes of learning are now tightly defined by competency standards developed by industry parties. The advantage lies in the potential for greater relevancy; the downside lies in the potentially restricted notions of learning, particularly a risk in arrangements where there is on-job training only. The increasing emphasis placed on the on-job environment has the potential, if the pendulum swings too far, to result in narrowly conceived practices that may serve the immediate requirements of individual worksites but not the longer-term needs of industry nor of learners. Studies have also confirmed that workplaces tend to favour the development of procedural knowledge over propositional knowledge. Research evidence, however, points to the value of both types of learning and to the importance of achieving a productive balance between the two (Hager, 1997; Harris, Willis, Simons & Underwood, 1998).

VET Learning can be Disjointed Between on- and off-job Learning Sites
The predominant theme in our research on on- and off-job learning environments is one of contestation (Harris et al., 1998). The sites as learning environments are fundamentally different and hence the notion of integration becomes problematic. New apprentices learn by dipping into their on- and off-job environments and taking what they require at those times. They oscillate between their two worlds — in the workplace often as a single learner with a mentor, and in the provider clustering with other learners and sharing experiences and learning from other mentors. The prongs of an apprentice’s tuning fork of learning are not always resonating in
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harmony, as messages received from the different learning environments are often contradictory, often in conflict within the apprentice's mind.

The learner has to learn how, and when, to adjust, negotiate and compromise, and has to become more autonomous and self-directed in order to survive. This is of course a desirable outcome. Within their communities of practice, the learners reconstruct their learning environments, manipulate them and pluck what they can and when, rather than the environments being entities that mould the learners. While the knowledge and values of their vocation are transmitted through the two environments, the real process is less a case of knowledge being given and more a case of the learners negotiating their own through active acquisition and interpretation. To the degree that each learner is able to handle the stresses and strains in this negotiation process, to that degree will he/she be able to integrate the different learnings from each environment. The VET learner learns to squeeze learning out of work.

Quality of Learning Environments?
The foregoing analysis raises questions about workplaces and training institutions as learning environments. However, processes relating to learning and assessment, compared with structures and policies, have not received as much attention. Yet such issues go to the very heart of the quality of VET for learners, as well as the ability of the system to deliver outcomes related to promoting lifelong learning (Robinson, 2000, pp. 28–29).

VET graduates generally report an overall high level of satisfaction with their training (NCVER, 2001). However, while research indicates that many enterprises and providers are working well to deliver quality processes that are assisting learners to meet their learning goals and needs, it also highlights some significant gaps and challenges which potentially could undermine the quality of the learning experience (WADOT, 1998; Schofield, 1999a, 1999b & 2000; Smith, 1999; Strickland, Simons, Harris, Robertson, Harford & Edwards, 2000).

In a national survey of 595 apprentices and trainees in the automotive and hospitality industries (Strickland et al., 2000, pp. 42–47), respondents were asked to rate the importance of various aspects in both their workplace and provider environments in terms of assisting them to learn, and whether each aspect was currently happening in their environments. Learners highlighted a number of conditions in their workplaces that, while rated important in supporting their learning, were nevertheless judged to be currently absent from approximately one third to over one half of all their workplaces. Four of these were common to both apprentices and trainees (percentages indicate proportions of workplaces where the aspect was not happening):

- opportunities to work on their own (apprentices 56%, trainees 47%)
- being able to be formally assessed when ready (apprentices 48%, trainees 33%)
- being able to attend classes and workshops that count towards their qualification (apprentices 32%, trainees 46%)
- employers/trainers taking time to talk to them about their job (apprentices 32%, trainees 32%)

In addition, apprentices reported the following aspects absent:

- being given feedback and encouragement about their work performance (40%)
- opportunities to talk to employer/trainer about what they'd like to learn (37%)
- opportunities to practise their skills (35%)
- being aware of what is required when being assessed in the workplace (32%)
- employers/trainers showing interest in their future in the workforce (31%)

while trainees reported these aspects absent:
• opportunities to talk to employers/trainers about their off-site training (43%)
• opportunities to have their competence formally assessed while at work (35%)
• employers/trainers showing interest in their future in the workforce (33%)

It is particularly informative to note that, in quite high proportions of workplaces, there are not people selected especially to help apprentices (56%) or trainees (47%) with their learning at work. In the light of policy directions encouraging development of training cultures within enterprises, this appears a crucial area in need of attention.

As with the workplace environment, our research generally points to high levels of satisfaction with many aspects of the off-site learning environment for both apprentices and trainees. The data reinforce the important contribution that off-site environments can potentially make to new apprentices' learning, particularly in relation to aspects such as: time to learn and practise skills that are not being learnt in the workplace, time to talk about their job with others (teachers and peers) and opportunities to have their competence formally tested. However, learners also point to areas that they believe are open for improvement. They consider that their off-site teachers/trainers, though judged to be effective at instructing, are not as aware and up-to-date with current work practices as they would like them to be. Input into what they would like to learn and the timing of their assessments are also not happening as often as the learners would like.

While these learners, therefore, share many views on the factors most helpful for their learning in both workplace and provider environments, in reality a significant number of them reported that those aspects are absent from their workplaces. Thus, not all providers and enterprises are able to deal with the complexities and challenges offered to them. There are inherent tensions between the needs of enterprises and the needs of apprentices and trainees, as well as tensions over the degree to which structured training should focus on industry or enterprise-specific knowledge and skills. This research highlights that real differences exist between enterprises in terms of their training/learning cultures and the resources that they are able to provide to support learning and assessment.

Conclusion

In summary, then, we've witnessed the construction of the Jericho walls of VET in Australia over the past twelve years in a climate of rapid change. The walls of Jericho tumbled after the enemy on the seventh day marched around them seven times blowing their trumpets. In our situation, who is blowing the trumpets?

The learners? Presumably no, as they are receiving portable, nationally recognised qualifications, despite the unevenness of workplaces in quality of learning environment. The teachers and trainers? Again, presumably no, for they have a job in the system, despite decreased autonomy, a shifting identity, insufficient professional development, changes to the nature of their work, and the significantly altered power relations vis-a-vis industry. The employers? Definitely not the large ones, but perhaps the smaller ones. However, the system is far more 'industry-led' than previously — they are obtaining credentialled staff from assessment processes based on industry-derived competency standards, and appear to be happy as long as it does not cost them much and government subsidies continue. Higher education? Perhaps. They do not tend to appreciate the competency-based nature of VET, which is deemed overly narrow and does not provide sufficient indication of capability for university entrance purposes. However, higher education does not know enough about what goes on inside VET walls and it is therefore difficult to play the right tune on their trumpets. So as long as VET does not make too many inroads into university territory,
higher education appears content for VET to serve as a ‘pool’ for some students entering university, as a ‘finishing school’ for some leaving university and as a provider for non-university participants. The States and Territories, via State Training Authorities? Perhaps, as they focus on the high costs of training. However, they are part of the infrastructure maintaining the VET walls. What about the Commonwealth, through the mouthpiece of ANTA? Definitely not. It is firmly entrenched inside the walls and is driving the system.

All these inhabitants thus appear to have a vested interest in keeping the walls of VET standing. Perhaps a more helpful question is: Can any cracks be detected in the walls, and if so, where are they requiring restoration?

The answer on the evidence in this paper appears to be ‘yes’ and that, while they have relatively sound foundations, they are in need of repair. From the research reported above, a summary of the areas where restoration could be done is as follows:

- Developing ‘learning-to-learn’ and ‘squeezing learning out of work’ skills in VET learners.
- Paying greater attention to equipping those in workplaces who help others learn (both formal and informal workplace trainers/coaches).
- Building more conducive learning environments in workplaces.
- Promoting greater recognition and value of VET teachers/trainers.
- Providing the conditions and incentives for engendering in VET teachers/trainers the motivation for engaging in continuing professional development.
- Enhancing the training of VET teachers/trainers, and valuing and rewarding them for completion of such training.
- Continuing the support for the rapidly developing body of research into VET policies, processes and products.
- Engendering partnerships in change — not topdown ordering of wall construction.
- Promoting a clearer understanding of change and change management, particularly in terms of its intensely personal nature, its non-linear progression and its differential impact on various actors.
- Paying greater attention (on the part of the leaders of change) to the ‘ordinary folk’ of VET.

We can assume for the purposes of this paper that those marching around the walls are researchers, the trumpets are their research. Their music is not intended to bring down walls, for they, as with the other stakeholders, also have a vested interest, and so their tune cannot be too discordant. Rather, it is intended to search out cracks in the brickwork.

In Australia, the point is only now being reached where there is a solid — though not yet sufficient — body of research knowledge about certain aspects of the VET walls that researchers, and especially policymakers and practitioners, can really derive value. Ten years ago, No Small Change (McDonald, Hayton, Gonczi, & Hager, 1993) concluded that research in VET formed a negligible quantum of all educational research in Australia and that there was a lack of a ‘research culture’. Today, there is now a substantial body of VET research, at least on some aspects, upon which to maintain and enhance restoration of the VET walls, and in particular, to work alongside — not over the top of — what this paper is calling the ‘ordinary folk’ to build the best possible system. Thus, a corpus of quality research is paramount to have any chance of influencing policy and effecting change (Selby Smith, Hawke, McDonald & Selby Smith, 1998).

VET researchers do not have the time nor the energy to march around the Jericho walls of VET all those times blowing their own trumpets! However, they should have
the enthusiasm to examine closely the bricks, and their research should play the exquisite music required to catalyse restorative action on the part of both policymakers and practitioners.

So, are the VET walls tumbling? Definitely not. Are they standing firm? Not in all places. Are they leaning? Yes — there are individual bricks needing repair or even replacement to rectify the lean. In this paper, I have tried to diagnose where some of these bricks may be. Researchers don’t want their trumpets to bring down the walls of Australian VET. But they do want the trumpets — their research — to identify where the walls need repair, that is, to clarify issues, highlight problems and examine potential alternatives. Research is needed to examine and critique the bricks not only to strengthen the structures but also to raise the quality of the experiences of those ‘ordinary folk’ who live inside and outside those walls — the VET teachers, the workplace trainers and, above all, the VET learners.

References


Research and Evaluation Committee project (in progress).


Secondary School Education for Young Adult and Mature-Age Students: Its Role in the Development of Self-Identity

Rod Adam
Hendra Secondary College

While much current debate on post-compulsory education and training centres on the nature and provision of employment related courses, there is another area of need that is often overlooked. This is for those individuals of any age who, for a variety of reasons have not had the opportunity to complete their secondary schooling at the year 10 or 12 level. Reasons for this non-completion include such things as family breakdown, family mobility, illness, behavioural issues, mental illness, parenthood and immigration. Often when such individuals are asked why they wish to return to school as an older student they simply state "I want to get a year 10/12 certificate". While improved employment prospects are a part of their motivation to study, for many it is the sense of self-fulfilment that comes from completing school that brings satisfaction. Comments from these students clearly indicate that success in their course of study plays an integral role in the ongoing development of their own self-identity. A commitment to access and equity requires that these courses continue to be offered. For more than a decade Hendra Secondary College on Brisbane's northside has sought to provide meaningful courses for such people.

More than ever before, we live in an age when it is assumed that all members of society will be educated to an appropriate level and that lifelong education will be part of everyday life. However, despite this assumption, a significant part of the population have not completed year 12 or even year 10 to a competent level. The reasons are many. This non-completion can affect the individual in a number of ways and so there are several factors that might lead to someone who has not been in school for some time taking the step of re-enrolling in a course to complete their high school studies. These include not having any recognised educational qualifications because of leaving school early or having gained poor marks in initial schooling and thus having limited access to employment or further training, the need for qualifications for advancement in a current or proposed career, and the need to prove to oneself that one is capable of completing a successful year 12 or year 10. These diverse reasons for returning, along with the wide variety of ages, family, employment, and social backgrounds, and previous educational levels attained, mean that providing for, and teaching such a heterogeneous group presents considerable challenges to any institution that chooses to provide a course. Demand for such a course is, however, consistent (Hendra Secondary College enrolment records) both for the significant number of young adults who have dropped out of the early years of high school, and for older adults who require formal education certification in order to change or advance in, their careers.
Hendra Secondary College

Hendra Secondary College operates basically as any other State High School with the exception that it caters particularly for adult students as well as traditional adolescent students. Courses are offered to young adult and mature-age students who can enrol in the 11P course (which includes year 10 English, Maths and Science and a number of Certificate courses), year 11 or year 12 if appropriate. Night classes are also held in year 10 English, Maths and Science for those who wish to continue working during the day. The term “Adult” applies to any student who has had time away from school and who is turning sixteen or more in the year that they do the 11P course. The main aim of these courses is to allow students to adjust back into study in a flexible environment, to gain recognised year 10, year 12 and Certificate qualifications and thus be in a position to make further decisions regarding their future education or careers. Day and night courses are also offered to those students preparing to sit for the External Senior exam. The Certificate IV in Adult Tertiary Preparation is also offered both day and night.

The Students

Students who enrol in the course fall into four broad categories.

- Those aged 16 to 18. These students tend to not have completed year 10 before, may have worked, usually receive Youth Allowance and many are independent.
- Those aged 19 to 25. These students may, or may not, have completed year 10 but if they did it was likely not to have been at a ‘pass’ level. Not having sound achievements for year 10 restricts entry to some TAFE courses and to the armed services.
- Males aged over 25. This group tend to have a history of varied employment although some may have worked in one industry for most of their working life. The move to re-educate is often precipitated by loss of employment, a period of unemployment or a desire to change career or to gain formal qualifications in the area in which they have been working.
- Females aged over 25. While a generalised grouping like this will come from a wide variety of backgrounds, they tend to show a number of common qualities. One of these is that they tend to underestimate their own ability. This may be due to previous negative school experience (even if it was thirty years ago), and a period of being “just a housewife” which has provided them with little opportunity to develop self-confidence in the area of formal learning. Employment tends to have been in the non-skilled area. Family responsibilities mean that time to work at home is limited but the high motivation of these women means that they manage more hours study than many other students.

Previous Education

From time to time surveys have been carried out regarding the previous education levels completed by enrolling students. This has particularly focussed on those doing the 11P course which includes year 10 subjects. (Students who have not previously completed an adequate year 10 are normally steered into the 11P course.) Of these students around 75% have not completed year 10 (approx 55% year 9, 15% year 8, 5% less than year 8. These vary somewhat from year to year.) It is also interesting to note that around 10% have completed year 11 or 12 but had now chosen to repeat year 10 subjects. It would appear that poor marks in year 11 or 12 had not gained these students any recognition and that they saw that their best option was to gain year 10 ‘passes’ as qualifications for further courses or employment. This information is shown in Figure 1.

Reasons for Enrolling

Students were asked their main reason for enrolling in a secondary course at Hendra.
The results in Table 1 show that 46% of enrolling students are aiming for tertiary studies while the 18% who nominated TAFE may have in mind either Certificate or Diploma courses. 26% see the gaining of a school certificate (year 10 or year 12) as their primary focus.

**Reasons for Leaving School**

The reasons why students did not complete their original schooling are many and varied as seen in Figure 2. The two highest-scoring categories, 'got a job' and 'disliked school', obviously deserve further inquiry but that is beyond the scope of this paper. In more general terms these reasons could be viewed as: the student's inability to meet accepted personal conduct standards, the student's inability to cope within the social, academic or hierarchical structure of the school and family/personal issues. It is therefore difficult to say that non-completion of schooling is the fault of the individual for the majority of these returning students.

**The Need for Adult Secondary Courses**

Why is it then, that there is still a need for a high school course for adults?

Currently, employment as an apprentice and entry to many TAFE courses requires Sound Achievements (passes) in year 10 English and Maths and sometimes Science. Many courses require completion of year 12. Students who previously have not attained these results and wish to take up such training must therefore complete their year 10 or 12. A similar situation exists for those wishing to move from unskilled to skilled jobs within some industries and government departments. Year 10 is also a requirement to join some areas of the Armed Services even for those who may have successfully completed year 12 but who did not pass the required year 10.
ENVISIONING PRACTICE — IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

subjects. It can be seen, then, that enrolling in the year 11P course is for many the first step in changing or developing a career. A further reason adults enrol in the year 10 or 12 courses is as a means of personal challenge and fulfilment, particularly for those who do not regard themselves as successful in their initial schooling. Rogers in his 1986 book “Teaching Adults” sees adult education as a means by which people become more adult. Thus in addition to gaining formal qualifications, students will also gain in the areas of personal growth, perspective and responsibility. (Rogers, 1986, p. 6). Personal growth will see them come to realise their own strengths and weaknesses and grow towards the recognition and utilisation of their talents. In developing perspective a student will achieve a more balanced approach to life and society that will lead to them making sounder judgements about themselves and others. The third area Rogers identifies in becoming more adult is to develop confidence in order to take on responsibility for oneself and in the College setting, this will mean responsibility for one’s own learning and for fulfilling one’s own potential.

Access and Equity

It has been stated above that many young people miss out on completing even ‘compulsory’ education through no, or little, fault of their own. An important tenet of our society is that all are entitled to a free, quality education. In terms of this equity it could be argued that they have not, in fact, had equal opportunity to embrace this education and so those 13 and 14 year olds who have missed out should still be able to avail themselves of a full education whether this be at the age of 18 or 38 or whenever their life circumstances enable this to be possible.

The Effect of Success on Self-Perception

Recently fifteen successful year 11P students were interviewed to find out what they thought of the course and what they gained from it. Thirteen of the fifteen students gave negative responses towards their adolescent schooling indicating not only a dislike of the school environment but also, except for one, a perception that they had been a failure at school. These comments included “Didn’t study”, was “Dumb and Hopeless”, “Didn’t attend much”, “Boring”, “Always in trouble”, “A dead-set failure” and “Trouble fitting in”. A number had been told by teachers or parents that they were not capable of achieving well. Hamacheck (p. 261) says that comments by significant others about a student’s capability will affect the way the student themself sees their own capability which will then affect how well they do, in fact, perform. “Karen” aged 28 who had completed year ten with poor results said,

I couldn’t do anything. I was dumb and hopeless. Like, if you get told enough that you can’t do something and you’re no good, then it sinks in that you are that way. Performance, then, is at least partially based, not on what a student is actually capable of, but on what they think they are capable of. “Once students “lock in” on a perception of what they are and are not, able to do, it is difficult to shake them from it, particularly if the perception has time to root itself into a firmly held belief.” (Hamacheck, 1987, p. 269). Students with low self-appraisals seem more likely to expect low achievement (if not failure) and therefore the thought of studying hard to them would be a waste of time since they are going to fail anyway. When these students come back to school, whether it be after one year or thirty, these negative feelings may be still with them and need to be overcome before they can succeed. In their interviews, students were asked about their feelings regarding returning to school. They were also asked how they now felt about themselves as a result of being a successful student. Table 2 shows these comments.

It can also be noted from Table 1 that significant change has occurred in these students over the course of the year. Most refer to being “more confident” and are
motivated to set goals to succeed and feel better about themselves. This change in self-view seems to have come about through achieving well in their subjects when before they thought they were not capable. Teachers need to note that positive feedback is therefore a vital component in the success of these students. By the end of the Year 11P year, most of these students see themselves as quite capable of completing Year 12 and for many, going on to tertiary study.

**Success, Self-esteem and Motivation**

The comments in Table 2 show clearly that being successful in an educational setting is linked with a change in the student’s self-image and a rise in their perception of their own personal competence. Owens, Mortimer, Finch see being able to attribute this success to one’s own efforts as a key factor in developing this sense of personal capability.

If individuals experience self-direction, successfully adapt to the challenges facing them, and attribute their successes to themselves, they will come to view themselves as capable and worthy. (Owens, Mortimer, & Finch, 1996, p. 1378)
and self-esteem. "If the student develops an intrinsic motivation towards schoolwork, these experiences will have positive implications for self-esteem." (Owens, Mortimer, & Finch, 1996, p. 1379). While this is true, the view could also be held that motivation increases as a result of higher self-esteem resulting from success. "High self-esteem motivates people to pursue their goals and to persevere in the face of obstacles and setbacks." (Kearns, 1995, p. 126). If this is so, then the importance of early success in the course, to build self-esteem, is a vital component of a student's successfully completing the course.

Learning Produces Personal Change

In his article "Learning, Culture, and Learning Culture", Jacobsen likens adults returning to education to someone learning a new culture. (The culture of the College, the culture of the subject.). In many ways, the student is required to learn to think like the teacher of that subject. For many, this requires a significant life change having an impact similar to that of losing a job or the death of a friend. "Inevitably, you change." (Jacobsen, 1996, p. 16). Because "active" learning occurs through discourse with the teacher and other learners, it is inevitable that as well as gaining new knowledge, there is also a change in the self-identity of the learner that comes about through expressing one's own views and listening to the views of others.

Learning a new culture, then, means learning a new way of making sense of experience; at the same time, making sense of experience is rooted in self-concept, while self-concept is rooted in the contexts of relationships in which it is being formed. Learners are gaining not only particular knowledge and skills, but a changed sense of identity through the social relations of learning. Learning a new culture is at least in part learning a new self. (Jacobsen, 1996, pp. 24–25)

Conclusion

For those involved in the delivery of courses to young adult and adult learners it is essential to remember that not only are they teaching skills and knowledge applicable in the workplace and everyday life but they are also involved in a process of personal transformation in which individuals come to realise their own capabilities and appreciate their own competencies. They thus facilitate a positive change in self-identity.

References


Knowing in Practice: Dispositions, Knowledgeable Identities and Participation

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This paper reports a study that explores the question of how farmers learn, in constructing knowledge in and for practice. It seeks to identify how they gain new ideas, make changes, and develop to a level of expertise. Six central South Island New Zealand farmers were selected purposively as case studies. The range of case profiles provides for comparison and contrast of the relative importance of formal qualifications, differences between sheep/beef farmers and dairy farmers, levels of expertise, age and experiences. The self-rating of the farmers enables a comparison of lower and higher performers, identifying characteristics which enable insight into why some farmers consistently lead new practice and why some are reluctant followers. The farmers are identified as social learners although working independently, in relative geographical and social isolation; learning through participation in the practice of farming. This practice includes a constellation of communities of practice, which may be resource-rich or resource-poor. Emergent grounded theory suggests that dispositional knowledge underpins construction and use of all knowledge; that construction and use of high-order propositional and procedural knowledge requires higher-order dispositional knowledge and that mastery is developed through evolving identity, dispositions, leadership and learning, socioculturally constructed through resource-rich constellations of communities of practice.

This paper is approached from the perspective of farmers as researchers in their own right, gaining knowledge. Schön (1983) recognised this "kind of rigor" and "experimentation" as knowledge-in-action and the action of a reflective practitioner. It proposes that as farming moves along the continuum from lifestyle, (i.e., valuing the 'way of life' as the dominant value of farming) to a paradigm where business and financial results are viewed as almost exclusive to intrinsic rewards, there needs to be a corresponding and increasing move from a trade-based skill culture to a professional-based learning culture. Farming in New Zealand has no strong tradition or cultural value of farming qualifications with farmers more commonly renowned for their ingenuity, inventiveness and stoic, hardworking attitudes. It is predicted that learning fast will be a major indicator of farm performance for the 21st Century (Parker, 2000). How are these six farmers making the transition from brawn to brain; from working hard to working smart?

Methodology
This current research is qualitative in design and approached from a constructivist and interpretive paradigm. Socially and experientially based, it seeks to understand the experiences of the subjects. The interviews aim to reconstruct the farmers individual processes of learning and their learning culture. Analytic and interpretive procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) are employed to arrive at findings with emergent, grounded theory.
Case Study
To seek answers to the research questions, farmers were studied in their own worlds as case studies, with extended ethnographic interviews. Six farmers were selected purposively for a range in age, type of farming, level of formal education, innovation and farming performance, to allow contrast and comparison (Table I).

The case studies are both explanatory and exploratory, involving personal histories of learning; the subjects’ ontogenies. This study seeks to illuminate decisions towards, and processes of, learning (Yin, 1994). It does not seek to represent a statistical sample but, "to expand and generalise theories, (analytic generalisation) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisation)," (p. 10).

Case Interviews
Extended ethnographic interviews are chosen to study the culture of learning with the selected farmers. An attempt is made to enter each farmer’s world, and to glean the richness of each unique set of circumstances that influence their individual knowledge construction. All farmer interviews were audio-taped and fully transcribed, for coding, to provide accuracy for quotes, and for robust analysis and accuracy of data. The transcriptions proved to be invaluable for coding and categorising data, for identifying emergent concepts and for enabling grounded theory to emerge with clarity. This research focuses on a small number of farmers as exploratory case studies while seeking also to produce descriptive data as the participants tell their own stories. Critical incidents are used in question design and analysis, (Billett, 2001; McCracken, 1988; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to reconstruct work events, in order to identify learning processes and knowledge construction. While on the surface this research may appear to be merely a small study of six people, it is in effect a study of an extensive array of critical incidents within the ontogenies of these six men as practitioners.

Self-Rating of Practitioners
The farmers in this study rated themselves against other farmers on comparable types of farms. This could be described as a self-appraisal in which farmers reflected on how their benchmarks rated compared to other similar practitioners. This reflection was reinforced by revisiting the question three times in total. The cases firstly considered the rating personally, and then in regard to how they believe their accountant would rate them, followed by how their farm advisor would rate them. This process required them to reflect with purpose. These ratings (Table I) were used to compare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME (PSEUDONYM)</th>
<th>FARMING TYPE</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>HIGHEST FORMAL QUALIFICATION</th>
<th>SELF-RATED PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>INNOVATOR /ADOPTER</th>
<th>SCHOOL (LEVEL COMPLETED)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>BagSci (Hons)</td>
<td>7/10 °</td>
<td>Early Adopter</td>
<td>7th Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin</td>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>8/10 °</td>
<td>Innovator</td>
<td>4th Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Sheep/Beef</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>DipFMgmt</td>
<td>7/10 °</td>
<td>Early Adopter</td>
<td>6th Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Sheep (ex Dairy)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>4/10 *</td>
<td>Late Adopter</td>
<td>4th Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>Sheep/Beef</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>8/10 °</td>
<td>Innovator</td>
<td>3rd Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>3/10 *</td>
<td>Late Adopter</td>
<td>4th Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * Lower performer  ° Higher performer
lower performers (those rated 40% or below) with higher performers (those who rated 70% or above). From the researchers knowledge of the farmers, they rated themselves erring on the side of ‘hard marking,’ particularly the higher performers.

Theoretical Framework

Communities of Practice

Lave and Wenger (1991) coined the term community of practice in their theory of situated learning. Wenger (1998) describes communities of practice, as a theory of learning that starts with the assumption that engagement in social practice is the fundamental process by which we learn. It entails mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire for example, stories and artefacts. Through practice, people negotiate meaning and evolve identities.

Identity

Identity is central to learning through social practice. It is a sense of belonging, a sense of membership, a sense of full participation; that which Lave and Wenger (1991) call becoming a kind of person. Meaning is derived within a system of relations that are developed within a specific social community; a specific culture of practice. Learning develops an evolving membership and an evolving identity in which “identity, knowing and social membership entail one another” (p. 53). Cain, cited Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 81) defines identity as “the way a person understands and views himself, and is viewed by others, a perception of self which is fairly constant.”

Constellations of Communities of Practice

To describe a broad or diverse set of communities contributing to a specific practice, Wenger (1998, p. 127) refers to such configurations as constellations of interconnected practices. In a constellation of communities of practice, each community contributes in its individual way to the “constitution of the overall constellation.” He coined the term ‘constellation’ in reference to a group of communities that contribute to a specific practice, although they may not be “particularly close to one another, of the same kind or of the same size.” Inclusion in a constellation is a way of recognising a specific relationship, which contributes to a practice and a culture that the communities have in common. Constellations of communities of practice, for the farmers in this study, include farm discussion groups, neighbours, farming publications, advisors, scientists (if knowledge and experience is shared), specialist field-days, monitor farm groups, mentors and others. This process differs from mere socialising, involving participation for practice. These relationships are interconnected by a sense of belonging, identifying with the particular extended practice and the culture of that practice. Those who neglect this area of their enterprise could be called resource-poor. They lack extension of their dispositional knowledge and subsequently the ability to make knowledge useful in practice. In this current study, the farmers’ constellations were mapped, with the lower performers displaying resource-poor constellations while the higher performers maintained resource-rich constellations. The richness of a practitioner’s constellations of communities of practice is identified as a major indicator of transformative learning, identification with knowledge ability, and of success.

Boundaries and Brokering Between Communities of Practice

While there are boundaries circumscribing the two subcultures of dairy and sheep/beef farming, the two sectors commonly practice boundary riding, watching (often unobtrusively) what the other sector is practising, and adopting relevant ideas for innovation. The higher performing sheep and beef farmers spoke of using farm consultants who also have a large dairy clientele. They saw this as an advantage, enabling the ability to learn through client
experiences from both industries. These consultants act as brokers making “new connections across communities of practice, enabling coordination, and — if they are good brokers — opening new possibilities for meaning” (Wenger, 1998, p. 109). This is an invaluable role that farm consultants can adopt — both for individual practices and for farm discussion groups; as multiple practices. Boundary encounters, (Wenger, 1998) in the form of farm (practice) visits, conversations and the reading of other sector publications, were referred to by the higher performing sheep and beef farmers. The success of these encounters as learning sources is dependent on an openness by practitioners to embrace new knowledge and a generosity of spirit within both cultures of practice.

Discussion of Findings

Situated Learning: Context-Specific Learning, Within Practice — Emerging Theory

The pathways of the six farmer case studies are summarised in conjunction with Figure 1. All six cases had early sociohistorical attachment and engagement in a farming community of practice; either on their family farm or on a farm of a relative or acquaintance. In all cases a strong attachment was formed, resulting in a sustaining love of farming and a dream of one day having the ‘privilege’ of owning a farm.

This study has identified a need for at least a temporary disengagement from farming to another context, for dispositional knowledge to develop from a broadened set of social practices. These practices may include other workplaces, tertiary education, travel, or a combination of experiences. This affords a decision to be made as an adult, to choose a career pathway, rather than simply fulfill social expectations.

The success of the relationship of social co-participation between novice and master relies on commitment, legitimate sociocultural access and transparency. This relationship is reciprocal and requires a generosity of spirit. Those cases who either never experienced such a committed relationship, or who never disengaged to another context, became alienated from their community of practice and disengaged psychologically (Figure 1). This psychological disengagement limited learning, evolution of identity, and construction of dispositions. As a result they were disempowered, limiting motivation and the ability to construct an identity for mastery. These farmers remain lower performers.

There is an indication from this study that there may be a critical period for construction of dispositions for knowledge-use and identity for mastery. If the critical period is not fulfilled it may damage or limit development. Further research is needed to identify this critical period but anecdotal evidence was spoken of by Joe, when he recalled that, “(Old-timers) used to say that if a young farmer hasn’t taken over the reins by 30 (years of age), then it’s too late — he won’t succeed.” This indicates that historically, a critical period was identified.

Those farmers who disengaged from the direct pathway, voluntarily and with a purpose in mind, were able to re-enter at a mature level with success. The levels of re-entry varied from partial to full participation. Those who were relative novices were able to accelerate learning with some evidence of transfer of associated knowledge, skills and dispositions. With maturity and the propositional, procedural and dispositional knowledge constructed through their experiences, they learned through participating in a community of practice; within a culture of practice. Their experiences and maturity enabled ready sociocultural assimilation into the rural culture.

Historically, as emerging masters, both Joe and Colin were severely tested by climatic and financial adversity. Coping with such challenges was important in their evolving identity, learning and disposition. Over time they developed rich constellations of communities of practices enriching
Situated learning: context-specific, guided learning within sociocultural communities of practice.

their knowledge base and enriching their practice. George and Ben, as emerging masters are presently at the stage in their careers where they are being tested in their business choices and decisions. Full emergence to mastery depends on how they cope with both adversity and success.

A fully committed and reciprocal novice-master relationship, negotiated with full access to the social and cultural practice, is essential for successful guided learning or apprenticeship in everyday practice. There is an essential relationship between culture and cognition in contextual learning; everyday cognition (Rogoff, 1984).

Situated Learning and Dispositions

A common phrase used in agricultural education and training, is that farmers learn 'on the job.' Situated learning though, is not just being on the job (situated activity) but is a process involving commitment,
transparency and generosity, in providing legitimate access to the sociocultural community of practice. People do not learn by a form of osmosis, from simply being there but actively construct knowledge through engagement and social interaction.

Those cases who grew up on farms, developed socioculturally to legitimate peripheral participation level (Figure 1) and at times to become partial participants. Those who remained continuously involved on their family farms struggled to move to full membership. There is a common experience in those cases where the father as employer, limited access to full participation (probably unconsciously), by exercising control over the participatory level of the son’s involvement. There was a lack of transparency, a lack of empowerment and a lack of attenuating conditions. This appears to have led to a loss of learner motivation due to truncated learning. Lack of identity towards mastery and limited dispositional ability for progressive knowledge, limited the learner’s ability to construct and use new knowledge. The result for these two farmers as young men (Max and Henry), was to disengage psychologically while remaining on the family farm. It is unclear what their role was in the farming enterprise but it appears to have resembled “an extra pair of hands.” It lacked progressive responsibility and management decision-making. As a result, these farmers have struggled to farm throughout their careers, both being lower performers, farming mainly for “the lifestyle.” This supports what Lave (1991) sees as a prolonged delay from peripheral to full participation (Figure 1) resulting in separating identity from knowledgeable practice.

**Constructing Knowledgeable Identities**

Those farmers who never grew up on farms, along with those who left their family farms either to work at other workplaces or to pursue tertiary education and travel, developed into ‘rounded’ people. They experienced increased responsibilities, evolving disposition and a ‘kind of knowing’ (Schön, 1983) through practice. These largely dispositional abilities, enabled their mature entry or re-entry to farming at, or approaching, full membership level (Figure 1). They demonstrated some transfer of knowledge and an ability to rapidly construct the knowledge required. Through their off-farm experiences, they had learned how to learn, and developed the dispositions required to construct and use knowledge; they had developed knowledgeable identities.

This knowledgeable identity, combined with a wide range of dispositions and maturity, allowed for a rapid pathway to sociocultural membership and an identity for mastery. They became ‘a kind of person’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991) with an ability for understanding which led to emerging mastery.

**Dispositions, Thinking and Practice for Mastery**

The two masters in this study (Joe and Colin) have experienced the highs and lows of practice, requiring the full range of higher-order propositional, procedural and dispositional knowledge. They display the full range of dispositions identified in this study as essential for rigorous thinking and rigorous practice in higher performing practitioners. Throughout adversity they have had to be resilient and resourceful, often making challenging decisions and taking substantial but calculated risks. Through a formal process requiring open-mindedness, critical analysis and a need to challenge their beliefs, they have kept ahead of the fast pace of changing technology and subsequent practice. They have maintained and extended their mastery through continually evolving dispositions, identity, learning and leadership.

**Resource-Rich Constellations of Communities of Practice**

While George and Ben (emerging masters), have yet to prove themselves as masters,
they are on the journey and have the ability to progress to that advanced level. Both the masters and emerging masters in this study have developed resource-rich constellations of communities of practice, which they are continually extending through practice and social interaction. In parallel, they are continually evolving through practice their higher-order propositional, procedural and dispositional knowledge.

The lower performers in contrast, exercise lower-order knowledge and resource-poor constellations of communities of practice. They rely strongly on historical and local knowledge learned from their fathers and others who influenced them in their early years. In critical incidents, they refer regularly to currently following practices learned at a time when farming was a protected industry; vastly different from present day practice. They have not kept pace with agricultural technology and have not made the transition to modern farming practice. These practitioners have not made the change in attitude required to farm successfully in today’s political and economic climate.

Due to their extensive and advanced dispositional knowledge, the higher performing farmers (masters and emerging masters) have the ability to move with fluidity in constructing higher-order knowledge either from a propositional base or from a procedural base. In contrast, the lower performers favour lower-order procedural knowledge; the more routine tasks. This preference appears to be due to their lack of dispositional ability.

While expertise depends on a convergence between experience and competence, innovative learning requires their divergence (Wenger, 1998). The lower performing farmers lack the dispositional ability to move outside their comfort zone and to take the associated risks for innovation, while the higher performing farmers in contrast, enjoy this challenge. If the practitioner hasn’t the disposition to move outside their comfort zone, over time their expertise becomes obsolete as it is not maintained or revitalised.

Emergent Theory
From inductive research of the personal histories and practice of six farmer as case studies, emergent grounded theory suggests that dispositional knowledge underpins construction and use of all knowledge. It indicates that construction and use of high-order propositional and procedural knowledge requires higher-order dispositional knowledge and that mastery is developed through evolving identity, dispositions, leadership and learning, socioculturally constructed through resource-rich constellations of communities of practice.

Conclusion
Qualifications or lack of the same are no indication of knowledge, ability or performance in practice. Both those higher performers with and without qualifications have exercised a formal, focused pathway to constructing higher-order knowledge in practice. This present research explored the experiences and practice of six farmers, identifying learning-rich and learning-poor characteristics and the need to emphasise a learning paradigm for mastery in the 21st Century. It challenges assumptions that farming is not knowledge work. It argues that performance and knowledge exist in parallel as knowing in practice, which is reflected in the practitioner’s level of performance.

References


Productivism, Sustainable Development and Vocational Education and Training

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Historically vocational education and training (VET) has fuelled the engine of economic growth and productivity in western industrialised nations. As markets become increasingly global and competitive, governments are intensifying pressure on national VET systems to produce more highly skilled and employable workers. ‘Jobs and growth’ is now the universal mantra of policy makers and the taken-for-granted raison d’etre of VET. In an era of manufactured risk and ecological crisis however, it is imperative to question the truth-claims on which VET resides. This paper argues the need for a fundamental re-envisioning of VET for an ecologically sustainable future. In doing so, it examines the discourse of productivism and its constitutive effects on VET policy and practice. The logic and assumptions that underpin contemporary constructions of VET are critiqued. The potential role and contribution of VET in the transition from productivism to ecological sustainability are discussed, and central dilemmas and challenges are outlined.

In an era when the principle of growth for growth’s sake is under close examination educational institutions which contribute in a very direct way to the expansion of industrial society and the assault on resources and environment have a grave responsibility to actively participate in such an examination. Such an examination must be a feature of the institutions themselves, and of the courses they offer. (McKenzie, 1979, p. 83)

This prescient statement was made by McKenzie who, five years after the establishment of the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system in Australia, argued that “TAFE has tended to concentrate too heavily on its role in relation to the workforce” (1979, p. 80). In his view, the predominant labour market orientation had led to neglect of both the environmental impact of industrial and technological practices, and TAFE’s role in preparing an environmentally aware workforce.

At the United Nations 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janiero, Australia signed Agenda 21 and thereby signalled its commitment to promote environmental education as part of a global action plan for sustainable development. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 emphasised the need to “incorporate environmental training into formal curricula for all disciplines... emphasising the skills and knowledge required to achieve sustainable development.”

Over two decades after McKenzie’s pronouncement, and despite Australia’s commitment to the principles ratified at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, little has changed. A recent study in South Australia, for instance, concluded that in view of “increasing public awareness of the importance of environmental management and ESD (Ecologically Sustainable Development) ...the lack of training programs within the vocational education and training sector ...is a major concern” (SA Department of TAFE cited in Guthrie and Cesnich, 1995, appendix 1).
In an era of manufactured risk and ecological crisis, it is imperative to question the universal truth-claims on which TAFE and VET (hereafter referred to collectively as 'VET') resides. This paper argues the need for a fundamental re-envisioning of VET for an ecologically sustainable future. It examines the discourse of productivism and its constitutive effects on VET policy and practice. The logic and assumptions that underpin contemporary constructions of VET are critiqued. The potential role and contribution of VET in the transition from productivism to ecological sustainability are discussed, and central dilemmas and challenges are outlined.

**Sustainable Development**

'Sustainable development' is a relatively new and polysemous concept. According to the landmark definition in the Brundtland Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987, p. 43), sustainable development is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs". Although open to varying interpretations, the Brundtland definition emphasises the need to locate the goal of ecological sustainability within the social and economic context of human development. Unlike the concept of 'sustainable growth', which assumes that perpetual growth is both necessary and attainable and that improved technical efficiency and scientific innovation can overcome environmental limits to production, sustainable development rejects the primacy of economic growth and aims to integrate economic, social and ecological development. Herein production should be restricted to the equitable satisfaction of basic human needs and held in ecological equilibrium (Palmer, 1998).

One of the few articulations of sustainable development with VET is contained in the 1997 Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning (Articles 1 and 17), which contends that:

...only human-centred development and a participatory society based on the full respect of human rights will lead to sustainable and equitable development... Education for environmental sustainability should be a lifelong learning process which recognises that ecological problems exist within a socio-economic, political and cultural context. A sustainable future cannot be achieved without addressing the relationship between environmental problems and current development paradigms.

Similarly, in relation to VET in Australia, it has been argued that ecologically sustainable development should be promoted in conjunction with other progressive goals, including democratic participation, economic justice, social equity and cultural inclusiveness (Anderson, 2001). Recognising that sustainable development is an ambiguous and contested term requiring further debate, this paper adopts the above definition and perspective but concentrates primarily on the ecological dimension.

**Productivism**

In his analysis of contemporary industrial society, Giddens (1994) refers to the condition of modernity as one of 'manufactured uncertainty' in which humanity is confronted with unprecedented risks: "Living in an era of manufactured risk means confronting the fact that the 'side-effects' of technological innovations are side-effects no longer." (1994, p. 175) Giddens links the emergence of manufactured uncertainty and its attendant social, biological and ecological risks to the rise of "productivism", which is "an ethos in which 'work', as paid employment, has become compulsive in character, crowding out and negating other human values and activities (Giddens, 1994, p. 175). Giddens argues that productivism is a direct consequence of the capitalist
imperative for “continuous economic growth”, which in turn presupposes the “continuous production and consumption of goods” (1994, p. 163).

According to Giddens, the answer to the contemporary dilemma of ‘how much is enough?’ relates only partially to the resource limits of nature. It can only be fully addressed by calling into question the ethos of productivism and its associated life practices — the continuously expanding circuits of production and consumption. Challenging the underlying rationality of productivism undercuts the meaning of work as paid employment and creates ‘pressure to realise and develop other life values’ (Giddens, 1994, p. 163).

**Productivism and Vocational Education and Training**

The ethos of productivism has been omnipresent in TAFE and its antecedents. However productivism has tightened its grip on VET in recent times with the ascendency of economic rationalism and human capital theory. Against the background of globalisation, national economic recession and growing unemployment in the mid-1980s, a far-reaching process of micro-economic reform was initiated in Australia in an effort to promote structural adjustment and economic recovery through the synchronisation of industry and education (Marginson, 1993). Viewed as a major supplier of ‘human capital’, VET was harnessed increasingly to the logic of economic growth and industrial production through the national training reform agenda. Competency-based training (CBT) was introduced to strengthen the connection between skills formation and economic production (Stevenson, 1993).

As a consequence, VET policy and practice are now premised on two fundamental assumptions that have acquired the status of self-evident truths, and which are reproduced systematically in the structure, culture and programs of VET institutions; namely that the principal, if not sole, purposes of VET are to: promote economic growth through the development of the human resources required by industry to enhance productivity and profit; and produce skills and competencies for work, thereby enhancing the employability of individual learners. It is no coincidence that both of these assumptions correspond with Giddens’ (1994) characterisation of the defining features of productivism: the needs of ‘industry’ have taken precedence over all others, and ‘work’ (as paid employment) has displaced all other human values and vocations.

As Giddens’ analysis suggests, the first assumption stems from the truth-claim that economic growth is a permanent and necessary feature of industrialised nations and that the future well-being of countries like Australia relies on its national economy becoming increasingly competitive in global markets. The second assumption reflects the related truth-claim that work (as paid employment) is the principal, if not exclusive, source of meaning and measure of value for human beings as it enables them to contribute to, and benefit from, economic growth. Despite their profound effects on VET policy and practice, the validity of these two assumptions goes largely unquestioned and alternative norms and values are discounted or simply ignored.

**Training-for-Growth**

Productivism and the universal truth-claim of permanent economic growth were present at the inception of the national training reform agenda, and are deeply embedded in its discourse:

> Our primary objective... must be to improve Australia’s economic performance in generating the skills required for national economic development. ... (E)ducation and training policies ...will...play an important part in ensuring that our human resources are fully and effectively used (Dawkins & Holding, 1987, pp. 12–13).
This extract from *Skills for Australia*, a blueprint for training reform in Australia, demonstrates the manner in which economic growth is taken for granted as the principal rationale of training reform. Implicit in this passage is the assumption that natural resources are infinite and can be exploited at will, without any consideration of the wider consequences for the global ecosystem. The only perceived constraints on growth are deficiencies in the nation’s human resources, which if developed fully through VET would contribute to higher levels of productivity. ‘Training-for-growth’, or ‘skills-for-productivity’, is thereby legitimated as the ‘primary objective’ of national VET policy.

The core assumption that economic growth is a permanent feature of human existence is no longer tenable. As the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 concluded, the present rate of economic development is unsustainable due to its detrimental and irreversible impact on the natural environment and its resources. The key factor contributing to environmental degradation is the growing gap between ‘poor’ Third World and ‘rich’ Western industrialised nations, the consequences of which are twofold. On the one hand, developing nations are hostage to spiralling foreign debt, overpopulation, unmet basic human needs, poverty and overuse or misuse of natural resources, all of which contribute to environmental damage. On the other hand, industrialised countries maintain unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and their economies remain in a perpetual state of development. Excessive consumption, unrestrained use of energy and mineral resources, and the generation of non-recyclable waste in industrialised nations are accelerating the rate of resource depletion and Third World degradation (Keating, 1993).

As a result of these compounding factors, the future health of the global ecosystem is in serious jeopardy. Only a fundamental reorientation of, among other things, modes of development, rates of resource exhaustion, and patterns of production and consumption in industrialised nations like Australia will defuse the present crisis (Keating, 1993). As a major supplier of skilled labour, VET is implicated in all these processes.

Given Australia’s contribution to the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and the growing body of scientific evidence of environmental problems, the persistent reproduction of productivism in official policy discourse is puzzling, if not perplexing. For instance, *A bridge to the future: Australia’s national strategy for vocational education and training 1998–2003* ignores the imperative for ecologically sustainable development and recycles the ‘training-for-growth’ assumption by declaring that the primary role of VET is: “To ensure that the skills of the Australian labour force are sufficient to support internationally competitive commerce and industry” (ANTA, 1998, preface). National economic interests are valorised over global ecological concerns. The selection of ‘forces for change’ in VET is saturated with the language of productivism: ‘growth in global markets’, ‘intensified international competition’, ‘consumer expectations’, and so on. At no point does ecological sustainability figure in this narrative. Instead, a sense is conveyed of ever-expanding circuits of production and consumption, in which VET fuels industry and enterprise demand for skilled labour. The potential for VET to promote a critical
awareness of the limits and consequences of productivism, and to develop the capacity to envisage and realise alternative futures oriented to ecological sustainability, falls outside this restricted vision. Moreover, the Key Performance Measures (KPMs) are almost exclusively concerned with steering VET providers towards the maximisation of skills-for-productivity. None of the KPMs are designed to measure the contribution of VET to ecologically sustainable development.

Productivism and its attendant myth of permanent economic growth, as Stevenson implies, can no longer be taken for granted as a legitimate basis for constructing VET:

It needs to be debated whether the secret to our success as a nation lies in our continued exploitation of scarce resources, adding economic value before export, in competition with other countries, all trying to do the same thing. ... We need to decide if, rather, ... the key to economic success (resides) in solutions which value conservation, sensitivity, cooperation, sharing, valuing leisure and activities which add quality to our lives, supporting small scale enterprise, and pursuing interests unable to be defined or taught as competencies. Then we need to relate such aspirations to the goals of vocational education (1993, p. 91).

Almost a decade later, and despite the now palpable contradictions of growth-for-growth's sake, debate continues to be stifled by the myopic effects of productivism.

Skills-for-Work
The second assumption on which the contemporary construction of VET is predicated is that training is preparation for paid employment and that skills are acquired for work. This assumption derives its currency from the truth-claim that the needs of industry and individuals are converging. The most recent articulation of the convergence truth-claim was presented in a review of the national training reform agenda: “Individual Australians have essentially the same interest as enterprises: whether they are now unemployed or looking for their first or for a different job, what they want from training is competitive skills which Australian enterprises want” (ACG, 1994, preface, emphasis added). On this basis, current policy frames assert that VET should be primarily (if not exclusively) concerned with giving individuals the skills required in the workplace so as to enhance their ‘employability’ (e.g., ANTA, 1998; Kemp, 1996). This construction of VET, supported by the technology of CBT, “impedes the consideration of the wide range of needs and concerns of students in vocational education — in fact any needs outside of the narrow vocational goals associated with reproducing industry and relationships among workers in industry.” (Stevenson, 1993, p. 93)

Productivism and the ‘skills-for-work’ assumption are fundamentally flawed however as they are based on an ideology of ‘work’ that is no longer economically rational or socially sustainable. Empirical data show that although 73% of VET graduates in 2001 were working in paid employment after completion of their training, over one third of these graduates held part-time positions. In addition, 27% of graduates were unemployed (either 'looking for work' or 'not in the labour force'). In total therefore, 47% of VET graduates were in full-time employment after training, while 52% were either underemployed or unemployed (NCVER, 2001, p. 5). The main conclusion to be drawn from this social reality is not that VET courses should reflect industry specifications. Rather it highlights the need to take greater account of the broad range of graduate destinations beyond paid employment, and the numerous non-economic needs of VET students. In effect, productivism has outlived its social relevance to such an extent that new vocational identities and forms of socially useful human activity other than paid
employment must now be recognised and valued through VET.

While the foregoing analysis does not negate VET's role in preparing students for work, it does underscore the need to place the normative assumption of 'skills-for-work' under close scrutiny. It also throws into question the logic behind the associated claim that "the interests of individuals cannot be well serviced unless the training they receive meets the skill formation needs of enterprises" (ACG, 1994, p. 133). In an increasingly jobless society, the concept of 'employability' is fast becoming redundant and should no longer be the principal focus of VET policy and programs. The unemployed and under-employed require skills to survive on limited income, the confidence to cope with adversity, and the personal resources to develop meaningful vocations other than those connected to paid employment. Many VET graduates will also move in and out of work and through a series of different occupations, often in industries for which they were never trained. They need the capacity to adapt to new work contexts, deal with economic insecurity, and reconfigure their identities as producers and consumers in an era of ecological risk.

In designing and delivering environmental education, UNESCO argued that both a 'reactive' and 'pro-active' approach should be adopted in order to equip graduates to both respond to and anticipate environmental problems.

Overall adult participation in environmental education remains limited, particularly in VET and other work-related settings. Most environmental education has been directed principally at school students. Yet adult learners are engaged in activities that have a crucial impact on the natural environment. As managers, workers and consumers, adults are active participants in processes of economic production and consumption which are at the root of productivism (Giddens, 1994). As noted in the 1997 Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning, "Adult environmental education can play an important role in sensitising and mobilising communities and decision-makers towards sustained environmental action" (Article 17). Research also suggests that environmental education has a significant impact on the attitudes and behaviours of post-school learners, possibly greater than on school students (Palmer, 1998). As institutions implicated directly in processes of economic production and lifelong learning, VET providers are strategically positioned to facilitate the paradigmatic shift from productivism to ecological sustainability. Not only can they develop the required knowledge, skills and attitudes through integrated and holistic approaches to adult learning and development, but they can also become working models of 'green' organisations in their own right. Although too few and far between, some VET providers are

Sustainable Development and Vocational Education and Training

In spite of its all-pervasiveness, the logic of productivism in VET has been questioned. In 1986, for instance, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) argued that VET should be actively involved in the provision of environmental education (EE). From the perspective of UNESCO (cited in Hardy and Salasoo, 1987, p. 60), VET institutions have both an ethical responsibility and the practical means to address the environmental consequences of economic production:

Technical and vocational education has provided the skilled manpower (sic) for agricultural and industrial development, which has been one of the main sources of environmental degradation. Technical and vocational education should therefore play an active role in helping to deal with these problems through its programs. The institutions concerned already have many of the resources, both physical and human, to offer appropriate EE.
experimenting with new approaches to organisational management and program design and delivery for ecological sustainability. Such initiatives exemplify the manner in which the principles and practice of ecologically sustainable development are no longer a pipedream, but a viable and coherent basis for redesigning the structure, culture and programs of VET institutions.

Given the powerful discursive effects of the ‘training-for-growth’ and ‘skills-for-work’ assumptions on VET policy and practice, combined with vested interests in their systematic reproduction, this shift is likely to be complex and highly contested. As Manion and Bowlby (1992 cited in Palmer, 1998, p. 85) contend, the central dilemma of sustainable development is: “what is the best way to confront and overcome the massively powerful vested interests that would feel threatened by structural changes to the status quo?” As key catalysts of change, adult educators and trainers will need to raise public awareness of the contradictions and irrationality of productivism, and take concerted action to reform policy, management and curriculum frameworks accordingly. In future, the principles of ecologically sustainable development should inform and reshape the formation of production-oriented competencies. Adult environmental education should be provided as part of a lifetime continuum of learning for sustainable development. In this context, a key challenge for adult environmental educators is not only to consolidate and build on the foundations laid in schooling, but to do so in a way that empowers adult learners to engage actively and critically with environmental issues in their own workplaces and communities (Anderson, 2002).

Conclusion
In 1979, McKenzie articulated a vision for TAFE that questioned ‘growth for growth’s sake’. Regrettably his message fell on deaf ears as productivism has since strengthened its grip on TAFE and VET. Despite commitments made at the Rio Earth Summit a decade ago, the VET system seems no closer to adopting the principles of ecologically sustainable development. Productivism remains a ubiquitous and persistent feature of official VET policy discourse despite mounting evidence of its unsustainability. The associated ‘training-for-growth’ and ‘skills-for-work’ assumptions are reproduced systematically through VET even though they no longer provide a rational or meaningful basis for human development in a post-industrial era.

In consequence, our imaginings of VET remain constrained by prevailing productivist assumptions about the necessity of permanent economic growth. VET is locked into a blinkered race for ‘global economic competitiveness’ which overlooks the diminishing ecological returns on training for a growth-oriented industrial system. As the human species confronts a risky future marked by environmental degradation and ecological crisis, it is imperative to consider the role of VET in promoting ecological sustainability and global citizenship. While the development of skills, industry and employment opportunities for all remain important social and economic objectives, they must be balanced with the even greater challenge of becoming more skillful and innovative at conserving our scarce natural resources and shaping our collective ecological destiny.

References


The Role of Contextual Factors in Judgements: Implications for Research into Adult Learning

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The purpose of this paper is to outline some methodological implications for a new theory of workplace learning proposed by Hager and Halliday (2002), who set out a relationship between context, judgement and learning. Learning is seen as concerned with judgements that are potentially fallible but also contextually sensitive. This approach was based on philosophical foundations and was not intended to provide a testable model, however, it has direct implications for the ways in which we structure learning situations (e.g., whether and how learners are able to combine discrete pieces of information). This paper sets out their approach as a Perceptual-Judgemental-Reinforcement approach to adult learning and outlines a specific research methodology for investigating the claim that judgements are based on implicit and explicit factors. The methodology is based upon social judgement theory and multiple-cue probability learning for examining the context of judgement.

The purpose of this paper is to outline some implications of a new theory of workplace learning proposed by Hager and Halliday (2002), who set out a relationship between context, judgement and learning. They saw learning as concerned with judgements that are potentially fallible but also contextually sensitive (Halliday & Hager, 2002). The Hager-Halliday approach was based on philosophical foundations and was not intended to provide a testable model. In this paper an attempt is made to translate their conceptions into a testable Perceptual-Judgemental-Reinforcement model (see Figure 1 for my representation of their ideas) and the following sections of this paper focus only upon the contextual or perceptual part of the workplace learning process.

Hager and Halliday (2002) argued that judgement is central to learning and that interests, purposes as well as features of a situation affect the judgement processes. The starting point for their model is the relationship between factors in a situation and judgements. A precursor for this perspective is the intellectual work 'Life, Work and Learning: Practice in postmodernity' by Beckett and Hager (2002). This traced the links between workplace learning and practical judgements and it was argued that:

...all workers — and indeed all adults in their lives in general, both now and for the foreseeable future — as subjects of learning potential are best regarded as integrated thinking and doing beings who exercise all manner of judgement during the working day — these are their practices (p. 40).

Towards the end of their book, they described six aspects of practical judgement that will be referred to in subsequent discussion of studies relevant to this topic:

1. Judgements are holistic
2. Judgements are contextual
3. Judgements denote
4. Judgements are defeasible
5. Judgements include problem identification
6. Judgements are socially shaped (p. 185).

The holistic aspect refers to the integration and existence of intermediate judgements. The contextual description is linked to the combination of information and the fact that judgements reflect changes in the environment. The criterion that judgements denote relates to the fact that judgements have consequences and affect the world around us. Beckett and Hager (2002) noted that judgements may be modified or require change and are therefore defeasible. Finally they referred to judgements in terms of them involving problem identification and often being collaborative or collegial in nature and hence socially-shaped. Of course, these are descriptions that can be applied to judgements but do not refer to the specifics of the antecedent circumstances.

A key aspect of the approach outlined by Halliday and Hager (2002) is that judgements remain contextually sensitive to implicit and explicit features of a situation. They laid out a general plan and at that time did not seek to specify how these features interacted. They indicated, however, that the judgements are based on personally relevant features of a situation. In this respect the model has major similarities to the field of research instigated by Brunswik on the importance of perception and judgement for all human responding (Hammond, 1996). The remainder of this paper deals with the social judgement analysis and outlines some relevant experimental findings that support the contextual aspects of a Perceptual-Judgemental-Reinforcement model of workplace learning.

Social Judgement Analysis
As far back as the early 1950s, Brunswik (1956) posited that an object in the environment (i.e., a distal stimulus) stimulated a person’s sensory organs to produce multiple cues (i.e., a proximal stimulus) to the object’s identity and properties. Researchers like Brunswik, acknowledged perceptions to be a construction from an incomplete and fallible collection of sensory cues. They pointed out that human judgment is analogous to perception.

Brunswik and his successors outlined a methodology for decomposing the contribution of specific factors in judgements that are made under conditions of complexity and uncertainty (see Cooksey, 1996). Individuals will differ in their ways
of judgement and it is hypothesised this may depend upon the cues or factors in a situation. Figure 2 describes the classic double lens model design as Brunswik conceptualised it. This double system design explicitly compares judgments with values for ecological criterion measures and sets the stage for research on how people learn about the use of cues in the ecology and research into judgmental accuracy and learning.

In the Figure 2 $Y_s$ represents judgments; and $X_1 - X_n$ represent the value of cues, information or details in a situation that is presented to a person. If the person is presented with multiple instances then it is possible to decompose their judgement and determine how the aspects in a situation ($X_1 - X_n$) are influencing their judgments. Furthermore, if we already know in advance the criterion value for the judgement in each situation (i.e., the correct answer) then it is possible to calculate the relationship between those same aspects in all the situations that we presented to a person and the criterion responses. We can then fit regression equations to both sides of the process to judgements and to the criterion. The predicted judgement is derived from a regression equation fitted to the cues in a situation and the criterion in the ecology. Using the double lens model it is then possible to formulate an identity:

$$r_s = GR_s R_c + C \sqrt{(1-R_s)^2 - (1-R)^2}$$

where:

- $r_s$ = the achievement index (i.e., the correlation between a judgement and the criterion)
- $R_c$ = the predictability index (i.e., the multiple correlation of the cues or factors in a situation with the criterion).
- $R_s$ = cognitive control (i.e., the multiple correlation of the cues or factors in the situation with the judgement for all scenarios)
- $G$ = a knowledge index (i.e., the correlation between the prediction and the predicted judgments for all scenarios)
- $C$ = an unmodeled knowledge (i.e., the correlation between the residuals from the above predictions).

Figure 2
Double lens model for studying judgments.
If the Halliday and Hager (2002) proposal is correct then people will respond to both implicit and explicit features of the situation in lawful but idiosyncratic ways. This should be the case where individuals are exposed to situations in which there is a single, identifiably correct solution or everyday situations where there is a subjectively preferred or personally optimal answer. Their hypothesis lends itself to a focus upon intensive quantitative investigation of a few individuals (e.g., Athanasou & Cooksey, 2001). The benefits of intensive case studies of responses to large numbers of real situations lie in the representative design and ecological validity of the findings. This idiographic approach (rather than nomothetic) leads to the accumulation of observations and enables us to determine what features of the context are likely to be relevant to the future interests of a learner (Athanasou, 1998, 1999).

A number of studies within the context of multiple-cue probability learning have pursued such a focus. The final section of this paper deals with these studies in some detail. The reader who is not interested in these specific details may skip this section.

**Multiple-Cue Probability Learning Studies**

Brunswik and Herma (1951) conducted the first study of cue probability learning using a relationship between position and the estimated weight of an object. These studies involved the presentation of cues or information from which a judgement could subsequently be made. The accuracy of the judgement can be compared with the criterion or true result. In such experiments various aspects of the situation have come to be studied including, the nature of the cues, their relevance, their redundancy or extent of intercorrelation, their validity and the type of feedback or outcome information provided to judges. This has provided a large body of literature, some of which is relevant for the perceptual-judgemental-reinforcement model of adult learning. The results from a range of studies that are relevant to the subject of this paper are summarised in Table 1. These are taken from an unpublished Annotated Bibliography of Cue Probability Learning Studies by R. J. Holzworth (1999).

**Conclusions**

These studies show that much of our human judgement is quasi-rational and based on perceived relationships. It ranges along a continuum from intuitive to analytic. The findings of earlier studies link perceptions with learning and support the general framework of the Hager-Halliday hypothesis but the relations are probably more complex than those envisaged by Beckett and Hager (2002). It seems unlikely that isolated case studies of judgements (no matter how real or descriptive) will provide a substantial and accumulated base of theoretical knowledge of judgement and decision making in the context of adult learning.

The selected multiple-cue probability learning studies that were reviewed showed inter alia that the use of cues was dependent on the relevance or validity of the information provided. Learning was easier when the information provided was clustered in some way and that this facilitated transfer. A consistent finding was that feedback on the accuracy of judgements may not be as important as first imagined by many laypersons. It may be more helpful to provide information about the nature of the decision-making ecology within which judgements are being made.

Most of the six judgement aspects described by Beckett and Hager (2002) have been covered in the cue probability learning studies. The astute reader would have noticed that the problem identification and socially shaped aspects were not mentioned. This is due to the limited number of studies using adults or the limited applications in work settings as well as my selection of examples that focused on theoretical rather than applied studies.
Table 1

Results from multiple-cue probability learning studies relevant to the Hager-Halliday hypothesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INVESTIGATORS</th>
<th>JUDGEMENT ASPECTS</th>
<th>KEY FINDINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summers (1962)</td>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>Cue utilisation was proportional to validity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bjorkman (1965)</td>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>Learning occurs more rapidly when categories are homogeneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transfer is facilitated after training on heterogeneous categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning occurs without reinforcement by observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton (1965)</td>
<td>Denote</td>
<td>Outcome feedback containing ecological validities led to significantly improved achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd &amp; Hammond (1965)</td>
<td>Denote</td>
<td>Information which allowed a person to compare their dependency on cues with their ecological validities was of greater value than knowledge of accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azuma &amp; Cronbach (1966)</td>
<td>Holistic</td>
<td>Concept formation isolated a sub-universes and identified a rule applying within the sub-universe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Concept formation merged sub-universes and applied a single parsimonious rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dudycha &amp; Naylor (1966)</td>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>Pairing an additional cue to one of low validity was always facilitating, while adding an additional cue to one of high validity was always detrimental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summers &amp; Hammond (1966)</td>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>Task properties and task information determine inferential accuracy and cue dependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauer (1972)</td>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>General tendency to choose the more frequent cue irrespective of cue validity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deane, Hammond &amp; Summers (1972)</td>
<td>Holistic</td>
<td>Performance on tasks requiring complex nonlinear relations can be partitioned into acquisition and application of task knowledge; poor performance can be attributed to incomplete cognitive control rather than incomplete knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castellan (1973)</td>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>The number of irrelevant cues had an effect on performance that diminished but did not disappear across trials; and there was an interaction between the number of irrelevant cues and the validity of the relevant cue, the resultant performance decrement being greatest for cues of moderate validity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steinmann (1974)</td>
<td>Denote, defeasible</td>
<td>Compared with outcome feedback both feedforward and lens model feedback led to increases in the consistency and knowledge components of accuracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problem identification and socially shaped aspects tend to feature in the applications of cue-probability learning. For example, medical diagnosis was studied by Tape, Kripal and Wigton (1992) who studied the role of feedback in the prediction of cardiovascular disease.

The Halliday-Hager hypothesis considered that both implicit and explicit factors influence perceptions and judgement. The multiple-cue probability learning studies that were reviewed, however, did not make this distinction and this appears to be fruitful field for future research. The implicit and explicit factors might be considered as sub-universes of information to which separate judgement heuristics are applied initially. Decisions about the sub-universes might be gradually merged using a more parsimonious judgement heuristic. Subsequently there may be a need to consider separately the stages of knowledge and application. That is, conscious awareness or theoretical knowledge may not be translated readily into real-world problem solving and application.

Judgements also reflect our use of specific cues or criteria and it has been shown that there is a great deal of individuality in this process. This is especially the case when judgements are made under conditions of uncertainty and where there are probabilities involved. We have known for some time that experience does not necessarily improve people’s judgements because biases prevent people from using the information offered by experience (see Brehmer, 1980). For instance, Brehmer reported that these biases include (a) the use of confirmatory evidence; assumptions about causality; and (c) disregard of negative information. Faced with such lawfulness in individual behaviour and the incongruities in decision making under conditions of complexity then the only way ahead may be to consider a program of research that documents the idiosyncrasies of each person’s judgements and learning in different contexts and under varying conditions.

References


The Importance of Difference in Lifelong Learning

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The contemporary widespread institutionalisation of lifelong learning ideology may certainly be seen as a good in itself. Learning — as both an engagement and an outcome — inevitably has value of some sort to some human interests. That reality may be understood as both the greatest strength of lifelong learning ideology and its greatest weakness. The measurement of engagement in lifelong learning and the measurement of lifelong learning achievements can serve to mask profound differences in the quality of both educational engagement and educational outcomes. It can also be used politically to mask culturally important differences. It is argued here that lifelong learning theory, advocacy, policy, practice and critique must maintain a focus on important distinctions in the quality or nature of educational engagements and outcomes. Only through such a focus is there any hope of realising the progressive, developmental and liberatory features of lifelong learning ideology by exposing and correcting the overwhelming tendency for lifelong learning discourse to be colonised by powerful sectarian, established interests.

The agenda of the lifelong learning movement for the world-wide transformation of social reality into lifelong learning cultures would seem to be emerging as one of the more spectacularly successful social movements in recent history. Lifelong learning is now institutionalised in the mission statements, policies and practices, not only of educational organisations but also of organisations in the corporate world, in the development plans of cities and towns and in the educational policies of governments and government instrumentalities.

The lifelong learning movement that has driven and which is identified with this triumph began in earnest in the early 1960s with the decision of the UNESCO to make lifelong education (as it was then termed) "the 'master concept' for all its educational planning" (Wain, 1987, p. 35).

In its formative decades, the movement embraced a number of different philosophical and ideological emphases. These have been drawn together elsewhere as three 'progressive sentiments': the individual, the democratic and the adaptive. The notion of an informing progressive sentiment is that of a stream, current or strand of commitment to cultural reform — one that is defined by a central programmatic purpose for reform of the cultural institutions affected (the educational institution in our case). That purpose, then, constitutes an organising ideal to which advocacy is directed, around which theory is constructed, and in support of which evidence is gathered. It captures the ethical meaning and import of the educational ideal (Bagnall, 2001, 2000). The three progressive sentiments are variously combined in ideological positions on lifelong learning.

The individual progressive sentiment is defined by its programmatic commitment to individual growth and development. It seeks liberation from ignorance (through individual enlightenment), from
dependence (through individual empowerment), from constraint (through the individual transformation of perspectives), or from inadequacy (through individual development). Lifelong learning works that are strongly grounded in this sentiment include those of Brocket and Hiemstra (1991), Taylor (1998) and Wain (1987).

The democratic progressive sentiment is defined by its programmatic commitment to social justice, equity and social development through participative democratic involvement. It seeks liberation from inherited authority of all forms, whether autocratic, oligarchic, theocratic, or whatever, and from oppression, servitude and poverty, in the creation of a truly civil society (Gutmann, 1987; Illich, 1973; Walker, 1992; White, 1983). Education, then, is to serve and mirror those ends (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Freire, 1972; Gelpi, 1985).

The adaptive progressive sentiment is defined by its programmatic responsiveness to cultural change. It seeks liberation from deprivation, poverty and dependence, through adaptive learning. Such development may be at any level of social organisation — individual, organisational, national, global, or whatever, depending upon the learning need (Knapper & Cropley, 1985; Kozlowski, 1995; Longworth, 1995).

The liberatory features of these three progressive sentiments have been blunted by other cultural influences contemporarily prominent in educational policy and practice (Bagnall, 2001, 2000). Nevertheless, a number of important dimensions of the lifelong learning ideology and advocacy that have been informed by those sentiments are evident in contemporary cultural trends. These dimensions may be recognised as capturing features shared by the three progressive sentiments.

Behind all of these emergent dimensions is the idea of learning being an engagement that — in different ways and with different foci — is important at all stages of life and in all life tasks (Wain, 1897). That central theme of lifelong learning ideology, theory and advocacy is empirically well grounded, since any conscious engagement in life cannot but result in learning (Tennant, 1988). It is picked up in various ways through the dimensions here identified. They are as follows, in no particular order of importance (Bagnall, in press).

**Dimension 1**

Educational engagements should focus on learning (Knapper & Cropley, 1985). This dimension calls for attention to be paid particularly to learning outcomes: in assessing prior learning, in setting learning goals and in evaluating educational achievements. It is seen as being an important counter to an over-emphasis on curricular content and process. These latter are importantly to be seen only as serving the outcomes to be achieved, never as ends in themselves. Nevertheless, this dimension does not, in itself, entail a denial of the obvious point that the attainment of desired learning outcomes may — in theory at least — be enhanced through educational intervention (Lengrand, 1975).

**Dimension 2**

Educational provision should be responsive to individual learner interests, at least to those of learners who have the status of adults in society (Knowles, 1984). This dimension is seen as being an important counter to over-weaning, ill-informed and misdirected attempts by those in authority — even if well intentioned — to determine for others to what educational opportunities they may have access. It places the learner at the centre of the educational enterprise and engagement. It argues that social development must respect the dignity and worth of individuals — respecting their right to be freely and willingly involved (or not, as the case may be) in determining the course of their development and contribution.
Dimension 3
Learning must be recognised as being irremediably contextualised or situated (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It follows, then, that educational engagements should be no less so (Usher & Simons, 2000). This dimension operationalises a common belief in contemporary educational and learning theory that all learning occurs in a cultural context and pertains to that context. Education, then, should acknowledge the constraints therein, while building on the opportunities.

Dimension 4
In its focus on learning outcomes, education should be concerned with developing and evaluating useful learning (Skilbeck, Connell, Cave & Tait, 1994). Utility may be conceptualised quite broadly — embracing knowledge that is found to be interesting and engaging as well as that which is empowering and functional. However, it is also not uncommonly conceptualised rather narrowly as the skills that contribute to the last of those types of utility: the functional or operational (Ball, 1990). This dimension also calls for the overturning of the traditionally lower status of vocational learning in comparison to more general or liberal learning (Dewey, 1961/1916). Traditionally, vocational learning has been seen and diminished as merely 'training' and has been resourced and valued accordingly (Ball, 1990). Only the more general or liberal learning has been properly termed 'education' and has been favoured correspondingly in the allocation of resources and in its comparative cultural value (Goozee, 1995). A focus, though, on useful learning favours the utility of learning through 'training' and seeks accordingly to valorise it (Dewey, 1961/1916).

Dimension 5
Educational provision should be accessible to those who want to engage in it and who might conceivably benefit from it (Lamb, Long & Malley, 1998). This dimension calls for educational providers to make education available in ways that are sensitive and responsive to the realities and situations of potential learners — in terms of its demands for learner skills, the timing and location of educational activities, the resources required and other educational requirements that do not diminish the quality of the educational engagement.

Dimension 6
Educational providers should be responsible for the educational opportunities that they provide (Skilbek et al., 1994). Rather than hiding behind cloaks of tradition, educational organisations, policy makers and teachers should accept responsibility for the quality of their educational practices and for the pertinence of their educational programs to learner interests. This dimension implies a concern for educational efficiency. On the one hand, respect for persons demands of educational providers that they require no more of students or learners in their programs than the best available knowledge of the learning tasks at hand suggests should be required. On the other hand, providers (and also learners) using public funds or other support in their educational provision or engagement have a duty not to use those resources in a wasteful manner.

Dimension 7
Learning attainments should be transferable across educational systems wherever they are pertinent (Billett & Hayes, 1998). This dimension requires that assessments of learning, including educational qualifications, be fully creditable from one educational program, qualification, system or sector to any others, to the extent that such credit is educationally appropriate. It requires also that educational providers have the policies and practices in place both to assess prior learning (where it has not already been accredited by a recognised accrediting agency) and to recognise appropriate credit awarded by other such agencies.
THE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENCE IN LIFELONG LEARNING

**Dimension 8**

Educational access should be *equitable* (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1984). Education is an important social good. It is itself and it leads in its outcomes to advantages and opportunities for those who engage successfully in it. Learning through education is recognised as being essential to individual, economic, social and cultural development and progress, and to the creation of a more secure, rewarding and socially just world. A just society therefore has a duty to its citizens to ensure that access to educational opportunities is available to everyone, regardless of their being or circumstances. An over-emphasis on the front-end-loading of educational provision and access for children and youth may thus be argued to be unjust in itself (Wain, 1987).

An important consequence of these dimensions is the radical contextualisation of education. This impact is captured directly in the third-noted dimension above. It is reinforced, though, by the others, particularly the focus on learning, on responsiveness to individual learner interests, on useful learning, on the accessibility of educational provision and on individual provider responsibility for the quality of their programs (Dimensions 1, 2 & 4–6 above).

That contextualisation involves the contextualisation of educational value. It sees any assignments of different value to education of different types as being dependent upon the traditions, values, interests, experience and situation of the learners and other stake-holders involved (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The comparative educational value of learning, in other words, is a purely *situational* matter, to be determined by those persons involved in the situation. Universal criteria and standards of educational worth are effectively denied. Any determination of comparative or absolute value is thus effectively reduced to individual or collective choice, interest or desire (Usher & Edwards, 1994).

Such a radically contextualised view of learning and educational value has the consequence of making *any* learning of possible or potential educational value. Within such a view, there are no context-free grounds on which any learning may be ruled out as non-educational or as contra-educational. Any learning outcome and any learning engagement, no matter how seemingly perverse, destructive, anti-social, brutalising or inhumane must be embraced as possibly valuable to someone in some situation. If all educational value is situational, then we can only view it from particular cultural perspectives. We therefore have no non-perspectival or unsituated grounds on which to judge it to be thus perverse, destructive, ant-social, brutalising or inhumane.

In like manner, such a radically contextualised view of educational value also has the consequence of making any learning of possible or potentially *equal* educational value to that of any other. Since the relative or absolute educational value of any learning outcome or engagement is dependent upon the particular traditions, values, interests, experience and situation of the learners and other stake-holders involved, nothing normative can be said of the relative or absolute educational value of any learning or education outside particular contexts.

What is possible within such a view is the sociological *reporting* of relative or absolute value in particular contexts. And that reporting may, of course, include the aggregation or clustering of like contexts or like valuations on their own terms, to compare and relate valuations and contexts, and to sum comparative or absolute values across contexts. Within the limitations of empirical sociology to provide such representations within acceptable levels of validity and reliability, it is thereby possible to give the impression of there being general and perhaps universal educational values. However, this impression is entirely misleading, for it masks our inability — as educators — to say anything constructive.
about the *a priori* normative educational value of different learning engagements or outcomes. Our academic role, rather is reduced to the technical role of *reporting* that which is or has been or might become and the relative probabilities of those being so.

The conception of lifelong learning (and education) that this view unavoidably promulgates is therefore an all-encompassing one. Nothing is excluded and nothing is known *a priori* to be of greater or lesser value than anything else.

As educational theorists of lifelong learning, we are concerned at crafting, refining, testing, evaluating and advocating universal conceptions of lifelong learning and its related and constituent concepts. In doing that from within an ideological framework that is radically contextualised in the manner that I have just described, we must, logically, admit *everything* that might result in learning and we must admit all possible learning outcomes into our definitions of lifelong learning.

This view therefore also tends to discourage educational scholarship and debate about the normative value of different types of and approaches to education. An ideology that is required to embrace all educational engagements and all learning outcomes as potentially (contextually) of equal value cannot consistently also encourage scholarship, research and debate that seeks to identify normative features of education and learning that are of greater, lesser, no or counter value on general or universal grounds. Such academic activity is thus diminished, historicised, marginalised and dismissed. It is portrayed as ‘legislating’ and as out-datedly modernist (Bagnall, 1999).

The above-noted dimensions of lifelong learning ideology and advocacy are essentially *formal* criteria. They constrain the form or structure of educational provision and engagement, but not its substantive qualities. They are silent on substantive questions, which are seen as irremediably contextual. Lifelong learning policy, practice and evaluation are thereby denied access to any well-grounded, well evidenced and well argued substantive criteria, principles and standards by which lifelong learning may be developed, facilitated and critically assessed. In setting policy that does justice to the above-noted dimensions of lifelong learning ideology and advocacy, educators, trainers and policy-makers are denied guidelines on any substantive criteria, principles or standards that may be used as guides in their activities. And this, it must be understood, is not an oversight of lifelong learning advocacy, but rather an essential feature of lifelong learning ideology.

A consequence of this substantive emptiness or vacuum, is that lifelong learning policy, practice and evaluation become undefended targets for educational fads and fetishes of any sort, no matter how ill-conceived, poorly grounded or inappropriate they may be (Bagnall, 1999). So long as the apologists of any educational fad or fetish can argue a strong case for their meeting the formal lifelong learning criteria articulated through the dimensions of lifelong learning ideology and advocacy, they can expect and demand their right to pervade, if not to prevail, in the lifelong learning marketplace. Unfortunately, experience has shown us just how readily disablingly limiting lifelong learning fetishes like ‘total quality management’ (TQM), and competency-based training (CBT) may become dominant in organisational or even national educational systems through the ability of their apologists to present them as meeting the formal criteria of lifelong learning in the absence of anything substantive.

In thus being open to educational fads and fetishes, educational policy, practice and evaluation are also opened to manipulation by self-interested or sectarian interests. It becomes easier — in the absence of well informed and well grounded opposition — for particular interests to prevail. Ironically, this can have the effect of making educational policy and systems
more uniform. Industrial or other interests can more readily muster sufficient influence to see educational policy through legislation and policy into practice on a scale previously unimagined. This is an outcome that is facilitated also by the last two previously noted dimensions of lifelong learning ideology and advocacy: those of the transferability of educational or learning outcomes and the equitability of access to educational and learning opportunities. Both of these dimensions can be and are used persuasively to argue for uniformity across systems and educational jurisdictions. Again, here, the institution of competency-based systems of vocational education and learning is a good recent example from a number of countries (Bagnall, 1994). Such systems serve to create a cheaper, more flexible work force, but one that is lower skilled than was the case in more traditional approaches to vocational education and training. The rhetorical arguments for this approach are essentially those of the earlier-named dimensions of contemporary lifelong learning ideology and advocacy, but the evidential and theoretical grounds for accepting those arguments as persuasive have never been available. In theory and in reality, the balance of evidence and reason has always been against the social justice of this approach as a realisation of lifelong learning principles, but that has had no impact on moderating or checking the sectarian interests committed to its imposition (Hawke & Cornford, 1998).

Sociological surveys of lifelong learning and educational engagement and outcomes will, however, almost inevitably reveal education and learning to be increasingly pervasive. The all-encompassing conceptualisation of education and learning that lifelong learning theory has unavoidably generated through the logic of its program, when appropriately operationalised in surveys, cannot but reveal greatly increased educational and learning engagement and achievement (Bagnall, 2001). The empirical success of the lifelong learning movement is thus built into its conceptualisation. That success, though, is a conceptual artefact rather than an experiential reality. It may, of course, also be an experiential reality, but the contextualised nature of lifelong learning ideology makes it difficult to identify and most unlikely that it would be so (Cornford, 2001).

From within the field and the movement that is lifelong learning, we may regard this as a horrifyingly distorted and over-blown misrepresentation of the way in which our beautiful utopian world of lifelong learning is to be understood. It is, however, an interpretation of the field that would seem to be well supported by the available evidence. On the one hand is the paucity of scholarship that focuses on matters of normative educational value in what is a veritable avalanche of written commentary and advocacy on and of the field. On the other hand is the uncritical even-handedness of the countless declarations and policies on education and lifelong learning that eschew, or largely so, the challenging critical work of making and evaluating substantive normative judgements about relative educational value.

What is needed, then, is a renewed emphasis in lifelong learning scholarship, theory, ideology and advocacy on educational difference — on what is both substantively and formally of greater or lesser educational value and under what circumstances it is so. To that end, it may well be helpful to return to a focus on the three progressive sentiments that were so influential on the lifelong learning movement in its formative lifelong education period. It is through those progressive sentiments that differences of educational import may be identified and articulated. It is through them that we may thereby develop frameworks of educational value sufficiently robust to inform decision-making in lifelong learning policy and practice.
References


Dealing with International University Students: Attitudes and Issues for Teaching and Support Staff

Michelle Barker, Ashlea Troth, and Angela Back
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This study examines the (a) social self-efficacy, (b) multi-cultural attitudes and (c) salient job issues for academic and support staff (e.g., student services, welfare, equity, and international centre) who work regularly with international university students. Twenty employees (10 academic, 2 administrative, and 8 student support) at an Australian University undertook a 3-day Intercultural skills train-the-trainer program. After the program participants were administered the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ: van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000) which assesses dimensions of cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability and flexibility. A social self-efficacy (Fan & Mak, 1998), and a job satisfaction measure were also administered. Finally, participants answered a series of open-ended questions that aimed to explore the perceived workplace needs, challenges, and rewards of participants when dealing with international students. Staff reported moderately high levels of social self-efficacy interacting with people from different ethnic groups; moderately high levels of job satisfaction, and the mean scores for all MPQ scales were above the midpoint. Academic and support staff recommended a number of university-wide strategies that would assist staff to meet the demands of an increasingly internationalised university context. Implications for international student support services will be discussed.

One of the major changes to the face of Australian universities in the last 15 to 20 years, has been the increasing number of international students who are attracted to study at an Australian campus. Part of a global trend towards study abroad, international education now represents a significant income earner for Australia. While universities place more and more attention on marketing academic programs in foreign markets, academic, administrative and support staff have to grapple with how to meet the increasingly diverse needs of the cohort in their classrooms and offices (Aspland & O’Donoghue, 1994; Barker, 1997; Channell, 1990; Cortazzi & Jin 1990; Elsey, 1990. According to Harris (1997), “there is a substantial shift occurring in universities and a mismatch between the needs of the students and the responses of the universities.” (p. 36).

The basis of this shift is partly intellectual (Kinnell, 1990), partly economic (the combination of the full-cost fee system and the changing patterns of university funding making such students the objects of inter-university competition) and partly political, reflecting the contemporary ideology of consumer choice and quality assurance. Similarly, in a relatively recent shift from the idea that the student must assimilate into a pre-existing structure to the idea that the institution must accommodate to the needs of more diverse student cohorts. (Harris, 1997, p. 36)
It is within this context of a rapid, complex shift in universities that the present research was conducted. The exploratory study that aimed to investigate the (a) social efficacy of University staff in dealing with people from other cultures (b) the multi-cultural personality profile of such staff, (c) their job satisfaction, and (d) their own thoughts regarding the challenges and rewards of working with international students, as well as their perceptions of what would help them more effectively meet the needs of international students.

Method
Participants in this study comprised 20 University staff undergoing a 3-day Training workshop for accreditation in the delivery of the ExcelL program (a socio-cultural skills program for international students). Ten (50%) staff were academics, 8 (40%) worked in various student support services such as the International Centre, Equity Services, and Welfare, and 2 (10%) had administrative positions. Seventeen (85%) of the participants were female and the average age range was 31–40 years. Fifteen (75%) of the participants were Australasian, 2 (10%) were Asian, 1 was born in the US, 1 in South Africa, and 1 in Argentina. The average number of languages spoken by the sample was 1.65 (SD = .88).

Measures and Procedure
The data was collected early in 2002. Participants were asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire that included (a) socio-demographic questions, (b) a 13-item measure of participants social efficacy in interacting with people from other cultures in various academic and general social situations (adapted from Fan & Mak, 1998); (c) the 91-item Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ: Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000) that generates 5 domain scores on Cultural Empathy (18 items), Open-mindedness (18 items), Social Initiative (17 items), Emotional Stability (20 items) and Flexibility (18 items); and (d) a 5-item measure of job satisfaction. The social efficacy and job satisfaction measures used 7-point likert scales while the MPQ employed a 5-point likert scale. Participants were also asked the following open-ended questions: (a) 'In your professional capacity, what are the main challenges you face interacting with students from other cultures?' (b) 'What are the main rewards you derive from these interactions?' and (c) 'What will help staff more effectively meet the needs of international students?'

Results
Social Self-efficacy, Multicultural Effectiveness and Job Satisfaction of Staff
Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, reliabilities and scale inter-correlations for self-ratings on the social self-efficacy, MPQ, and job satisfaction measures. Internal consistencies were high for all scales. Staff reported moderately high levels of social self-efficacy interacting with people from different ethnic groups (considerably higher than scores found in student groups by Mak et al., 1998). Table 1 also shows that the mean scores for all MPQ scales were above the midpoint. The highest means were found for cultural empathy and open-mindedness (considerably higher scores than those found in 3 student samples by Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001). Moderately high levels were also reported for emotional stability, social initiative and flexibility. Moderately high levels of job satisfaction were also reported by the sample. The inter-correlations reveal several significant positive correlations between the social self-efficacy scale and MPQ dimensions. More specifically, it appears staff who reported higher levels of cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social initiative and flexibility were more likely to feel confident in their cross-cultural interactions. As expected, there were several significant
positive correlations between the MPQ dimensions. However, no significant links were found between job satisfaction and the other variables.

**Main Challenges Faced by Staff When Interacting With International Students**

Responses were analysed for the open-ended question, 'In your professional capacity, what are the main challenges you face interacting with students from other cultures?' The most salient themes to emerge, common to academic, administrative and support staff, were language and communication barriers (N = 10 participants) and time pressures (N = 4). Some examples of the answers given are shown below:

- Time for listening — in counselling, one hour is not usually long enough. Usually need double the time to unpack stories because of language — uncovering words we both understand. (Student Support)

- Often the language barrier makes it difficult in the full understanding of the request/problem. (Administrative)

Academic and support staff also reported another challenge was their lack of awareness/knowledge regarding the different cultural values and behaviour of their students (N = 6).

- Lack of awareness of specific cultures and how they work. (Student Support)

Closely tied to this theme were concerns about cultural differences in the learning styles and academic abilities of international students (N = 10 academic staff and N = 2 support staff). Indeed, this was the most salient challenge experienced and reported by academic staff. Some examples are given below:

- The main challenge is how to cater for different teaching-learning styles. I often have the feeling that our methodologies are not very successful in fulfilling the needs of students from some particular cultural backgrounds. (Academic)

- The main challenge is trying to get Asian students to understand the concept of critical thinking. (Academic)

### Table 1

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<td>6. Flexibility (MPQ) (18 items)</td>
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<td>7. Job satisfaction (MPQ) (5 items)</td>
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*Significance levels: *p < .05, **p < .01. Ratings were made on 1 to 7 scales. Ratings were made on 1 to 5 scales.
Dealing with diverse educational backgrounds and standards. (Academic)

**Main Rewards Derived by Staff When Interacting With International Students**

Next, responses were analysed for the open-ended question, 'What are the main rewards you derive from your interactions with international students?' A salient theme that emerged common to academic, support and administrative staff, was the satisfaction of helping international students \((N = 12)\). Some examples of the responses made include:

Joy in helping, empowering students, seeing their increased confidence. (Student Support)

It is good to see their relief when they know that someone understands them. (Student Support)

The other major theme common to staff from each of the main functional areas was the rewards for themselves associated with learning about diversity and other cultures \((N = 7)\). For example:

Deeper understanding of how people from different cultures think and behave and their cultural philosophy and ideology. (Academic)

I learn diverse viewpoints and get to reassess and refine or change my own 'system'. (Academic)

Furthermore, half of the academics in the sample reported that diversity in the classroom was beneficial to learning for all students, both international and local \((N = 5)\). For example:

In the classroom, fostering openness and appreciation of cultural diversity. Challenges prejudice. (Academic)

Diversity is interesting! Diverse experiences, knowledge and skills stimulates classroom discussion that often leads to the conclusion of common underlying values but different ways to express them. (Academic)

**Helping Staff More Effectively Meet the Needs of International Students**

Finally, responses were analysed for the open-ended question, 'What will help staff to more effectively meet the needs of international students?' Overwhelmingly, the most frequent response common to academic, administrative and support staff was the need for education and workshops on inter-cultural management \((N = 10)\); 6 of these staff mentioned the ExcelL program as a worthwhile way to address this need. Some examples of the answers given are:

- URGENT need for appropriate training and open discussion. XX staff need to be educated not to view international students as 'problems', 'difficult' or 'cash cows'. (Student Support)

- Appropriate training in inter-cultural communication to ensure staff are understanding towards the difficulties encountered by staff and students from varying cultural backgrounds. (Administrative)

- Need to be educated on different cultural values/rules and educational experiences/expectations of students. (Academic)

Several staff \((N = 3)\) also mentioned the need for a comprehensive university-wide approach to address the needs of staff dealing with international students. For example:

- We need a university-wide effort in order to meet the needs of international students. Lets look at the experiences from universities overseas. There are wonderful examples of concrete steps taken that go beyond paying lip service to internationalisation. (Academic)

Other solutions put forward by staff included: the need for staff not to impose their own cultural practices on international students \((N = 3)\); more time and resources to do an adequate job \((N = 3)\); compulsory research and academic skills for international students \((N = 2)\), and immersion of staff in other cultures \((N = 2)\).
Discussion and Implications
While the numbers of international students entering universities in Australia and overseas continue to rise rapidly, there is very little research into the perceptions and experiences of those who teach them, and those who administer their academic programs. The present research responded to the gap in the literature by exploring the perceptions of a small sample of academic and support staff about the issues that arise for them as they strive to respond to the needs of international students in an Australian university. Clearly, there is a need for further research with larger samples of staff from various disciplines, elements, and levels within the university. If we are serious about internationalisation, then we are compelled to understand more the students who are attracted to study in a foreign university, but also the staff who work with them.

The present study surveyed a convenience sample of staff who had recently volunteered to participate in an intensive intercultural skills training program. As expected, the staff who were from support areas such as counselling, equity, and the international centre, as well as from academic departments, exhibited moderately high self-efficacy about interacting with people from ethnic groups different from their own. They also scored higher than average on dimensions such as cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social initiative and flexibility. Clearly, they are well suited to their responsibilities that demand high levels of social initiative and flexibility. It was not surprising that they reported moderately high levels of job satisfaction.

Given that the staff participants had recently completed a train-the-trainer intercultural skills program, it would be interesting to understand the extent to which their moderately high scores on almost all the dimensions of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire was due to the effect of the training. The use of a pre-test and post-test design would have helped to determine the extent to which the intercultural skills training program influenced their scores on the various dimensions.

One of the major contributions of the study was to document staff perceptions of the main challenges they faced when interacting with international students. Clearly, the nature of the intercultural interaction creates particular difficulties because of language and communication barriers. Time pressure serves to deepen the complexity of the interaction. It is little wonder, therefore, that staff highlighted the need for further training on specific cultures, and the educational experiences and expectations of students.

Interestingly, there were many commonalities in the perceptions of academic, support and administrative staff. This augurs well for staff working together in training sessions, as well as on the job. In contrast to many research studies that focus only on the problems presented by international students, the present study sought to understand if staff perceived there were rewards from working with international students. It was heartening to see that staff shared similar perceptions about the major rewards, including the intrinsic reward of helping people solve problems, as well as the value of learning about other cultures. For academic staff in particular, international students contributed diverse perspectives in the classroom, thus enriching the experience of local students as well. At the same time, academic staff reported their main challenge was to understand international students’ learning styles and how to help them to adapt to the demands of the Australian teaching and learning environment.

It is evident that the increasingly internationalised Australian university creates both challenges and rewards for the staff who work there. There is a strong call for a university-wide effort to educate and support all staff as they strive to meet the diverse needs of international and Australian students they encounter each day.
References


Transition to a New Academic Context: Intercultural Skills Training for International Postgraduate Students

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The extent of international students' academic, social and cultural adjustment to the Australian University environment has important implications in terms of students' grades, retention rates, and general wellbeing (Edmond, 1997). This paper discusses and evaluates the implementation of an evidenced-based experiential learning program (ExceL: Excellence in Experiential Learning and Leadership; Mak, Westwood, Barker & Ishiyama, 1998) designed to teach socio-cultural competencies for academic and career success (e.g., participating in small groups, expressing disagreement). Twenty-four international postgraduate business students (and a matched control group of 26 students) completed a pre-program and post-program questionnaire. Both surveys included (a) a 13-item measure of students' social efficacy in interacting with local Australians in academic and general social situations (Fan & Mak, 1998); (b) the 33-item Interaction Skills Checklist (Ishiyama, 1996) that generates both an overall score and domain score on Processing, Active Engagement, Self-Enhancement, Approach, Assertion and Interruption; and (c) socio-demographic questions. ExceL Program participants reported a significantly higher level of overall interaction skills at the post-training evaluation compared to their pre-training levels while control group participants reported no change. There were no significant changes in intercultural social confidence for either ExceL or control group participants. Implications of these findings, and recommendations about the design of postgraduate orientation programs for international students, are discussed.

International education, mainly within the tertiary education sector, has become one of Australia's top ten export industries since the 1990s. The increase in the international student population occurs in a global context in which there is extensive competition between universities and colleges to attract new international student cohorts (Furnham, 1997; McClure, 2002; Tomich et al., 2000). In 2002, the Business Group at Griffith University had a total of 1771 international undergraduate and postgraduate students. More specifically, the schools in which this study was conducted, the School of Management and the School of Accounting, Business and Finance had 134 and 70 international postgraduate students respectively.

Research evidence indicates that the process of adjustment to a new academic and cultural environment leads to considerable stress for international students and impacts on their perceptions of teaching and learning (Ballard & Clanchy, 1984; Channel, 1997; Elsey, 1990; McClure, 2001; Volet & Renshaw, 1996; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). While language difficulties contribute to academic stress, in earlier research, Barker and her colleagues (1991)
propose that “students and staff both may overattribute problems to difficulties with English when, in fact, the problems stem from unfamiliarity with cultural norms or simply with the new environment” (p. 83).

Australian research in the last decade has clearly demonstrated that international students are significantly more likely than their local counterparts to report difficulties in social situations, both within academic and everyday interactions (Barker, Child, Gallois, Jones & Callan, 1991; Edmond, 1997). Furthermore, Fan and Mak (1998) found that NESB (Non English Speaking Background) immigrant students reported lower levels of social self-efficacy than did NESB Australian-born students. Immigrant students reported higher levels of social difficulties and fewer shared interests with the local people, compared to NESB Australian-born students. This research has important implications for international students’ academic success and general personal adjustment. Increasingly, there is recognition of the importance of social self-efficacy and effective interaction skills in promoting intercultural adjustment. For international students to reap the maximum benefits from an unfamiliar educational system, they will need to establish interpersonal relations and communicate effectively with mainstream students and university staff (Mak, Westwood, Ishiyama & Barker, 1999).

Many international students participate in on-arrival orientation and academic bridging programs offered by host universities (Irvine, 1998). The emphasis in these programs is largely on imparting information about study problems and study skills, although many universities are developing more innovative programmes that address the wide variety of needs experienced by international students (for example, innovate critical thinking programs as described in Farrell, 1999). The student, however, is often left to acquire various expressive and conversational skills through day-to-day contacts. The successful adjustment of many students depends largely upon their interpersonal skills, differences between their home culture and the host culture, their personalities and how they are received and helped by members of the host culture. Overall, they receive little formal assistance in acquiring the requisite skills or knowledge of host culture norms in specific situations.

The effectiveness of social skills training programs in providing people with the requisite behavioural skills and cognitive strategies to operate effectively in a different environment has been well documented among a range of clinical and general population groups (see, for example, the reviews reported in Hollin & Trower, 1986), including training programs for immigrants and sojourners who need to learn to function effectively in a foreign culture (e.g., Bochner, 1986; Gallois & Callan, 1997; Mak, Westwood & Ishiyama, 1994). The approach has also been adapted specifically for international education in a sociocultural competence training program called ExcelL (Excellence in Experiential Learning and Leadership). The programme is described more fully in Mak (2000) and Mak et al. (1998, 1999a, 1999b) and summarised briefly below.

The ExcelL Program
ExcelL is a skills-based and practice-focused group intercultural training program targeted at international students’ social adjustment and effectiveness through enhancing social efficacy and skills in academic and other interpersonal contexts. The program is grounded in established social learning principles, using a social skills approach, involving modelling, corrective feedback, and practice for behavioural skill acquisition. It also explicitly addresses cognitive dimensions (such as culturally based differences in norms, values, attributions, and social perceptions that govern cross-cultural differences in interpersonal behaviour by determining what is considered appropriate and inappropriate in particular situations), and
affectionate issues (such as anxiety and communication apprehension) that mitigate social efficacy or the confidence necessary for effective performance and achievement of goals in interpersonal encounters. The acquisition of sociocultural competence is facilitated by the construction of 'cultural maps', which provide a succinct description of effective and appropriate ways of behaving in specific contexts (e.g., participating actively in seminar discussions). The cultural maps also provide a basis for discussion about why certain behaviours are preferred (i.e., the values underpinning individual contributions and participative learning).

The program focuses on core competencies, targeting specific situations that are acknowledged to be difficult for international students in the host culture. For example, participating actively in classroom discussion, seeking help from lecturers, making social contacts and initiating conversations.

The five stages in teaching each sociocultural competency are (from Mak et al., 1998):

1. Alliance building and assessment, where trainers create an inclusive and supportive group environment.
2. Cultural mapping, where trainers provide detailed explanations of a sequence of behaviours appropriate for each sociocultural competency.
3. Demonstration and coaching, where trainers model a practice scenario, emphasising the sequenced steps or microskills involved, and participants practice the same exchange and receive trainer coaching and feedback until the micro-skills are mastered.
4. Goal-setting and contracting, to apply the learning in the real situation, with trainers assisting participants in developing realistic and specific action plans.
5. Transfer of learning, with participants reporting on their experience with practicing the learnt competency in the real-life situation and receiving corrective feedback where necessary from trainers or other group members.

The effectiveness of the programme has been evaluated in various settings in Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia, with demonstrated benefits in social confidence and various domains of interaction skills (see Mak, 2000; Mak, Barker, Logan & Millman, 1998).

**Griffith University Case Study**

The ExcelL Program is a major component of the orientation program offered to postgraduate students each semester at the School of Management, Griffith University. Along with peer and staff mentoring programs, The ExcelL Program is part of a suite of programs that facilitate international students' academic, social and cultural adjustment, as well as promoting intercultural communication and understanding between Australian and international postgraduate students.

In 2001, two pilot ExcelL programs (three-hour sessions held weekly across four weeks) were conducted with undergraduate and postgraduate students in the School of Management. The ExcelL Program seems to be optimal if it is offered across four or six 3-hour sessions to ensure sufficient time for alliance building and assessment, demonstration and coaching, and goal setting. In 2002, it was decided to experiment with an intensive two-day program format for postgraduate students in the School of Management, and the School of Accounting, Banking and Finance. The program was offered as a full-day workshop on two Saturdays so that ExcelL did not conflict with students' academic schedules. In order to allow time between the workshops for students to practise their newly acquired sociocultural competencies, the workshops were held three weeks apart. Students were divided into two smaller groups that were led by at least two ExcelL Program trainers. The sessions focused on three cultural skills
that are fundamental to the ExcelL Program: seeking help; participating in a small group; and refusing a request.

Four weeks after the second workshop, students were invited to a final seminar where they completed post-test questionnaires, participated in a small, public ‘graduation’ ceremony where the Head of the School of Management presented students with their ExcelL Program certificates, and photos were taken. In addition, students were invited to enact scenarios where they demonstrated the sociocultural competencies they had gained. For example, small groups of students demonstrated seeking help from a Residential Adviser, and asking a lecturer for an extension on an essay.

The more intensive abridged version of the original ExcelL Program is the context for the present research study.

The Present Study
Several predictions are made about changes in ExcelL participants’ self-reported interaction skills and social self-efficacy prior to, and following the ExcelL sociocultural competencies training program. More specifically, participants are expected to have increased levels of (a) social self-efficacy in interacting with local Australians and (b) interaction skills. By contrast, it is expected that a control group of students will show no significant changes in their self-reported social self-efficacy and interaction skills across this timeframe.

Method
The sample consisted of 24 international postgraduate business students who participated in the ExcelL training program and a control group of 26 postgraduate business students. Of the total sample, 31 (62%) were male and 19 (38%) were female. 18 males and 6 females completed the ExcelL sociocultural competencies training program. The age of participants in the training group ranged from 21 to 34 years, with a mean age of 25.28 (SD = 3.46). The age range of participants in the control group was between 23 and 47 years, with a mean age of 32.69 (SD = 8.29). For those students who participated in the ExcelL training program, 11 (45.8%) were from India; 9 (37.5%) were from Asia; 3 (12.5%) were from the Middle East, and 1 (4.2%) was from Australia. In the control group, 15 (57.7%) students were from Australasia; 5 (19.2%) were from India, 3 (11.5%) were from Asia; 1 was from the Middle East (3.8%), 1 from the UK, and 1 from Canada. Only 3 of the ExcelL students indicated they spoke English at home while 18 students in the control group identified English as their household language.

Measures and Procedure
The data was collected in Semester 1, 2002. In the first ExcelL session prior to training, participants were asked to complete an anonymous pre-training questionnaire. In the same week, control group participants completed the same questionnaire in their postgraduate class. Both surveys included (a) a 13-item measure of students’ social efficacy in interacting with local Australians in various academic and general social situations (adapted from Fan & Mak, 1998); (b) the 33-item Interaction Skills Checklist (Ishiyama, 1996) that generates both an overall score and domain score on Processing (6 items), Active Engagement (6 items), Self-Enhancement (6 items), Approach (6 items), Assertion (5 items) and Interruption (4 items); and (c) socio-demographic questions. The social efficacy measure and Interaction Skills Checklist both used 7-point likert scales.

Four weeks after the second (and last) workshop of the ExcelL program, training participants were asked to complete an anonymous post-training questionnaire. As for the pre-training survey, it comprised the measures on social self-efficacy and interaction skills. Control group participants completed the same post-test questionnaire. In addition, the training participants rated
the ExcelL Program in terms of the relevance of the training program, overall, to their needs. Finally, they rated nine specific aspects of the program (e.g., group discussion; demonstration by trainers, practice and coaching) on 11-point scales with responses ranging from 0 = 'of no value at all' to 10 = 'extremely valuable and useful'.

Results

Pre- and Post-Training Social Self-Efficacy

The social self-efficacy scale, pre and post ExcelL, revealed good internal consistencies (α = .81 pre-program; α = .79 post-program). However, a paired samples t test revealed no significant changes to ExcelL participants social self-efficacy in interacting with locals in the Australian society from pre-training (M = 58.91, SD = 13.61) to the post-training evaluation (M = 56.25, SD = 10.71), t (22) = 1.10, ns. Similarly, no significant changes in inter-cultural social confidence emerged for the control participants from pre-training (M = 55.52, SD = 9.27) to the post-training evaluation (M = 57.38, SD = 10.37), t (24) = -1.38, ns.

Pre- and Post-Training Interaction Skills

The full Interaction Skills Checklist, and its six sub-scales, revealed good internal consistencies at pre- and post-training ranging from a low of 0.72 for Active Engagement at pre-program to a high of 0.97 for the total on the Interaction Skills Checklist post-program. ExcelL participants reported a significantly higher level of overall interaction skills at the post-training evaluation (M = 168.88, SD = 33.26) compared to their pre-training levels (M = 153.54, SD = 6.79), t (23) = 3.01, p < .001. By contrast, control participants reported no change in their overall level of interaction skills from pre-training (M = 154.73, SD = 29.55) to post-training (M = 154.62, SD = 30.09), t (25) = 0.03, ns.

Table 1 presents the pre- and post-training means and standard deviations of each of the six interaction skills domains for ExcelL training participants. A series of paired samples t tests were conducted to examine any significant changes in the domain scores. ExcelL participants reported significant improvements in four of the domains — approach at p < .05 and N = 24; and active engagement, assertion, and interruption at p < .01 and N = 24.

ExcelL Program Ratings

After the ExcelL program, the students were asked to rate the overall program in terms of the relevance of the training to their needs. All participants rated the program as either “very relevant” (N = 11) or “relevant” to their needs (N = 13). Table 2 contains the means and standard deviations of the participants’ ratings of nine specific aspects of the program. Table 2 reveals that most of the ratings were very high (with mean scores from 7.38 for “Value of contract for success” to 8.92 for “Value of demonstrations by trainers”), except for moderately high ratings.

Table 1
Mean Domain Scores on the Interaction Skills Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOMAIN</th>
<th>PRE-TRAINING</th>
<th>POST-TRAINING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Processing</td>
<td>26.75 (7.07)</td>
<td>29.04 (7.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Engagement</td>
<td>30.38 (4.55)</td>
<td>32.38 (6.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-enhancement</td>
<td>27.83 (6.47)</td>
<td>29.67 (6.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>29.08 (6.55)</td>
<td>31.88 (7.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertion</td>
<td>21.25 (5.20)</td>
<td>24.96 (5.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interruption</td>
<td>19.00 (3.75)</td>
<td>21.46 (3.97)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Standard deviations appear in brackets.
Table 2
Mean Ratings* of Program by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECT</th>
<th>MEAN RATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration by trainers</td>
<td>8.92 (1.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice and coaching</td>
<td>8.42 (1.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk by trainers</td>
<td>8.79 (1.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group discussion</td>
<td>8.25 (1.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural maps</td>
<td>8.17 (1.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-study using ExcelL Participant's Manual</td>
<td>6.63 (2.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action plan</td>
<td>8.12 (1.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract for success</td>
<td>7.36 (1.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework practice</td>
<td>6.88 (2.21)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Ratings were made on 0 (of no value at all) to 10 (extremely valuable) scales. Note: Standard deviations appear in practice.

of 6.99 for “Value of homework practice” and 6.63 for 'Value of self-study from ExcelL manual'.

Discussion and Implications

International students face particular difficulties in adjusting to university life, not only those associated with adjusting to a new role in an unfamiliar environment (that of tertiary student at a foreign university), and associated language difficulties, but also of adapting to a new social and academic context where different norms govern perceptions about what constitutes appropriate behaviour. The type of post-arrival support services that are usually provided are in the form of information resources, material that will improve student’s knowledge about their new environment, but which will not necessarily improve their skills at operating effectively within this new context. This paper describes the ExcelL Program, an intercultural skills program designed to enhance sociocultural competence among international students in Australia.

Results of the experimental-control group study suggest that the ExcelL Program is effective in improving the interaction skills of international students. However, the changes are not as great as those reported by Mak et al. (1998) in their evaluation of the 6-week version of the program. This suggests that while the intensive, three-competency program is effective, the longer 6-skill program is more effective. This is consistent with learning theories and the principles of contracting.

Given the success of ExcelL’s implementation in business Schools, there has now been interest across various elements of Griffith University to implement the program more widely. A 4 x 3 hour program has been implemented within the course curriculum at the School of Tourism and Hospitality in semester 2, 2002. Early indications and anecdotal evidence to date indicate that the program has progressed well, and that incorporation of the program into curriculum is highly worthwhile. Further research is needed to evaluate the impact of intercultural skills training on international students’ adjustment to the new academic and social environment of Australian universities.

References


Technical Issues Facing Contemporary Commercial Singers — What Voice Specialists Should Know About Effecting Positive Change

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There is a growing demand by young singers for voice training in rock and pop styles. This demand is driven largely by a desire to emulate successful recording artists and to participate in flow-on opportunities of employment in the high profile contemporary music industry. In many cases, singers and their teachers are challenged to know and meet the needs of these contemporary styles. For teachers, a major part of this challenge is to see their work in terms of the cost-benefit balance that an appropriate technique promotes for healthy singing. According to this contention, to use a technical approach successfully a singer needs to be planful and knowledgeable about what working to the plan will exact. Balancing the required aesthetic result while evaluating the costs are cognitive matters for a singer — matters to be considered and translated into action. For singing teachers, new envisionment is needed if they are to adapt and change their pedagogy to better help singers monitor and evaluate their approach.

Voice professionals agree more readily about what outcomes are wanted from the teaching of contemporary commercial voice than about how to develop them. In envisioning an appropriate training program for voice educators, three major issues emerge. First, there is an absence of any systematic training framework for teachers of contemporary voice, generally. Second, there are inherent challenges in developing and implementing a responsive and responsible program — one responsive to singers' expressions of their needs that at the same time is responsible in integrating theory and practice. Third, such integration is problematic because there is an aesthetic bias in the existing literature on voice pedagogy — a bias that is rooted in the classical western tradition of what constitutes beauty and health in vocal production.

Consider what it is that voice specialists should do in terms of designing, implementing and reflecting on specific training and vocal health care programs for gig singers. Miller (1996) provides a lead:

The success of any technical approach to singing must be measured by how nearly it arrives at the planned aesthetic result with the least cost (Miller, 1996, p. xix).

Miller's statement although intended for the classically oriented singer, seems equally valid for students and teachers of contemporary vocal styles. So, let us consider next the style-based realities that motivate
contemporary commercial vocalists to work on and with a technical approach in the context of Miller's comment. When performing, these vocalists 'draw on a bank' of resources including their perceptions of stylistic need and of what will appeal to an audience. There is a 'cost' in doing this. Miller (1996) would describe it as a lessening in vocal health, that is, contemporary commercial singers conceptualise and seek their “intended aesthetic result”, with vocal abuse the cost. Miller (1996) also considers these singers are more likely to be unaware of the cost-result connection than their classical colleagues. If this is correct, their ignorance will mean some deleterious aspects of what they do will either lead directly to voice damage, or be an unrecognised debt, payable at some later time. However, it may not be correct. The contention may be flawed by an emphasis on the classical tradition in Miller's (1996) theory building. In this respect, preliminary analysis of a recent survey (Bartlett, 2002) is interesting.

A Study of Gig Singers — Early Trends

While data collected and collated to this point are only part of an ongoing investigation that is far from complete, they reveal interesting trends. Subjects of the study are 'gig singers' — that group of contemporary commercial entertainers who earn their living doing successions of short engagements in a variety of public entertainment areas. They are the long distance athletes of the singing world. Many sing loud, they always sing long and they are expected to perform a diverse range of music styles that demand vocal qualities deemed unacceptable by Miller and other pedagogues in the western classical tradition. Professional gig singers are totalling over 12 hours of performance time per week (2–3 gigs per week at 4 hours each). A few perform more; some of those whose data are analysed work up to 5 gigs per week. In addition to such heavy voice loads, most are involved in paid work other than singing for 15–25 hours per week. Many of the surveyed singers described their workplaces as frequently noisy and smoky. All use their speaking voice as part of this other work.

Consistent with Miller's thinking, most in the survey reported symptoms of vocal fatigue. However, they are impelled by commercial considerations to work regardless of environmental conditions and vocal health problems. Most have strategies for dealing with minor episodes and seek help only when the situation is critical. Generally, they do this with non-medical specialists such as singing teachers. All recognise needs for development in their profession. They want training to help produce an intended aesthetic result, or to conceptualise one, and to do so in ways that do not invite vocal abuse. All indicate that they are able to speak about their training needs in articulate ways, and all consider they know what constitutes a “good” voice teacher. All believe that such a teacher will know about gigs and work that knowledge into training designs and applications.

Envisioning Appropriate Training Programs for Voice Educators

Considering the three issues raised at the beginning of this paper that confront program design, there is little that we can do about the first (an absence of any systematic training framework for teachers of voice). Australia needs to build a research-and-development culture in relation to such a framework. Responses collected to date from the survey indicate that gig singers have a knowledge base and motivation that could help in doing this. Particularly, action research models might assist the field to build its conceptualisations of what Miller termed, a “technical approach to singing” (Miller, 1996, p. xix).

These research data might help address the second of the confronting issues (challenges in developing and implementing
a program responsive to singers' own expression of needs and responsible in the integrity of its theory and practice). Respondents have their own voice in relation to perceived needs of their workplace and vocal styles, as well as in relation to the work they do. These need to be heard, valued and incorporated into the research and development culture. If this occurs, it will assist also with the third issue (a bias in the existing literature) by helping to put new meaning to Miller's notion of "technical approach".

Training Voice Teachers

Voice teachers may not yet have conceptualised the field of teaching and learning essential to singers developing workable schemas of their own performance instrument. We do not know. Some assume this to be the case. For example, Sataloff (1997) suggested:

A fundamental flaw in the teaching tradition [of voice] has been the failure to help singers and actors understand the components of their instruments, how they are supposed to work together, the ways in which they are fragile, and the stresses that are likely to cause them to break down. (p. 297)

In the study of any instrument it is expected that a student will recognise and describe that instrument. For example, a student of piano should know that it has black and white keys organised in a particular pattern and fitted within a structural frame. They should know that when pressed by the fingers the keys will activate hammers which in turn strike strings of different thickness and tension to produce sound at different pitches. There are many other such attributes, of course, including what to do to protect the piano against the stresses of use. If Sataloff's proposition is correct, then voice educators and singers need to address what constitutes the voice. A comprehensive and useful working knowledge for students of voice would include knowledge of the physiology and psychology of vocal production — and how to protect the voice as instrument.

Sataloff continued:

The first thing teachers need to do is acquire the knowledge themselves and, second, impart to their students that having such knowledge is important to performing. (p. 297)

The premise that we need to train the trainers in voice curriculum and pedagogy seems obvious. Yet, in Australia two key elements are missing. First, there are no comprehensive programs for teachers of singing that have substantive studies of the teaching of voice at their core. One tertiary institution, Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, provides elective studies in vocal pedagogy — and this is a fairly recent addition. Second, there is not yet a regulatory body to create and maintain standards of curriculum and pedagogy for voice. Rather, it is left to interested persons to self educate though professional associations such as the Australian National Association of teachers of Singing (ANATS) and The Australian Voice Association (AVA), and the short courses, workshops and journal articles and conference papers to which they have access.

Voice science is a relatively new discipline. Its advances have been rapid due to the development and employment of technology. The research is exciting but often is inaccessible to voice teachers (Bartlett, 1999). Even if teachers know where to look for information, lack of familiarity with scientific language is often a problem in interpreting and using text-based information in this new field. Organisations such as ANATS and AVA disseminate current pedagogical and research-based information to members through newsletters, workshops and annual symposia. But membership is small and while the organisations build their membership base and influence, teachers of voice conceptualise teaching practice in major part on their own performance.
experience, and/or on their own past training (Bartlett, 1999).

**Contemporary Commercial Singing Styles**

The literature of voice science has focussed on the teaching of classical voice. However, it has far-reaching implications for the emerging field of contemporary commercial vocal pedagogy. The New Grove Dictionary (2001) defines the field as “A genre of music, encompassing several styles, that is readily available to a large proportion of the population...” (p. 598). This prestigious music dictionary’s reference to “several styles” does little to help identify and understand the considerable diversity. Generally, six major style groups can represent the field: Pop, Rock, Country, Rhythm and Blues (R&B), Jazz, and Music Theatre. Each encompasses an ever-changing number of sub-styles, for example, Pop — house, dance, rap, disco; Rock — heavy metal, grunge, soft/hard rock, rock and roll; R&B — funk, gospel, motown, doowop; Jazz — swing, Latin, blues, ballad; Country — bluegrass, modern, country and western; and, Music Theatre — rock opera, Broadway, modern operetta.

Any successful pedagogical approach for this field should include an empathy with the range of music styles and the environmental conditions that singers have to manage. Contemporary commercial singers tell us that their reality is characterised by smoky venues, high levels of background noise, and audiences that often have entertainment as only one of several motives for being in a venue. Add to such conditions the variables of acoustic quality — where venues often have poor natural acoustics and inadequate sound reinforcement — and we begin to see particular constructs in a building picture of the whats and hows of training for these singers and their teachers.

Empathy may be the key to training programs generally. Knowing what it is like to be a singer, and what the contextual features of performance are, should be useful information in course planning, regardless of which vocal styles singers are using. However, how do we do that in relation to a field where there appears to be little in the literature to inform us about voice pedagogy and curriculum? Currently, our efforts to promote for contemporary commercial singers the proposition of sustainable vocal health, either borrow heavily from a neighbour field — such as classical voice where variables of performance may be quite different, or stumble on “patch up” approaches that rely on individual teacher’s breadth of performance experience and capacities for empathy and communication.

**The Literature and Aesthetic Bias**

The major concern of the voice teacher of the popular performer...is how to avoid dysphonic episodes with singers who ignore the canons of beauty, strength and health. (Miller, 1996, p. 119)

This statement highlights the third major issue: an aesthetic bias in the existing literature on vocal pedagogy — a bias that is rooted in the classical western tradition of what constitutes beauty and health in vocal production.

This and others of Miller’s statements are sweeping in their condemnation of popular music performers (contemporary commercial music singers). If taken literally, they suggest that work in the commercial music industry condemns the popular singer to exist in the basement of performance virtue. For pop musicians there is the assertion of an inevitable relationship between ignorance of ‘the’ canons (lack of classical training?) and dysphonic episodes (vocal damage). The position illustrated by Miller seems to ignore the reality of societal change and aesthetic choice that promotes “gigs” and gig singers as the substantial part of commercial, contemporary styles.
These are common assertions in the existing literature (Osborne, 1979; Ruhl, 1986) that reinforce the bias. If they are right, the critical issue facing teachers for teachers and also for therapists is to guide what gig singers recognise of the relationship among aesthetically inferior vocal production, dangerous and inappropriate technique and inevitable vocal damage. For therapists, assertions such as the following reinforce a view that contemporary commercial styles are inherently damaging:

Much of the doctor's clientele comprises pop musicians who have little technical training and who abuse their voices under unfavourable performance circumstances...medical specialists (sic) are pleased to deal with the 'classically' trained singing instrument. (Miller, 1996, p. 306)

Coincidentally, this latter part of this statement suggests that even when trained in the tradition of the canons of beauty, strength and health, some classical singers will not avoid dysphonic episodes. Nonetheless, the medicos will be 'pleased' presumably because this sub-set of dysphonic singers will be easier to deal with because of their better training.

Contemporary commercial singing is the occupation of choice for many professional performers and as such, deserves the development of specific management and training strategies (Cleveland, 1993; Schutte & Miller, 1993). Two of Sataloff's statements (1997) pertain. First:

Pop singers may be particularly resistant to the suggestion of voice lessons. Yet, they are in great need of training..., and second,

...a good voice teacher can teach a pop singer how to protect and expand his/her voice without changing its quality or making it sound 'trained' or 'operatic'. (p. 693)

There is an inconsistency in the assertions that pop singers need training and that they are resistant to it. Let us assume both propositions are correct and ask the question, "Why is it so?" I believe that pop singers in considering what they will get from training have little faith that they will receive informed and relevant help. To be credible, singing teachers and the training they offer need to be seen as open and adaptive. They need to accommodate the very different vocal qualities used by singers of contemporary commercial styles. Traditional methods of vocal pedagogy are no longer adequate as they are unable to address the ever-changing stylistic demands inherent to contemporary commercial vocal music styles. Sustainable vocal health regardless of style should be the goal of voice professionals working with singers of contemporary styles. If we are to have any lasting effect on sustainable voice health for this group we must first understand the forces that drive their performance choices.

A consideration of purpose, method and application of accepted pedagogical practice in relation to contemporary commercial singing, would be an encouraging sign of a discipline that is addressing the challenges posed by a changing society. Perhaps this might find a beginning in the initial preparation of Australia's schoolteachers.

References


Literacy and the Vision Splendid

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Faculty of Education, Griffith University

Developments in what we know of learning and learning practices have highlighted literacy as the critical predictor of the work that many in the education and training community will have to do. From frontline supervisors responsible for on-the-job training of railway line workers in Queensland Rail, to convenors of tertiary courses with organising and moderating responsibilities across groups of colleagues, such developments have created an impetus to envision work practices in ways that account for workplace literacy. The authors pursue a chicken-and-egg dilemma as they outline action research in two diverse workplaces. In both cases literacy became the central focus in changed practices — either resulting from a re-envisionment, or causing one. First, in Queensland Rail, supervisors concerned with the health and safety of infrastructure workers reconceptualised their role in management and leadership to include identifying how and where literacy was problematic and to invent an appropriate accommodation. Their implementations of change were a new envisionment of practice and resulted in a highly practical kit of guidelines. Second, at Griffith University, convenors of courses in the first year of a Teacher Education program found that many ostensibly literate students had difficulty in relating and integrating concepts from different courses into a developing vision of teaching and of themselves as prospective teachers. The convenors adapted a taxonomic means for recognising and expressing relationships for different sources into a resource for guiding and assessing students’ work. The experience has proven successful in terms of its student-based objective. But, it has not been without difficulty as a range of lecturing staff moves toward reenvisionment as a result of changed practice.

Training on the Line — Study 1

The research literature in a number of fields indicates that policymakers often initiate change without understanding what those who get the jobs done need to know and to do to be able to implement them. This is faulty re-envisionment and typically, it negatively predisposes initiatives (e.g., in education, see the criticism of failure to properly involve principals and teachers by many in the Schooling Reform movement (Goertz, Floden & O'Day, 1995) in medicine, see discussion of communication weaknesses where patients are not involved in consultations about treatment and management plans (Burnard, 1992; Gordon, 1995; Katz, 1984) in tourism, (Flowers, 1996) on poor coordination between Australian States and its resulting loss in opportunity; in systems management generally with poor envisionment associated with functional breakdowns, disruption and mismanagement, (Gutknecht, 1988; Hespe & Little, 1971; Stewart, 1991). Queensland Rail (QR) was required from 1992 to morph from a huge section of a State Government Department to corporation. Together, freight and passenger businesses in 1990 were losing $2 million a day. So it too, had envisionment with a threshold between success and failure that relied heavily on understanding what its workforce needed to morph appropriately. It set about its task with a deliberate and explicit sense of the importance of such an understanding.

Various QR initiatives taken in response to new organisational and management structures that the move to corporatisation created...
were concentrated on literacy and its inclusion in goals for better awareness of safer and more effective practice in QR's workplaces. Most noticeably, it established a literacy framework from which to assess and restructure literacy competencies of its workers, employed literacy advisors, formed a Literacy Management Committee, and published its own literacy policy (QR Literacy Policy, October, 1996). It went public with such developments, including a presentation by its CEO and Workplace Projects Manager at the 1996 national conference of the Australian Council of Adult Literacy. In 1995/96, the huge financial losses had begun to turn around. By 2000/2001, the financial result was a positive one.

There were many variables involved in QR's positive story over the past 10 years. Strong management, commitment and cooperation in the workforce and a principled business perspective have characterised the organisation. The sense of literacy at QR has moved from "literacy-as-state" (Langer, 1987) to a wider concept where it is seen and "understood" by management as an instrument of interactive, collaborative communication. This new sensitivity may be seen in a number of projects used to encourage participation from staff in awareness-raising and competence-building on workplace literacy. For example, the Supervisor Support for Literacy Project (1996) centered on literacy as a key to unlock what track workers needed if they were to get the "Yellow Ticket" (certification that one who is 'on the track' can protect the workplace) and "Striped Ticket" (its equivalent for someone in an 'off track' situation). There had been incidents that needed deliberate attention. These included fatal accidents to people on the line, where unsafe working was associated with faulty communication. Frontline supervisors involved in infrastructure felt their gangs of maintenance workers included many who were illiterate. Some wondered if their own literacy was up to the tasks of the track and to the additional demands of leadership. QR developed a program of action research where supervisors who were bridge-masters, road-masters, and depot supervisors in one of the administrative regions of the State participated. Each supervisor was responsible for a number of teams ("gangs"). At the start, most were reluctant participants. They were busy men with real work to do — buckled lines and wash-outs to fix; they did not really have time for getting together in "town" for workshops on literacy. This changed across the eight days eventually spent constructing the "Supers Lit-Kit" (their name). With some outside help, the research established a running definition for what the supervisors agreed "literacy" was. At first, it was very much a traditional definition ("Literacy is reading — and writing"). However, they began applying and adjusting their definition as they found more and more characterisations of literacy at work throughout the region. Ultimately, their description was that it was a multimodal phenomenon involving various forms — speaking, listening, reading, writing and observing. They indicated many instruments — telephones, radios, walkie-talkies, "thousands" of forms, notes, signals, whistles, flags, lamps, train noises, etc. They also described the range of codes, meanings, uses, and positionings that these things created for all who were directly or indirectly involved.

For example, each shift of maintenance workers ("gang") typically began its work with a gang-member collecting and sharing information on what times trains would be on the section of line where they were working. Usually, this would happen with a start-of-shift telephone/radio communication taken by a senior member of the gang from Train Controllers working out of a large regional centre. Before the supervisors had formed their initial definition of literacy (a "3 Rs" view), much had been assumed about this important task — including a fairly common view that there wasn't much literacy involved. But, as they
began to reflect on the nature of the job, and on what those who do it needed to know and to be able to do, the view changed and attributions such as the following came:

You've gotta' know how to listen. And before that, you've gotta know how to use the code — and the right way to talk to the Controllers...

It's no good just rememberin' it. You've gotta write it down, and check you got it right.

And the Controllers don't like that.

They discussed also what was involved in recording such information, and in sharing it — deciding not only that there was lots of literacy, but also that this type of literacy was very important. Their definition broadened. They moved across several such tasks, including filling out forms, reading instructions from above, listening to work orders, watching how people went about picking up heavy objects, finding more and more literacy. They then examined traditional sanctions they had personally observed or experienced against declaring one's own dysfunctional literacy or illiteracy. They decided that the sanctions were undesirable. They looked also at what they did in supervision from the viewpoint of literacy in terms of existing and preferred practices, and where they could use existing systems of support such as QR’s network with TAFE, private suppliers of literacy assistance and help from within the gang.

Finally, they decided to develop a set of materials to help other supervisors to monitor their own supervisory practices in relation to recognising literacy and monitoring and responding to the literacy needs of workers.

There have been a number of useful outcomes from this project. A Supers' Lit Kit was produced in 1996/97 and QR assigned two of the supervisors from the original team to travel the State conducting similar programs of action research. Features of some of the proforma that were confounding railway workers across the State were drawn to the attention of QR. The quasi-legal, impenetrable text of many such forms has been replaced to increase likelihood of a reader’s engagement and worded in Plain English. There is a more widespread acceptance of literacy need and for on-site response by supervisors. Supervisors in the region where the original research was conducted set up in the following year a “Help-a-mate” system to offset delays between recognising problematic situations of literacy use and lasting response. It is uncertain to what extent these moves will promote lasting and positive replacement of old sanctions and habits. However, the intentions are in place, the system is committed at senior level to ongoing development of the corporate vision with a strategic view of literacy at work, and the locus of such strategic activity for personal skill development, workplace reform, safeworking, and productivity is at the workface.

Changing Context: Changing Practice—Study 2

In similar ways, the sense of literacy at Griffith University had moved from “literacy-as-state” (Langer, 1987) to a view where it was seen as an instrument of transformative learning. In a university context, knowing about literacy as practice is generally a “knowing what” view that emphasises literacy as product. Lecturers involved in this project assumed knowing about literacy as a “knowing how” applied understanding of the effects of literacy on learning (Bryer & Fletcher, 2000; Fletcher, Bartlett, Bryer & Bowie, 2000). This view included process as an essential feature of knowing.

Pre-service teachers undertaking their second semester studies were expected to be able to demonstrate beyond the knowing of what literacy was as a practice, and demonstrate in specific and integrative ways what the doing of literacy could achieve for them as learners. A model of literacy as an instrument for learning required students to analyse and synthesise
relationships across subjects in a written assessment task (Biggs, 1999). This common assessment item was allocated 30% of total marks in each of three of four, second-semester subjects where staff agreed to participate. Structural criteria (Biggs, 1993) were used as explicit indicators for students to address in their writing. Their personal task was to think about what they had learned about teaching across the three subjects.

It was an awareness raising and competence-building project for both lecturers and students designed to encourage active participation (Lunenberg & Volma, 1999) of all involved in an online discussion forum. The use of technology to facilitate conceptual change (Clift, Mullen, Levin, & Larson, 2001) was a deliberate effort by lecturers to create a ‘learning space’ for over 300 students to discuss, clarify and share their evolving understandings of teaching and learning. Peer support has been found to have a positive effect on learning for first-year students (McInnis & Hartley, 2000). The innovative use of an inter-subject forum where students who were enrolled in any or all of the three subjects could join in the group discussion encouraged peer support and collaboration.

Results
An 80-item “concepts of learning” questionnaire found 8 items had pre-post difference scores that correlated with success in the psychology subject. The results showed positive change in the following items:

- People can understand an idea from someone else’s viewpoint, even when they come from different social backgrounds.

Negative change occurred in the following three items:

- People who can understand any given theory interpret it in the same way.
- A group of learners is only as strong as the strongest member.
- The mind receives knowledge passively.

These responses suggest students’ views of learning had changed in ways to reflect the approaches to learning supported across subjects. Interview data supported these findings. For example:

It was the culmination of the assignment that I began to think. Oh I know some things that I didn’t know about. And you showed a couple of videos of classroom situations and I suppose I only latched on to that because I thought, oh now finally you’re doing what I thought you would, but certainly now I can’t look at a book the same way now — or ever again and I’ve got a much better concept of what I’m doing.

However, an analysis of forum discussion found the main focus of postings centered on clarifying information related to assessment items rather than elaborating and synthesising understandings. There was no evidence to support the view that online discussion transformed student learning.

Teaching outcomes for lecturers were positive. Collaboration promoted clearer understandings of the complementary work done across subjects. This resulted in a closer alignment of teaching objectives and a more coherent set of subject outlines for students. Identification of common student needs facilitated co-ordinated intervention where students encountered consistent and scaffolded support throughout the semester. The use of a common set of criteria for assessing student writing enhanced the moderation process in marking and offered insight into the ways a view of literacy as
process can contribute to transformative learning outcomes.

Conclusion
In both cases reported here literacy became a central focus as participants in policy and practice attempted to create and manage change in their respective workplaces. While a change imperative drove the particular reforms we have outlined, it is apparent that with reform came greater precision in initial conceptualisations of what needed to be done. In both cases, there have been successful outcomes — and a greater understanding of work yet to be done if envisionment is to be a forceful and dynamic property of institutional adaptation to needs for personal development, safety and productivity across all levels of a workforce.

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Lunenberg, M.L., & Volman, M. (1999). Active learning: Views and actions of students and


When Students See Learning for What It Might Be

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Griffith University

Aspirations that teachers can help students find what makes them tick as learners, and that both become progressively smarter at using this knowledge underpins the Learning Made Easy (LME) System used at Ipswich Grammar School, Queensland. LME, now a model for others in Australia and the United States, is a metacognitive program. The program aims to assist students and teachers better understand and plan what is required if students are to learn effectively and to see a future for themselves as learners. This becomes the common intellectual thread to academic work across the subject areas. The intention is that students will achieve far consequences from opportunities of interacting with the curriculum. These include broad-based skills — such as confidence to handle challenge and change — as well as near ones — such as competence in tackling the tasks of being attentive, in being receptive to learning, in being systematic when selecting and processing information, and in being communicative. The intention for teachers is that they share a systematic basis when imagining what happens as their students build intellectual and operational schema about how a lesson works, and how they should work a lesson — this generalised to a school day, a semester, and a lifetime of learning.

Introduction: The Power

Metacognition and its moderating power in the pursuit of effective learning have been increasingly visible in the research literature of our field over the past twenty years. We now know what it is (Flavell, 1979; Kearney, 1997) and are better informed about how it operates (Bartlett, 1978; Osman, & Hannafin, 1992; Ridley, Schutz, Glanz, & Weinstein, 1992; Schunk, & Zimmerman, 1994; Vermuten, Vermunt, & Lodewijks, 1999). This is particularly the case in relation to learning strategies (Borkowski, Carr, & Pressley, 1987; Bulgren & Scanlon, 1997) where metacognition underlies much of the decision process. What we know and operationally manage of our knowledge base is at work. This working knowledge often is most obvious in the strategies we use to get things done. Not so obvious, but just as important, are the cognitive planning required if the strategies are to work optimally, and the attitudes and motivation that a strategist associates with such mind games.

Typically, metacognition is at work as we bring strategies to bear that are appropriate in a given task situation, or decide not to. For purists, it is also at work — albeit at zero level — when we don’t see that we could have used a known strategy, or forget that we have one that might have been helpful. Our cognitive and affective monitoring of the task at hand and of our own attitudes, motivation and capabilities to do the job is the stuff of metacognition. In its simplest form, it is a deterministic
assembly of what we know about how to know more, and of how we feel about this. Characteristically, it includes a repertoire of strategies and of the know-how and conditional knowledge to match strategy to task.

Metacognition also includes operational procedures that determine whether the strategy chosen to motor our work operates with a Rolls-Royce purr or a Rent-a-Wreck prayer. Applying depths of processing theory to the metaphor, metacognition is a factor in the surface-deep level dichotomy (Craik & Lockhart, 1972), which describes whether our work is conducted at a superficial level (e.g., reading a text for its signs) or driven to deeper levels (e.g., reading the text for what its signs signify). In this sense, it underpins my own work on top-level structuring (Bartlett, 1978; Bartlett, Fletcher & Kearney, 2002; Meyer, Middlemiss, Theodorou, Brezinski, McDougall, & Bartlett, 2002) and on the Ipswich Grammar project, much of which is reported here.

Results and Discussion: The Point

Because of its power, we have reason to be more confident that metacognition is a low-problem factor with high pay-off potential for educators. When properly organised into systematic attempts to effect quality and lasting changes in what we do in schooling, metacognition is a winner for re-envisionment. Ipswich Grammar School's (IGS) attempt to do this began in 1992. At the school's request, a program was conceptualised that aimed at identifying applications of top-level structure theory. I wanted this program to assist teachers to read their theories and practices at Rolls-Royce levels, bringing to consciousness what they signified, and imagining the signification for their students. Additionally, learning rather than teaching was to be at the center of their attempts to adapt practice. As a critical friend to individuals, department-level groups and whole-of-staff in an ongoing program of reform, I assisted in this goal setting and for 11 years provided a conduit to literature and discussion as teachers developed and shared their knowledge of teaching practice at IGS.

Teachers of the school generally approached opportunities of the program in a scholarly way. There was variation. However, in my period of active engagement (1991–2001), their written and verbal accounts of participation generally presented a mind-sense of their work that included reflectivity, openness to scrutiny, and a positive inquiry approach to whether strategic learning would result from strategic teaching. This view is reflected in graduates' reports that are shown in Table 1. A majority felt that teachers had helped them to know how to learn with a trimodal clustering of scores at the higher end of the scale. However, there were mixed results in relation to how they were assisted to better understand themselves as learners. The distribution groups around descriptions of always, frequently, sometimes and almost never to never. There is an important difference in the two sets of data. The more variable response on the second issue may have been an outcome of patchy exposure across subjects in some years as two graduates reported: “I think my year, because we were the first to get it, it was really only prominent in a couple of subjects” (TY, Bartlett & Kearney, 1998, p. 25); “It wasn’t particularly integrated into the subjects (and was) every so often pulled out” (LM, p. 26).

For others, the practice involved in learning and applying strategies may well have outweighed in time and effort demanded of students and visibility in teachers' work the personal reflection and insight required if students were to better know themselves as learners. Perhaps, it was simply more memorable. Alternatively, some of the 30 respondents who volunteered to participate in focus group discussion may have found in their reflection some cause to reconcile
the improvements many claimed to have made as they moved beyond IGS and its teachers. One commented about his university work:

I make a mind map first, then I write an essay plan, and then I will write notes and then I will write. The whole sort of process was one that I made when I was at school, but now I can really apply it (LB, Bartlett & Kearney, 1998, p. 31).

Graduates had much to say about their strategic learning. Some indicated that their teachers had helped them build on what they had brought from their primary school:


High school just took it further... built on what I could do (AR, p. 24).

Most spoke highly of LME and teachers of the school:

LHTL (an early title) taught you... if you hadn't been shown, how to actively learn material.

It was helping a lot of people. (TH p. 26)

Modifying it to make it suit... that made you a better learner. (HB, p. 26)

They made me know I had to do something about it. (TT, p. 26).

Certainly, for purposes of unifying the school’s belief about what is important, teachers were depicted in such responses to be carrying the messages of LME. Typically:

There was a big impact on listening; You learnt how to write scientifically very well. (p. 30).

The respondent (LM) who made the negative comment above concerning integration by teachers, went on in interview to suggest his perception was such:

because we don’t really know what was the Learning How To Learn program and what wasn’t. Because, I think it was integrated the whole way through and probably we didn’t realise it... and it probably has influenced our learning without our realising.

Graduates associated such messages with personal and skilful learning and usually with high levels of academic achievement:

There are always students who aren’t going to need any type of strategic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>CUM %</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>CUM %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently-Sometimes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>79.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes-Almost never</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost never-Never</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mean = 4.81; SD = 1.58</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mean = 3.49; SD = 1.70</strong></td>
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learning because they have got their own. They have figured it out early in life (TH, p. 29).

They suggest that as students, many were assisted by their teachers to go beyond the superficial signs of strategic behaviour — like applying a mnemonic — to deeper levels of inquiry where they explored what the mnemonic signified about "being strategic". The mind-sense that they make of using such things as top-level structuring was a special meaning of "sense". It involved internal features such as cognitive coherence and metacognitive direction:

Year, I sort of use compare and contrast especially, like if I use some information during the day, especially in Uni lectures. You immediately compare to the knowledge base already, like say accept, reject, modify what you are thinking (HJ, p. 32).

Day to day, I always use lists and problem solution (HP, p. 32)

Additionally, they saw the strategic approaches learned at school had generalised beyond Ipswich Grammar's classrooms:

Planning conversations... where you are in an argument or conversation with a friend or a girl. You never know, you have got these backup plans, the smart things you have to say to impress them (SS, p. 32).

If I look at my family in the way that we argue, the types of structures are there. I can see the difference in people. Mum is all of them, she uses everything. But Dad is just cause-effect (HJ, p. 32).

I think for me, looking for jobs. That's how I used it best, sort of, 'Do I want this job and why, and for what reason?' (JM, p. 32).

It wasn't until university that I decided to explore these ideas (OF, p. 32).

These positive perceptions are consistent with academic improvements measured for students while at school. Learning Made Easy (LME) has shifted outcomes across all levels of capability. The program was introduced in 1992 with an initial focus on Year 8 and Year 10. However, teachers for these classes were also teaching at other year levels and the approach extended informally to Year 12 where an associated improvement showed on the Year 12 external examination for the first time. Maintenance of the 1992 result across subsequent years and its further improvement from 1994 reflect the systematic rollout of LME technology from 1992–1994. Data for placement in tertiary institutions shown in Table 2 also evidence positive changes across the years. More students were now doing better academically; more were qualifying for and taking up places in the tertiary sector.

The immediate improvement in academic performances and subsequent reports from students after finishing their schooling provides a positive view on near and far

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*1990–93</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>(65–77% University and TAFE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>(78% University; 16% TAFE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>(82% University; 8% TAFE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>(74% University; 12% TAFE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>(70% University; 22% TAFE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*1998</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>(83% University; 4% TAFE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*1999</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>(73% University; 21% TAFE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>(73% University; 20% TAFE)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These data are from the Graduate Survey collected annually by the IGS School Counsellor.
outcomes of the school's program. These data indicate that teachers of Ipswich Grammar had achieved their intentions.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Teachers, students, parents, schools-as-systems — all of us know and love learning strategies. We realise that they are knowledge-based, knowledge-seeking weapons in a war against our own mediocrity and that those who have them are better off than those who do not. *Learning Made Easy* has been helpful for students and teachers to become purposeful strategists in school learning situations. The data from graduates are informing about the longevity in what they had learned as students about being strategic and about the ranging uses they had found for such abstracted learning. These are positive and supporting data when we consider whether teachers achieved the positive intentions they took into *Learning Made Easy*.

Getting a result is still important, as the Year 12 test results have shown. However, for many at Ipswich Grammar the thrill of doing something may well rest in being right about its planning and about the strategies learned, selected and used in an implementation. The scope of teaching and learning substantive content has included a deliberate and informed “tinkering” with the strategies to make them work better or in new and different settings and with this and other content. If this line of reasoning is correct, students and teachers are likely to experiment and play with the methods and thrust of the program.

However, others will have put their money on external features — things that they see, hear, taste, touch and smell in the world around them. Whether success with a maths problem or balancing a chemistry equation is constructed by a deliberate mindset is not as great an issue as getting the maths right. The thrill of doing something well may not involve as much reflection and mental tinkering. We need further research to see whether such differences exist and how they affect near and far outcomes of *LME* because it is important for educators to be aware of these differences, and what they mean as students and teachers discover metacognition in their work. Such analytic awareness may hold the key to better understanding why some teachers and teaching styles fit comfortably with some learners rather than with all learners — and what might be done as a result. As might be inferred from the reports of graduates from Ipswich Grammar, attempts to see such possibilities have obvious reward when students see learning for what it might be.

**References**


Developing a Cognitive Framework for Examining Educational Hypermedia

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The rise in the use of the World Wide Web in teaching and learning has elevated the use of hypermedia as a mode of information accessing. Many researchers have theorised that hypermedia offers potential benefits to learning and a number of empirical studies have attempted to investigate such claims. In the main, these studies have compared the learning effects of hypermedia with that of print-based text. Some studies report superior learning effects (Jonassen, 1988; Frey & Simonson, 1994; Liu & Reed, 1995), whilst others have found advantages for text (Shneiderman, 1987; Reihm, 1996). Clearly the jury is still out about the extent to which the non-linearity of hypermedia provides a suitable learning medium for all or the majority of students. Part of the conundrum is that there is not yet a well-developed theory of educational hypermedia (Rouet & Levonen, 1996; Dillon & Gabbard, 1998; Ford & Chen, 2002). In order that this theory develop further more empirical work is necessary. A critical aspect of this empirical work will be research that informs about the ways in which learners engage with hypermedia courseware and the reasons behind their engagement decisions. One line of inquiry might be to examine the cognitive aspects of these engagements. This paper discusses some of the key cognitive dimensions of educational hypermedia and attempts to draw together a framework with which to examine its effects on learning.

Background

In recent years, the emergence of digital documents has progressed from word-processed text, through stand-alone hypermedia, to the World Wide Web. When directed at educational purposes the technologies are collectively referred to as educational hypermedia. Some commentators and educators (e.g., Landow, 1992; Dryden, 1994) have predicted major shifts in paradigm to the manner in which we understand the learning experience and the educational process as a result of these technologies. The promise of hypermedia has been touted as having “the potential to become a significant application area: equalling or perhaps exceeding that of word processing, spreadsheets and general database application” (Begoray, 1990, p. 121). The nonlinear nature of hypermedia and assumptions about its educational value appear to underlie much of this argument.

Yet after a decade of research, other authors (Mcknight, Dillon & Richardson, 1991, 1996; Dillon & Gabbard, 2000) suggest that such strong claims are short of supporting evidence from studies of learners. Dillon (1996) argues that in the last decade of empirical evidence much has been generally assumed about hypermedia, but rarely demonstrated; “that the unmistakable advantages of hypertext have rung hollow” (p. 26). The lack of a general theory of hypermedia learning and a tendency to overlook the lessons learned from user studies of previous technologies are considered major reasons for these claims not being realised (Dillon & Gabbard, 1998). Rouet and Levonen
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(1996) agree that a major drawback of current research and understanding of hypermedia is its lack of a thorough theoretical foundation. That there is neither a general theory of hypermedia, nor a model of the cognitive processes involved in interacting with hypermedia. Thus, there remains a large gap between theories of knowledge or discourse and the actual capacities of hypermedia systems.

The next section of this paper discusses the evolution of educational hypermedia, provides a definition, and explores some of the cognitive dimensions of the learning experiences associated with it. The final part builds from these dimensions a cognitive framework that might assist in further empirical research.

Hypermedia

From Hypertext to Hypermedia

The terms hypertext and hypermedia are often used interchangeably. There is, however, a clear distinction between the two terms. Hypertext is an idea that can have its historical roots traced back to Vannevar Bush (1945). Bush with his emphasis on the role of association in cognition dreamed of a technology that would allow us to deal with an exponentially growing knowledge base by quickly facilitating the selecting, retrieving and arranging of data. It has been the advent of the computer that has allowed for the realisation of this idea. The concept of hypertext is a simple one, that of nodes of text being linked together. In hypertext information is organised as a network in which nodes are text chunks (e.g., list of items, paragraphs, pages) and links are relationships between the nodes, virtually any kind of relationship that can be imagined between two text passages (Rouet, Levonen, Dillon & Spiro, 1996). Thus, hypertext systems have been proposed as a means of facilitating the interactions between readers and texts (Chen, 1995; Dede, 1996; Duchastel, 1990).

In contrast, hypermedia can be thought of as an extension of hypertext in which the technologies of sound, graphics, animation and video have been added to that of text (Lai & Waugh, 1995). As a result, the notion of a node is extended beyond that of just containing textual information to one in which it includes sound, graphics, animation and video. The term hypermedia therefore accounts for the inclusion of these additional technologies. It is this more inclusive definition more accurately portrays the current application of these technologies in education. At its core hypermedia still has a text base, however, sound, graphics, animation and video are increasingly supplementing this. Collectively these technologies are referred to as hyper(media) reflecting the move beyond just hyper(text).

In this paper the focus is on the “hyper” element and less concerned with any particular kind of media. That is, the focus is on the way learners employ the “hyper” to facilitate their learning. So, the term hypermedia is used throughout as the more general term referring to information systems that offer hyper structuring, regardless of whether they include media other than text.

A Definition of Hypermedia

According to Tricot, Pierre-Demarchy & Boussarghini,(2000) hypermedia are documents or organised collections of documents. They consider a hypermedia document to be structured material that enables the user to ‘build sense’. More specifically then, hypermedia are electronic documents where the communication channel can be audio, visual or both; the code used can be linguistic, iconic or analogical (e.g., sounds, pictures, dynamic pictures); and the structure can be linear or nonlinear. This definition provides a richer meaning of document than that associated with its paper based form. It is this richer concept of a document that leads to claims about its educational potential.

So, what are the claims being made about hypermedia that make it attractive for
learning? Firstly, that hypermedia presents a new way to interact with media that differs from reading standard linear media (e.g., textbooks, diagrams and charts). For example, within a textbook the text is typically presented in a linear form, in which there is a single way to progress through the text, starting at the beginning and reading to the end. Secondly, that within hypermedia, information can be represented in a semantic network where multiple related sections of media are connected to one another (Foltz, 1996). Users may browse through the sections of media, jumping from one node to another. This permits the reader to select a path through the media that is most relevant to their interest. The concept of user selected pathways in hypermedia to retrieve and read information has caused a great deal of interest, particularly within the education community.

Educational Hypermedia

Many different perspectives are emerging as to what educational hypermedia is and what it can do in education. There is a lack of consensus in this area, a situation due to the novelty of the technology and to its continuing transformation as technical possibilities continue to expand. These perspectives can be illustrated from the literature. Some see hypertext and its extension hypermedia as a new CBI (Computer-based Instruction) authoring environment (Park, 1991), whilst others see a new type of CBI application emerging - hypermedia assisted instruction (HAI) or learning (Heller, 1990). Others see hypermedia as an ideal knowledge representation format that allows for generative or adaptive learning (Dede, 1988; Jonassen, 1986,1988); a powerful environment for exploratory learning for ill-structured, advanced knowledge domains or literacy education (Spiro & Jehng, 1990; Spiro, Feltovich, Jacobsen & Coulson, 1991); or a platform for multidisciplinary learning in the increasingly complex and growing field of science (Davenport & Cronin, 1990; Marchionini & Shneiderman, 1988).

Hypermedia and Learning

Learning with the use of computers has been a growing aspect of education for more than two decades. In more recent times, and with the advent of the World Wide Web, applications have developed which utilise web browsers as the underlying production and delivery engine. The earliest entries into computer based learning were usually written using programming languages and constructed in the main by computer programmers. The pervasive nature of web browser technology, the underlying universally adopted Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) and software that enables the lay person to develop browser screens without any knowledge of HTML has led to a vast array of web-based products including educational products.

Hypermedia is a form of information access which is highly attractive to educational users because, on the surface at least, it leaves them in full control of that access while at the same time making it extremely easy. Hypermedia provides "learning environments that promote the active, personal exploration of information for both comprehension and information" (Welsh, 1995, p. 275). Thus, as a learning context, it is seen as turning control over to the learner, a construct considered central to effective learning. Hypermedia as such espouses a very constructivist (Von Glaserfield, 1987) approach to learning: a view of learning emphasising active and interpretative knowledge acquisition, as individuals integrate and extend their knowledge in an effort to maintain its viability.

Much of the research into the use of hypermedia in education has focused on the capability of hypermedia for flexible information organisation and retrieval, interface design, or mixed media. The use of hypermedia as a tool for mediating the nature of the cognitive interactions that occur between learners and the computer
has been less thoroughly explored (Yang, 2002). In addition, not much attention has been given to analysing the cognitive processes that go on in learner’s interactions with the technology. Therefore, further empirical studies that focus on learners’ interactions with hypermedia as a way of better understanding better the cognitive dimensions are needed. Such studies will require the development of frameworks that take account of the cognitive dimensions. Two aspects that would seem to be central to any such frameworks are the cognitive styles of individual learners and the cognitive dimensions of learner interactions with hypermedia.

**The Cognitive Style of Learners**

In the past decade many studies have reported that individual differences had significant effects on student learning using hypermedia systems. Gender difference (Ford and Miller, 1996), system experience (Hölscher & Strubel, 2000), and cognitive styles (Durresne & Turcotte, 1997; Shih & Gamon, 1999). Chen and Macredie (2002) argue that among these differences cognitive styles are seen to play an important role in the development of hypermedia-based learning. They consider cognitive style to be important because they refer to users’ information-processing habits, representing individual user’s typical modes of perceiving, thinking, remembering, and problem solving. Therefore, any framework that is used to develop research into the cognitive dimensions of learner interaction with hypermedia ought to take account of the cognitive styles of the learner.

Chen and Macredie (2002) propose a learning model, developed from evidence from previous research, which illustrates how cognitive style influences student learning in hypermedia systems. The model draws upon the concept of field dependence originated in studies on perception by Witkin and Asch (1948), Witkin (1950), and Witkin and Moore (1974). These studies revealed that individuals were different, but individually consistent, in their preferred modes of processing information. Witkin and Moore (1974) used the term *Field Independence*, to describe individuals who were said to rely on an internal and vestibular frame of reference, and *Field Dependence*, to describe individuals who rely on external and visual frames of reference.

After reviewing the literature and undertaking empirical research Chen and Macredie (2002) concluded that the evidence suggests that non-linear learning may be more suitable to field independent learners. In contrast, field dependent learners, who rely on external references and prefer structure, may have more difficulties with non-linear learning and still prefer a linear format. A tabular representation of their learning model (see Table 1)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>COGNITIVE STYLE</th>
<th>FIELD DEPENDENT</th>
<th>FIELD INDEPENDENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Approach</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>Navigation Preference</td>
<td>Guided</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<td>Processing Information</td>
<td>Global</td>
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<td>• Tools</td>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>Indexes</td>
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<td>Learner Control</td>
<td>Guided</td>
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DEVELOPING A COGNITIVE FRAMEWORK FOR EXAMINING EDUCATIONAL HYPERMEDIA

below) indicates the relationships between the characteristics and learning patterns of field dependent and field independent individuals.

According to Chen and and Macredie (2002) the empirical evidence shows that field dependent learners adopt a passive approach to their learning in which they look for and follow any structure provided in the learning. As a consequence they prefer a hypermedia system that provides navigational guidance. In contrast, field independent learners adopt an active approach to their learning and prefer freedom of navigation. Field dependent learners adopt a global approach to information processing in which they rely on maps of the learning with which to build “entire perceptual fields” (p. 12) that guide them in their learning. This is in contrast to the field independent learners who prefer an index and other tools that assist them to locate information, whilst affording them the independence to choose how they might proceed with their learning.

The findings from this research indicates that close attention needs to be paid to how hypermedia systems can accommodate different learning preferences. It indicates that different kinds of learners need to draw upon the cognitive aspects of hypermedia systems in different ways. As a result it seems crucial that any hypermedia system ought to provide the cognitive tools to accommodate different kinds of learners. For example, it would be useful to provide maps of the learning for field dependent learners as well as providing an index for field independent learners. Likewise, freedom to decide learning paths might be of benefit field independent learners, however, would be counter-productive to those field dependent learners seeking structure from the learning materials.

In the next section hypermedia cognitive tools are discussed. The tools selected are purely arbitrary and used for the purpose of my starting to think about expanding the model of hypermedia learning presented by Chen and Macredie (2002) to include these tools. The purpose for expanding the model in this way is to build an instrument with which to analyse recorded episodes of learner interactions with hypermedia systems.

Hypermedia —
The Cognitive Tools

The final part of this paper briefly analyses two hypermedia cognitive tools (information access and information searching). The discussion is confined to two tools as a means of maintaining this paper at an appropriate size and as an example of how the cognitive model of hypermedia learning might be expanded.

Information Access

Some characteristics of information as hypermedia are that it is hierarchically organised (text, pictures, graphics, sound, video) “with associative or referential links able to be manipulated using a graphical user interface (GUI)” (Lai & Waugh, 1995, p. 26). It is a network of ideas/concepts connected on the basis of their associative or referential links in addition to organisational links and suitable for information searching and retrieval. Duchastel (1990) sees the important features of information in this form as being:

- non-linear access to information
- varied information access
- integrated information access
- ease of access to information
- free access to information (p. 222)

This implies that information seeking is the fundamental underlying hypermedia activity, one which Jonassen and Grabinger (1990) describe as “a fundamental learning activity, precursive to many others” (p. 13), and which Marchionini (1989) sees as a “special case of problem-solving” (p. 57). These activities would seem to be linked in most learning processes, — learning is essentially a problem-solving activity in which information searching is an important skill.

The features of hypermedia information access identified by Duchastel (1990) would
appear to accommodate different cognitive styles. For example, a field dependent learner searching information would be inclined towards an integrated information access which would provide linearity and structure, whereas a field independent information searcher would be more likely to do so in a non-linear way. Table 2 maps these features against cognitive styles.

**Information Searching**
Research shows that: information searchers prefer facilities such as keyword search or an index mechanism (Joseph, Steinberg, & Jones, 1989). However, where search questions are vague, people tend to resort to browsing or exploring strategies (Marchionini & Shneiderman, 1988). Wright (1990) attempts to impose some structure on the search process by proposing that six different types of search tasks can be identified. These he describes as:
1. search target simple and fully known
2. search target simple but only partially known
3. search target complex and fully known
4. search target computed from on-line trade-offs and feedback from the computer
5. search target simple but unspecifiable to a computer
6. search target unrecognisable for the purposes of terminating the search. (pp. 176–178)

Identifying search processes in this way seems to be educationally useful for two reasons. Firstly, these processes can be thought of as a range of pedagogical strategies capable of eliciting from learners a number of different learning outcomes. Secondly, this diversity of search processes would also require learners to engage in a range of cognitive activities and develop a range of cognitive structures.

Once again, it would seem possible to map these features against cognitive style. In terms of these information search processes, field dependent learners would be less likely to employ the search mechanisms of browsing and exploring or a search strategy where the target was unrecognisable for the purposes of terminating the search. Field dependent learners would be more likely to rely on the search being made clear by the learning system and not having to employ the search mechanisms of browsing or exploring. Table 3 maps these searching mechanisms and strategies against cognitive styles.

**Summary**
Research that has focussed on the interactions between the learner and hypermedia systems has identified that individual differences have significant effect on student learning. Among these differences, cognitive style plays an especially important role because they refer to learners’ information processing habits, representing their typical modes of learning. Therefore, building any kind of learning model for hypermedia must take account of the learning needs of learners and their preferred mode of learning. In order to build a robust model of hypermedia

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<th>COGNITIVE STYLE FIELD DEPENDENT</th>
<th>FIELD INDEPENDENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Features of Information Access</td>
<td>integrated information access</td>
<td>non-linear access to information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ease of access to information</td>
<td>free access to information</td>
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<td>varied information access</td>
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Table 3
Hypermedia Information searching tools mapped against Cognitive Style

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<th>HYPERMEDIA COGNITIVE TOOL</th>
<th>FIELD DEPENDENT</th>
<th>FIELD INDEPENDENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION SEARCHING MECHANISMS</td>
<td>KEYWORD INDEX</td>
<td>INDEX BROWSING EXPLORING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Searching Strategy</td>
<td>1. search target simple and fully known</td>
<td>1. search target simple and fully known</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. search target simple but only partially known</td>
<td>2. search target simple but only partially known</td>
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<td>3. search target complex and fully known</td>
<td>3. search target complex and fully known</td>
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<td>4. search target computed from on-line trade-offs and feedback from the computer</td>
<td>4. search target computed from on-line trade-offs and feedback from the computer</td>
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<td>5. search target simple but unspecifiable to a computer</td>
<td>5. search target simple but unspecifiable to a computer, and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. search target unrecognizable for the purposes of terminating the search</td>
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learning the cognitive tools available in hypermedia systems need to be matched to these preferred modes of learning. This paper has attempted to take a small step in this direction by mapping the attributes of two such tools against a cognitive styles framework. With further mapping of this kind it is hoped to build a hypermedia learning cognitive framework which will allow for a richer examination of the cognitive impacts of hypermedia learning systems.

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In times of uncertainty, chaos and disillusionment society questions the integrity of its' leaders. This paper reports a pilot study of the relationship between spirituality and leadership. The researchers advocate that 'spirituality' is increasingly recognised as more than an attribute of religious life, that 'spirituality' is evident in contemporary organisations and that some leaders hold; either consciously or subconsciously, to a number of 'spiritual' beliefs, principles and practices that are reflected in their approach to leadership. This study uses a phenomenographic approach to determine the qualitative difference in experiences of spirituality by a group of twelve leaders.

There is a great deal of consternation and restlessness in our midst about the mission and direction of our organisations, and a growing frustration and cynicism about the quality of their leadership and the superficial and decadent values many leaders espouse. Phil Jackson, the coach of the famous Chicago Bulls, sees leadership behaviour as a spiritual act of surrendering self-interest to 'the greater general good' (1995, p. 5). Carol Osborn writing on spirituality in business defends spirituality not as an escapism but as a 'life driven' alternative paradigm that 'looks within for alternative' (1992, p. 21). Haughey sees spirituality in leadership as a balancing and integrating our private and public values. This process entails an internal struggle in our psyche' as we proceed towards self-knowledge and self-discovery (1994, p. 73).

Zohar and Marshall (2000) advocate raising our 'spiritual intelligence' making sure of the 'meaning and purpose of our life and actions in a wider context.' As the Catholic priest O'Murchu (1997) points out, spirituality represents our search for meaning and purpose in life, it has very little to do with formal, divisive, institutionalised, exclusive, fanatical religions. He repeatedly affirms the current organisational ferment and the great upsurge in 'the spiritual hunger of our times'. He claims this hunger can be satiated by 'reclaiming' our submerged spirituality that is our ancient 'birthright'. O'Murchu calls for a more 'integrated' spirituality which 'transcends the idea of one thing being more important than all others; everything is considered to be relatively important' (O'Murchu, 1997, p. 58).

In recent times there has been a remarkable increase in writings and commentary about spirituality and its relationship to organisations and people; spirituality is no longer regarded as a cranky, new ageist fad. Sacred or secular, spirituality is very much on the social agenda (Bridger, 2001) and the quest for spirituality cannot be written off as hedonistic, narcissistic indulgence (Drury, 1999).

Several researchers believe that leaders who are spiritually alive reflect their spiritual values and beliefs in their leadership. Starratt and Guare, hold that '... Spiritual persons tend to bring that depth and sensitivity and reverence to all or most of what they do ... respond[ing] to other people and to situations with an openness, acceptance, and reverence' (1995, p. 193). Others like Greenleaf see spirituality in leadership in servant-hood, relationship,
and humanity not as an exercise of positional power (1974; 1977). However, Keyes, Hanley-Maxwell and Capper differentiate spiritually, focused leadership from servant leadership. They explain that the decisions and motivation of the servant leader may be construed as patriarchal or paternalistic (1999, p. 230). Whereas other researchers believe spiritually centred leadership 'implies the belief that one can elicit in others that belief in their own power for goodness ... [a belief] in the essential possibility of human greatness' (Starratt & Guare 1995, p. 194).

Spirituality-focused leadership reveals the leader's attempt to release the human spirit (Jaworski, 1996) through reflective thinking upon the 'inner voice' and values that inform and guide the leader's ethical behaviour (Fairholm, 2001). Where such spirituality is evident in deliberate leadership practices then the capacity for success is heightened. The challenge is to understand the sense of spirituality that leaders experience in their work contexts and to appreciate how they apply it to improve their work practices.

A Pilot Study
This study uses a phenomenographic approach to determine the qualitative difference in a group of leaders' experiences of spirituality in their activities. Phenomenography investigates the variations in people's experience of spirituality in their leadership in their organisations. It does so by focusing on the relationship between the subject, (i.e., organisational leaders) and the object, (i.e., their experience of spirituality in their leadership) in a specific context, (i.e., regional Australia). From the collective data obtained in a series of one-to-one in-depth, open-ended interviews, the researchers were able to identify a series of qualitative differences in peoples' experience. These differences are expressed in the form of conceptions of human experience (Svensson, 1989). Any generalisability of understanding is investigated using this empirical approach and is not assumed (Marton, 1981, p. 180). A starting point for such an approach is the belief that there are a limited number of qualitatively different ways in which people can experience the phenomenon of spirituality in leadership.

Twelve organisational leaders in a regional Australian context were chosen to participate in this pilot study. Their organisations represented such diverse fields as education, medicine, politics, sport, Indigenous groups, journalism, business, police, religion, and the Arts. To ensure gender representation, six males and six females constituted the group. Each person participated in an open-ended interview that involved the researchers raising the following non-technical questions for response by the participants:

- Drawing upon your experience, what does spirituality mean to you?
- How have you experienced spirituality in your leadership in the workplace?
- What role should spirituality play in leadership practices?

To ensure that the interviews yielded only the interviewee's experience of the phenomenon of spirituality in leadership, the researchers employed a series of phenomenological principles (Spinelli, 1989). The included: bracketing (suspending personal judgement about the phenomenon during the process of the interview), seeking participants' external horizons (encouraging participants through discourse to share their fullest understanding of the phenomenon), reduction (assisting participants to gradually refine their understanding of the phenomenon of spirituality in leadership), and the horizontalisation of the categories (treating each category as being of equal worth).

Each interview was recorded by audio-tape and transcribed for analysis. The analysis involved pooling all of the written statements and conducting a phenomenographic investigation of it. This analysis
consisted of a non-algorithmic discovery procedure as described by Dahlgren and Fallsberg (1991) that resulted in a related set of categories of description. These categories represent the qualitatively different conceptions that participants hold of their experience of spirituality in their leadership. These conceptions are interrelated in an outcome space that demonstrates the relationships that exist amongst these different conceptions.

Results
Seven conceptions of people's experience of spirituality in leadership were identified in the transcribed data from the twelve participants in this study. They are expressed in the following categories of description according to the different structural (i.e., How the experience of the phenomenon of spirituality in leadership was conceptualised) and referential (i.e., What was the content of the participants' experience of this phenomenon) aspects. Each of the conceptions is described in detail to share the nature of the collective experience of spirituality in leadership. Finally, the seven conceptions are interrelated to develop an appreciation of the relationships that exist amongst the different conceptions.

The seven conceptions are:

1. Spirituality in leadership as living by a set of values, feelings, beliefs and personal philosophies.
2. Spirituality in leadership as understanding one's inner self.
3. Spirituality in leadership as seeing people as holistic learners.
4. Spirituality in leadership as treating people as equals.
5. Spirituality in leadership as seeking guidance.
6. Spirituality in leadership as building relationships.
7. Spirituality in leadership as being a leading learner.

1. Spirituality in Leadership as Living by a Set of Values, Feelings, Beliefs and Personal Philosophies

Spirituality in leadership was experienced most generally by people as a set of values and feelings which the leaders and the people around them held broadly concerning key guiding principles or directions for acting in a spiritual way in different work contexts. For some people, this set of values and feelings was expressed in the form of a basic set of beliefs that were the expressions of their values and feelings. In its most complex form this conception of spirituality in leadership was expressed as a philosophical framework that guided people's actions in exercising such spirituality in their leadership roles.

The importance of a broad set of values to influence how people exercise spirituality in their leadership was mentioned by several of the participants in this study. They saw these values as being derived from spiritual, possibly religious, experiences that influenced people's lives over time. These values become important counters to the material values that characterise our society early in the twenty-first century.

Therefore, spirituality in leadership in this conception ultimately means that people will take responsibility for their own decisions on the basis of their own clear set of beliefs, values and ethical understandings. As Participant 10 states: "Leaders need to take responsibility for the decisions that they make, and I think that the modern way of doing things is that people who are making decisions are also putting the responsibility onto either others or other systems or things like that." What they should be doing is acting using the positive set of ethics that were proposed above.

2. Spirituality in Leadership as Understanding One's Inner Self

For spirituality in leadership to be understood and effective, a number of participants felt that it was important to understand one's inner self and for other
people to do likewise. Naturally, such an understanding is going to be tied to the values that people hold dear. Whatever the expression our leadership manifests, it is linked to integrity and socialisation. As leaders grow and experience success, they develop a stronger awareness of themselves as leaders. This development is a powerful example of spirituality at work in leadership.

The importance of knowing one's inner self will emerge further as an influential force in the demonstration of spirituality in leadership by these people.

3. Spirituality in Leadership as Seeing People as Holistic Learners

When people who occupy leadership roles interact with colleagues as whole persons in workplace situations there is a sense of spirituality that emerges in their leadership that is highly empowering. It is empowering for both the leader and the co-workers because the leader views all workers as people who lead full lives, with work being but a part of these lives. In addition, concepts of holistic sharing and the reaction of the human spirit amongst work team members can produce the experience of spiritual energising amongst the whole team.

The energising effect through exercising spirituality in one's leadership can have a lasting effect on the behaviour of successful leaders because it draws the workers to the leader. The result is a group of people who think and act collectively rather than individually.

4. Spirituality in Leadership as Treating People as Equals

Strength in leadership emerges when leaders treat all people under their control in an equal, fair manner. In fact, it is probably preceded by actions in which leaders think of people first rather than the bottom line of their balance sheet. A direct consequence that derives from treating people equally is that all members of work teams develop respect and dignity in the eyes of their fellow workers. Once this has been achieved, it is reasonably easy for leaders to offer staff the incentive to be themselves in their workplaces. In some way, such a strategy by leaders often leads to the empowerment of all members of work teams.

Such an equalitarian act as treating people as equals seems to be a powerful perspective in Australian society, especially in rhetoric. However, these people have indicated clearly that they see it very important as a means for increasing spirituality in leadership in Australian organisations.

5. Spirituality in Leadership as Seeking Guidance

The conception of spirituality in leadership as seeking guidance is not developed thoroughly in the group of participants in this study. However, it has been experienced to sufficient depth for it to be included in the results. Underlying it is the belief derived from religious experiences that people benefit from seeking help from colleagues and other people in the wider community to enable leadership in public life to be achieved effectively. This advice may come from prayer or it may come direct communication with people. It is construed to be spiritual by the recipients because it offers wise counsel on how to address issues of public importance. In some way it is related to the next conception on developing or building relationships because a key element in seeking advice is the idea of developing networks from which to obtain such advice.

Obviously, the practice of seeking guidance by leaders is a reassuring one to the people around the leader. Consistency of practice becomes very important if this practice is to be effective, as it certainly was for Participant 3.

6. Spirituality in Leadership as Building Relationships

Building relationships came through as an important conception of spirituality in leadership for the group of participants in
this study. They recognise that leadership involves a leader and people who are willing to be led or who will work together with the leader to produce a positive outcome. The main ideas to be highlighted in this conception are: that relationships in workplace leadership should be built on key values of integrity, respect and love; just being there for others can enhance spirituality in leadership; cooperation with others is important, as is the idea of looking beyond oneself. Finally, the participants emphasised the value that is obtained from connecting with other people through work-based relationships.

Personal values, many derived from practising a Christian or other religious life, underpin this idea of building relationships in workplace leadership. Co-operation with others was seen as another key element in the development and maintenance of relationships in workplaces.

Also, spirituality in leadership was found to exist in some community groups where members of these groups looked beyond themselves.

7. Spirituality in Leadership as Being a Leading Learner

The final conception that emerged in this group of leaders was that of spirituality in leadership as being a leading learner. It was a conception that was only partially developed in the data, but sufficient was expressed to indicate that it is relevant to this phenomenon. In this case, the conception was expressed in terms of people operating as educational leaders. The idea of a leading learner makes sense when it is included in the educational journey that most people engage in during their lives. The educational leader facilitates learning processes. The purpose of such an enterprise is to promote learning for a better world. Therefore, the leading learner or educational leader uses education as the catalyst for developing a better world. It is this experience which is the spiritual part of the learning and leading for it draws together people in a common goal — to become better educated to play more active roles for improving our world.

Just how learning binds people together seems to be some form of a spiritual experience because it develops within them the sort of values that were mentioned earlier in Conception 1. It also is a medium through relationships are built (Conception 6) amongst groups of people in workplaces. However, in this fragment of the conception there is only an introduction to the sense of spirituality in the leadership that occurs.

Discussion

This study affirms our contention that spirituality is a vital aspect of leadership practice in the increasingly complex, stressful and materialistic organisational milieu. Reflective leaders consciously practice it as an integral, not a peripheral facet of their leadership. Many others leaders appear to practice spirituality subconsciously. Unsurprisingly, our study found that spirituality is conceptualised, experienced and communicated in different ways: as a value platform, core principles, as a social dynamic, as inner voice, as transformational learning, as connective energy, and as trustworthiness. These manifestations of spirituality are evident in the leaders' daily interactions. At the interpersonal level spirituality is revealed as a nurturing, caring, humanising bond. These findings lend support to writers like O'Murchu (1997) who call for integrated spirituality. We endorse this call for different reasons. We believe that an inclusive, integrative conceptualisation of spirituality can harmonise the seemingly incompatible but innately enriching secular and sacred sources of spirituality. This we believe would give greater depth, meaning and credence to a misunderstood and trivialised concept. Secondly, the variety and fullness of our conversations with leaders of different persuasions and workplace backgrounds convince us that rather than being unconcerned, reluctant or spiritually illiterate many leaders are ready
and willing to talk about it openly and share their experiences. Could this be due to the challenging times we experience, sample bias or unique characteristics of the region in which the study was conducted? These questions and the positive response of participants suggest the need for further substantive research.

The passion/celebration/acknowledgement of spirituality in leadership by the informants echoes the call for authentic, principle-centred, values-driven, compassionate leadership heard in the recent literature on leadership (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997; Duignan & Bhindi, 1998; Sergiovanni 2000; Spears & Lawrence, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 1993). It is also consistent with collegiality, mutual respect, interdependence and trust building which comprise the main tenets of communities of learning in modern organisations (Senge 1990; Gerber 1998; Bhindi 1995). Spirituality as transformative learning is found in all ancient cultures and spiritual traditions (Hesse 1954, 1956) as well as modern adult learning protocols (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Relationship building in the age of knowledge, expertise and professional autonomy signifies the underpinning value of many professional service organisations.

In the context of stressful workplace, spirituality in leadership takes on a special meaning as facilitation of severe loss and grieving suffered by people during times of massive change such as restructuring and downsizing (Noer, 1993; Bhindi, 1995). And so is the process of grief and healing following personal crisis and suffering where the leader serves as the 'kalyan mitra' or the soul mate (O'Donohue, 1997).

It is evident that the spiritual or spiritually-centred leaders convey their spirituality not through a grandstanding splurge but through their humanising influence in everyday encounters and exchanges amidst the cut-and-thrust of organisational life. They exemplify in behaviour, the principles of their spirituality. Such leaders possess a heightened sense of their spirituality and seek engagement rather than avoidance of challenges. They are conscious of their own limitations, and vulnerabilities and seek spiritual nourishment through reflection-in-action. They obtain spiritual strength from the energy and positive emotion reciprocated by those around them. This study, albeit exploratory should be of special interest to leadership trainers who in the main have tended to concentrate on the corporate and strategic aspects of leadership and have either shunned or neglected the significant spiritual and, until recently, the emotional spiritual and, until recently, the emotional dimension of leadership.

References


Understanding how best learning for and in small business should proceed constitutes a worthwhile, yet challenging pedagogic project. Small businesses seem not attracted to, nor do they value taught courses that are often viewed as being irrelevant, inappropriate or inaccessible to small business workers. However, given that small businesses need to respond to new demands it is worthwhile understanding the kinds of pedagogic practices they adopt when learning to make changes. This paper reports the initial findings of a study of how 30 small businesses learnt to implement the Goods and Service Tax (GST). Interviews were used to understand the pedagogic practices that these businesses adopted when implementing the GST. In most cases, contributions to learning were identified in a movement from an initial reliance upon external contributions to a greater independence within the small businesses. The core of the learning process was most commonly reported as being mediated by localised support and expertise (e.g., experts, information, accountants, consultants) as the small businesses engaged with the task. Local contributions of different kinds played an important role in mediating the learning. From these findings, a model of learning in small business was generated whose wider applicability will be appraised through a second round of interviews with small businesses.

Identifying how small businesses can learn effectively is central to governmental priorities (ANTA, 1998) and address issues of social justice as small business workers are less likely to engage in structured training or be the subject of employer expenditure on training than their counterparts in larger enterprises. It also presents a challenging yet worthwhile project for those interested in understanding how to develop individuals’ vocational capacities. This paper identifies some pedagogic bases and practices by which learning for and in small business proceeds. These include the movement from a reliance on sources external to the small business, to a greater independence in acting. In particular, the developing capacity to act independently was often premised on learning mediated by localised sources. In particular, the capacity of the localised contributions to provide guidance that was pertinent, trusted and premised on some level of intimacy with the small business all seemed salient. The recent experience of small businesses learning to implement the Goods and Service Tax (GST) provided the context and opportunity to understand the learning of new tasks in small business. Small business workers were required to understand and implement the new taxation system and monitor in through submitting quarterly Business Activity Statements (BAS). For some businesses, it meant the adoption of systematic and/or electronic administrative practices, requiring
extensive new learning. As this initiative was mandated for all small businesses, it provided an opportunity to identify some of the diverse bases for and processes of learning as they implemented the same procedures. However, the processes of analysis and verification adopted in the study also aimed to understand learning for small business in activities other than the GST, in order to appraise the outcomes more generally.

This paper commences with a brief review of what is already known about learning in small business. The review highlights a preference of small business towards workplace learning rather than for taught, formal, nationally accredited training as offered by the vocational education and training (VET) sector. The disaffection with participation in taught courses reinforces the importance of generating approaches other than those through courses. However, learning in workplaces may require localised assistance and support to learn what is not known or knowable in the workplace. For this reason, it is important to identify how best small business learning can be supported and encouraged.

Learning in and for Small Business

Much is already known about small business perspectives on learning. Small business comprises a significant component of national economic activity and employment. About half of all private sector employment in Australia is provided by small businesses, which account for around 97% of all private sector businesses (ABS, 2000). However, over half of these businesses have no employees. Therefore, a large portion of small businesses’ concerns about their level of skills is about personal development (Kempnich et al., 1999). The nature and size of small businesses means they have quite different organisational characteristics and skill development needs from larger enterprises.

Lack of Participation of Small Business in Taught Courses

Small business commitment to structured VET is, at best, weak. Overwhelmingly, the data about accredited courses indicate that small businesses are reluctant to participate in or sponsor these courses (Billett & Cooper, 1998; Gibb, 1997). There are at least four reasons why ‘taught courses’ provided through national VET frameworks are unlikely to attract small business. Firstly, approaches to learning often deny the reality of small business because such approaches reflect large business or ‘industry needs’. For instance, small business management courses are criticised for their use of big business management theory and practice (Kempnich et al., 1999). Small businesses are not little large businesses and have different priorities and needs. Secondly, courses that conform to national industry prescriptions may be of limited interest. These courses often lack a focus on the kinds of outcomes required by small business.

Thirdly, the pedagogic approaches of these courses are often misaligned with small business needs. For instance, Coopers and Lybrand (1994) identify qualities of a good ‘small business course’. These include courses being short, sharp and specific; available at a local venue; having flexible timing; interactive delivery; related to specific problems and opportunities; pitched at an appropriate level; linked to participants’ environments; and whose presenters have empathy derived from first-hand experience. It seems small business employers want courses with learning processes based on practical experience, greater flexibility in course content and outcomes associated with immediate job requirements (Coopers & Lybrand, 1994; Roffey et al., 1996).

Finally, the market-based provisions of VET likely hinder small business participation in VET (Billett & Cooper, 1997). Providing tailored courses to small business is unattractive to VET institutions that prefer enterprises with large numbers of
employees engaged in the same courses or modules. Taught courses are unable to be individualised, tailored and localised to meet small business needs in cost effective ways. However, options for developing effective small business operations are not restricted to participation in taught courses. Learning also occurs as part of everyday work activities and through the opportunities that arise everyday in small business settings and the local community.

Importance of the Workplace and Localised Support for Small Business Learning
Internationally there is growing interest in workplaces as learning environments (Boud & Garrick, 1999). For workers in many sectors of small business work, there is often no option than to learn in the workplace, because it constitutes the only location in which to learn workplace requirements. Recent research illustrates the preference of small business workers to learn in their workplaces (Coopers & Lybrand, 1994; Kilpatrick & Crowley, 1999; Raffo et al., 2000). Small businesses nominate 'learning as you go' as the best means of gaining skills as small business owner/managers (Coopers & Lybrand, 1994). This approach is preferred as it is held to be practical and hands-on; the easiest and quickest way to learn and occurs as part of work tasks. Interactions with others, particularly with other business owners, are held as effective means of gaining skills, mainly because it benefits the business and is industry-specific (Coopers & Lybrand, 1994). In these ways, learning is held to be context specific and arising as a consequence of dealing with situated problems (Raffo et al., 2000).

However, while evidence identifies many useful contributions to learning derived from everyday activities in the workplace, these contributions alone may be insufficient. There are weaknesses to learning through just work alone that need to be addressed, including being able to access expertise external to the enterprise (Billett, 2001). Thus, it becomes necessary to understand further how learning can best proceed in small businesses and in what ways combinations of support can contribute to the development of small business workers' and owners' capacities to perform more effectively.

Aims of the Investigation
The overall aim of the empirical work was to investigate how learning in and for small business can be best organised. The recent Government mandated requirement for the implementation of GST and BAS presented a context and opportunity to understand how small businesses learnt to implement these externally derived initiatives. Key questions for the project included:

- How did small businesses learn about and develop the capacity to implement the new goods and services taxation system?
- What were the kinds of variations in approaches taken by small business in response to this initiative and in what ways were particular approaches seen to be effective?
- What did they learn and what was most difficult to learn?
- What models of learning for small business can be identified from these experiences?

Procedures
The procedures for this study focused on identifying and understanding how small business operators had learned about the GST. Data were gathered to generate a model of learning for small business. A sample of 30 small businesses participated in the practical investigations. These comprised enterprises of different sizes (i.e., micro businesses with 1–3 employees to those which employ 20 employees), locations (metropolitan and non-metropolitan) and specialisations (i.e., a range of focuses on goods and services). Owners, managers and employees of small businesses
comprised the informants interviewed for the study. The sample was drawn from the Brisbane metropolitan area as well as non-metropolitan areas in Queensland. Assistance in locating these small businesses was provided by the small business community and the government partner. The main source of data was that elicited through semi-structured interviews with small business staff. Each interview aimed to develop a narrative about how the small business had learnt to implement the GST and BAS. This included identifying who or what had helped, what had interfered or restricted the learning and understanding the level of learning achieved. Each interview was audio-taped and transcribed. From these transcriptions, 30 case studies were developed using headings that elaborated the processes of learning, judgements and justifications of different kinds of contributions to learning the concepts and procedures associated with the GST. Case studies were returned to participating businesses for comment and verification.

The next phase of the study involved an analysis of the case study data to identify (a) how small business workers learnt to implement the GST; (b) particular contributions to their learning; and (c) links between contributions to learning and particular learning outcomes. A tentative model of learning in and for small business was developed from this data and is discussed in the next section. This model was validated and refined through a separate round of interviews not reported in this paper.

**Findings**

Data about how the 30 small businesses learned to implement the GST, is the key focus of this paper. The data have been used to advance a tentative model of learning in and for small business (see Figure 1). In reporting these findings, this section is divided into two main parts and refers to: (a) the focus of and goals for learning; and (b) the processes of learning.

**Focus of and Goals for Learning**

Although engaged in achieving the same goal, the analysis of the case studies revealed variations in the focus of, goals for and the scope of the learning required by the small businesses. The differences in the tasks to be undertaken and the learning required are explicable through a consideration of four main factors. Collectively, these refer to the degree of readiness for the learning task. Firstly, there were distinct differences in the level of and kinds of business administration capacities within the small businesses. Some were well placed to learn this task because they already possessed the administrative skills required. However, others lacked these capacities.

Secondly, the levels of technological and infrastructural readiness were different. For some, the existing administrative infrastructure provided a platform to make incremental changes to implement and enact the GST and BAS. For others, the requirements of GST and BAS rendered the existing technology and infrastructure obsolete. For these businesses, new means of organisation and administration were required, sometimes extending to the restructuring of their existing administration processes.

Thirdly, there were differences in the small business operators' interest in the task. For some, their businesses' administration was, at best, an unnecessary evil; for others it was central to their business practice and personal interest. For instance, some of those engaged in professional practices (e.g., an optometrist and veterinarian) were not really interested in the task. They preferred to pay for expertise to assist with financial and taxation-related tasks. Others relied on family support, particularly a female business partner (often a wife), to administer the business. Other small business operators, whose vocational interest was more aligned to operating a business, were less interested in the actual focus of the business as long as it returned a profit. These operators tended to be intensively engaged in learning to implement the GST. In sum, individual small
business operators' interest was diverse. It ranged from those for whom engagement in the task was superficial to more intense, and addressed situations where the outcomes were to just comply or through to those where there was a need to understand and practice business in a way that exercised the taxation regime to the enterprises' full advantage.

Finally, the level of the small business operators' confidence to be successful in the task of learning was salient. Those who had accountancy skills proceeded and engaged with sources of information differently from those who lacked these capacities and confidence. Some informants' confidence in proceeding was premised on their capacity to secure advice from close and trusted consultants, accountants and family members. The contributions of family members emerged as providing both advice that was trusted and valued, and also supported the confidence to proceed. Other small business operators' confidence was constrained by the scope of the activities before them and the sense of isolation they experienced. For these enterprises, the task of learning to implement the GST seemed perilous. For others, it was a small adjustment to existing practices.

So, for some enterprises, the GST and BAS required significant changes to their work practice, while for others there was minimal disruption. Some enterprises had to integrate the use of computers within their daily work activities, requiring the development of new skills and making redundant others. For other enterprises it was a simple adjustment to book-keeping activities (i.e. the placing of additional columns in a journal). So in understanding how learning in and for small business might proceed, issues of readiness for learning, the scope of the learning required, and individuals' interest in and confidence to proceed with the learning were identified. Given the diversity of experience and readiness, any model of small business learning needs to accommodate differences in the scope of the learning tasks, the degree of support required and the diverse base of learners' readiness.

Process of Learning

The data were used to identify the kinds of support that the small businesses engaged with. The small business operators ranked the utility of particular contributions to learning and then justified and illustrated its utility. The contributions to learning included 'Just getting in and doing it', 'Advice of other small business operators', 'Local networks', 'Consultants/tax specialists', 'Courses', 'Governmental support', 'Industry association' and 'Others'. These had been identified in the literature review. The small business operators ranked these contributions — from Indispensable through to Irrelevant, with a Not applicable category. Table 1 presents the aggregated data of the ranking of these contributions. The contribution of family members to learning the GST/BAS was the most frequently nominated 'Other' category. Its consistent reporting by some small business suggests it needs to be included in future accounts of small business learning. Ten 'Other' categories (including the tax office website and hotline) were nominated but not included in Table 1 since each was mentioned by only one small business.

Table 1 also makes explicit differences in these contributions' reported utility. 'Just getting in and doing it' and 'Consultants and Tax specialists' were consistently ranked the highest in utility, with 23 and 24, respectively, of the 30 respondents claiming them to be either Indispensable or Very Useful. 'Advice of other small business owners' and 'Local networks' were more likely to be seen to be of low utility. Although 'Courses' carried the highest frequency of being judged Not applicable, it was found that when they were accessed they were likely to be viewed as being of greater rather than lower utility. This finding is useful. Robinson (1997) claimed that despite the reported disaffection of small business for taught courses, (see Coopers & Lybrand, 1994, 1995) the majority reporting that disaffection had not attended any courses. Here, small businesses
Table 1
Overall Contributions to Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTRIBUTION</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>IRRELEVANT</th>
<th>NOT USEFUL</th>
<th>USEFUL</th>
<th>VERY USEFUL</th>
<th>INDISPENSABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just getting in and doing it</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice of other small business operators</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local networks</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants/tax specialists</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental support</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry association</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others e.g., Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A small number of informants responded more than once to the above categories and some made no responses.

participating in VET courses expressed satisfaction with their participation. Both 'Government support' and 'Industry associations' also shared a mixed review of their utility with similar numbers referring to high and low utility. Among others that were reported Not applicable were 'Local networks' and 'Industry associations'.

Overall, the two contributions most consistently reported as making the strongest contributions were 'Consultants and Tax Specialists', and 'Just getting in and doing it'. The former is perhaps not surprising given the particular learning task. However, it emphasises and exemplifies the need to access expertise from outside the enterprise to secure knowledge not available within it and/or is not likely to be learnt by deduction or trial and error alone. Yet, this external contribution is contrasted with the other highly ranked contribution – 'Just getting in and doing it' which is a contribution located within the small business and in the interest of the operatives. That 'just getting in and doing it' was nominated by so many small businesses operators reflects current research which holds that learning in and at the workplace is an important means of gaining new workplace skills (Coopers & Lybrand, 1994; Kilpatrick & Crowley, 1999; Raffey et al., 2000) as individuals engage in the process of constructing meaning and developing procedural capacities through engaging in conscious goal directed activities.

The data on 'Other contributions' warrant further mention. Distributions in the frequency of the perceived utility of other contributions suggest wide differences in perceptions of their value. That is, contributions that were of little utility for some small business operators were perceived by others to have provided an indispensable level of support. This then leads to a consideration of different kinds of contributions and their location to the small business. Some are remote from small businesses (e.g., government support, ATO web-site and help line, Industry associations etc.), others are more local (e.g., Local networks, family support, courses, accountants and (some) consultants) and others are located within the small business (e.g., just getting in and doing it, book keeper, other staff). So there are different kinds of contributions to learning that can be understood in terms of their location and also the scope and limitations of their contributions.

Towards a Model of Small Business Learning

The findings revealed diverse learning processes in the 30 small businesses, even given their different starting points and scope of the required learning. However, there were some important similarities in the learning processes across the small businesses. In learning to implement the
GST, they all commenced by formulating goals and proceeded to develop the capacities required to implement the initiative (see Figure 1). In this figure, at the top, reference is made to how the small business operators perceived the task and elected to engage in it. This, and their readiness shaped how they proceeded. Overall, they were identified as engaging in three iterative phases of learning: (a) initial approximations of the task; (b) improvement through practice until (c) independent performance of tasks (or maturing capacities) was achieved. The initial approximation of the task was the phase where small businesses initially attempted to implement the GST and enact the BAS. It is here that local mediation was most valued. That local mediation was particularly useful when it was provided by sources that understood the particular requirements of the enterprise and could guide the passage towards independent performance. The importance of practice cannot be underestimated. It was through engagement in activities associated with the implementation of the GST and BAS (just doing it) that procedures were refined and learning occurred through problem solving and 'trial and error'. As participants' knowledge and experience widened, some of them reported being more confident and able to address new problems and tasks, with decreasing need to refer to external sources of information. For many of these small businesses, the goal was to develop a capacity that would free them from a dependence upon outside expertise. These phases led to independent performance as depicted in Figure 1 as a maturing capacity to act independently. In most cases, small business operators came to rely less on external advice as they learnt to be more or less independent in securing their goals. Those businesses who delegated matters pertaining to the GST and BAS to bookkeepers and accountants outside of the business were in the minority.

The findings from this study demonstrated a clear movement from a reliance on external sources of advice and support to the development of an internal capability. Some small operators relied less on external advice and processes than others. Others had always

![Figure 1](image-url)

Bases for learning in and for small business.
relied on external sources of advice, and would continue to after the implementation of the GST and BAS. The pace, appropriateness and timeliness of advice and assistance were identified as key bases for effective support of these small businesses’ learning.

However, the key basis for this learning was localised form of support that could provide relevant and pertinent advice premised on an understanding of the small businesses’ needs. Localised support through experts, family, and other small businesses made the most important contributions to learning at different times and in different ways. All have implications for how learning, in and for small business might best proceed. They emphasise the need for pedagogic practices to occur in small business workplaces supported by locally-available expertise. That expertise is most helpful in supporting small business in their learning when it offers technical expertise. However, when this expertise is coupled with an intimate understanding of the enterprise’s needs and is experienced through trusted relationships it is most useful. Perhaps this is why the contributions of trusted partners within families were so frequently acknowledged. These findings suggest that if both the economic and social goals of enhanced participation by small business are to be realised that options such as localised arrangements for learning support need to be encouraged and acknowledged.

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References


Co-Participatory Practices at Work

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This paper discusses workplace participatory practices — the reciprocal process of engaging in and learning through work (Billett, 2000). Reciprocity between the affordance of the workplace (its invitational qualities) and individuals’ engagement in the workplace is proposed as a means of understanding how participation in and learning through work proceeds. These affordances are shaped by workplace norms and practice and affiliations (e.g., cliques, associations, occupational groupings, employment status) and are often characterised by contestation and their inequitable distribution. The distribution of and access to opportunities for practice are directed towards sustaining the work practice and/or the interests of particular individuals and groups who participate in it. These reciprocal processes of participation in the workplace are illuminated through an analysis of the participatory practices of three workers over a six-month period. These are those of a union worker, a grief counsellor and a school-based information technology consultant. The findings first illuminate the work of these three individuals through an analytical framework comprising categories of activities and interdependencies. The bases for participation, performance and learning for each of the three workers are then illuminated.

Work, Participation and Learning
Understanding the requirements for work and participation in and learning for work may be best understood through an analysis of micro-social processes in workplaces. These processes are proposed as shaping how work is enacted, and understanding the relationship between workplace participatory practices and what is learnt through engagement in work activities. An account of how micro-social workplace processes shape activities, actions and learning is advanced. Little distinction is made between participation in workplaces and learning. Consequently, factors shaping participation in work — workplace participatory practices — are also central to how and what individuals learn through work. The need to understand further workplace participatory practices arose from earlier work (Billett, 2001b) that identified how contributions to learning were shaped by workplace affordances and how these affordances were construed as being invitational by individuals in workplaces. Judgements about workplace affordances shaped how they engaged in and learnt through work. These findings illuminate the inter-psychological processes that occur between the social world and individuals and how micro-social processes shape the moment-by-moment learning that Rogoff (1990) refers to as being micro-genetic. To advance an understanding of requirements for work, learning through work and workplace pedagogical practices, it is necessary to illuminate and elaborate these reciprocal participatory practices. In the following, what constitutes workplace participatory practices is outlined and advanced. Then the procedures and findings of a recent study of the requirements for work and the micro-social processes that constitute the reciprocal participatory practices of work are discussed.

Workplace Participatory Practices
The contributions to and limitations of learning vocational practice through work
were identified in earlier work (Billett, 2001b; Billett & Boud, 2001). Whether considering learning through everyday work activities or through intentional workplace learning activities, reciprocal participatory practices shape this learning. That is, how workplaces afford opportunities for individuals or cohorts of individuals to participate in and learn through workplace experiences, and how individuals elect to engage with what is afforded them. The scope and focus of tasks they are invited to engage in are often directed towards maintaining the work practice’s continuity. This may include the standing and employment of individuals or cohorts in the workplace. For instance, Bernhardt (1999) has identified how, to safeguard their own employment, full-time workers restricted the activities and learning of part-time employees. Consequently, opportunities were afforded in ways that were aimed to sustain the work practice and/or particular interests in the workplace (e.g., other workers).

The bases for participation in workplaces are rendered particularly salient because of associations between participation in social practice and learning (Rogoff, 1995; Lave, 1993). The knowledge required for work practice has social and cultural origins. Therefore, it needs to be accessed inter-psychologically — between the individual and the social source (e.g., Vygotsky). Therefore, more than merely completing a work task, a lasting cognitive legacy may occur. This legacy arises through the reinforcement or refinement of what individuals already know, or through extending what they already know. However, although access to activities and interactions are shaped by workplace norms and practices, individuals also exercise their agency in determining how they participate in social practice, and what they learn through their engagement. The bases of this agency and its exercise are likely shaped by individuals’ personal histories and their subjectivities. Individuals may well be directed to sustain and extend their practice in ways that are inconsistent with the social practice’s goals, albeit leading to a disassociation and dis-identification with the social practice (e.g., Hodges, 1998). Tensions may arise when the kinds of participation individuals want is not afforded by the workplace. For instance, a worker used his two-way radio to listen to fitters fixing and maintaining parts of a manufacturing plant. He actively sought out the fitters to learn more about their work, as this was work he prized for himself. However, his efforts were frustrated by restrictions on the number of fitters that could be employed in the workplace, and by the safety officer’s efforts to constrain his attempts to observe and interact with the fitters in places that were off-limits (Billett, 1994). In this way, the tensions between the individuals’ goals and those of the workplace are played out in these reciprocal participatory practices.

Conceptually, understanding further these reciprocal processes contributes to key discussions within psychological theorising about the relations between individual cognition and the socio-geneses of knowledge (e.g., Cobb, 1998; Rogoff, 1995; Scribner, 1997; Valsiner & Van de Veer, 2000). Procedurally, it is necessary to elaborate an understanding of work requirements and the impact of workplace participatory practice on work and workers.

Illuminating Three Work Practices

The study discussed here aimed to illuminate and understand further these workplace participatory practices and their consequences for learning through work. Key questions guiding the inquiry were:

- In what ways does the social practice of work afford participation?
- What is the range of bases by which individuals participate in the workplace?
- How does co-participation and its consequences differ across workplaces?
• What are the consequences for learning arising from co-participation?

Procedures
The procedures comprising this study are two interrelated sets of activities. The first mapped the requirements for three participants' work practice while the second investigated their workplace participatory practices. Firstly, the three individuals were identified, and selected, and permission obtained for their involvement. The aim was to identify individuals engaged in diverse work practice, including at least one who was in some way a contingent worker (i.e., part-time, contractual or home based). The participants selected comprised: (a) a trade union official; (b) a grief counsellor at an institute of forensic pathology; and (c) an information technology (IT) consultant to five primary schools. Their work and work practices were quite distinct from each other. For example, the IT consultant represented a worker who was contracted to work part-time for one day a week at each of five primary schools. In addition, the work practices were also selected respectively for the importance of developing shared understanding, knowledge that is difficult to learn, and circumstances where interactions with co-workers may be limited or difficult.

A scheme of Activities and Interdependencies was used to describe the three individuals' work practice over a four-week period through processes of interviews and observations. The direct observation of work and interviews were used to describe the work practice. Data were gathered and analysed to evaluate the scheme's capacity to: (i) identify the requirements for that area of work practice; (ii) make predictions about the likely learning through their participation; and (iii) examine those factors assisting or inhibiting participation. The second phase comprised a six month investigation of the workplace participatory practices of the three workers. Commencing, progressive and summative interviews were conducted throughout the six-month period with the participants, using sets of items designed to map the trajectories of both the work practice and the subjects' participation in their work practice. Data derived from the observations and interviews were analysed using the refined scheme of activities and interdependencies. The workplace data provided rich descriptions of the requirements for performance and factors assisting and inhibiting participation and how they have evolved over a six-month period.

Findings

Continuity of Work Practice
The bases for the continuity of each work practice first need to be elaborated in order to understand the kinds of activities they are focussed on and the bases by which participation will be afforded. The trade union exists because of a need for the industrial and professional representation of its members. To sustain itself, the union has to be positioned to best address members' needs, to advocate for the public sector and the professional standing of workers in that sector. As government policies are central to shaping of the public sector's employment practices, the union seeks to influence government policy. However, because of its party political affiliation, the union is aligned to one of major political parties (Labor). However, this affiliation is complicated when this political party gets elected into office and becomes the employer of the majority of its members. This affiliation brings additional internal complications for the union as some of its officers are also members of factions within the political party and are aspirants to be pre-selected as members of legislative assemblies. So there are complex relations between the industrial and professional concerns of its membership, and the union's political affiliations. As the union's industry sector is responsive to and services the community, it is also important to be positioned in key debates and discussions.
about the sector. In addition, the union plays a role in supporting and sustaining employee unionism. So its key goals are all about sustaining and maintaining itself through advocacy for its membership, the industry sector, the profession it represents as well as unionism more generally.

The forensic pathology center has a legislated role. Its existence is not under threat unless the legislation under which it is constituted is revoked. As long as the state wants coronial inquests, there will be a role for the centre. Like any other government body it needs to be seen to be performing effectively to maintain its current level of funding and to secure growth (e.g., for an adequate provision of counsellors). However, there are other threats to the centre's continuity. In a climate of outsourcing and cost cutting, the privatisation of the centre's functions has been canvassed. Recently, another threat to its continuity arose from earlier practices in other forensic pathology institutes where access to body parts and their retention had occurred without consent. This issue, and non-consenting retention of human tissue in hospitals, raised widespread concerns in the community, upon which governments reacted in a number of Australian states. In this particular pathology center, the counsellors took the lead role in responding to governmental inquiries and community concerns about the retention of human tissue for coronial and scientific purposes.

The five state-funded primary schools for whom the Information Technology (IT) consultant (Aden) works, play an ongoing role in the community, educating young children. Like many public institutions they have been subject to structural changes. These include the requirement for each school to adopt wider administrative responsibilities and be responsive to innovative practices, such as using IT for both administrative and educational purposes. As the staff in these schools lacked appropriate computing expertise, the five schools have collectively employed Aden to provide these services. Much of Aden's initial work was to assist teachers with routine breakdown and maintenance tasks. As a casual employee, early in his employment, his tenure had been dependent upon working effectively with teachers in assisting them with information technology for educational purposes. However, the departmental directives about the implementation of the Standard Operating System (SOS) caused a change in the priorities and saw his status rise as he became more centrally involved with the schools' administration. So, in these ways it was possible to identify some key bases by which the three workplaces' continuity was based. In the next section, the bases for the continuity of individuals' practice are described and discussed.

**Continuity of Individuals' Practice**

Each of the three participants had distinct bases for their participation in their work. Common was some relatedness to important personal goals. Anna works as a trade union official. Her reasons for working in the union are highly consonant with the union's goals and bases of its continuity. She has a long-founded concern about equity and social justice and comes from a family with a tradition of public service. She enjoys a high level of relatedness with many, but not all of the core values of the work practice in which she engages. An exception is her growing disaffection with political party politics, and of the union's associations with the Labor party of which she was once, but is no longer, an active member. Her concern about close affiliation with one political party is not shared by all her colleagues, some of whom are closely affiliated to the party and are active members of party factions. This complicates her standing in the union, as she is unaffiliated, in a system where factional support and numbers can be very important and potent. Some officials in the union have the goal of being pre-selected for seats in the legislative assembly. Therefore, their relationship and loyalties are, at times, ambiguous.

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Her capacities to research, write and present cases are well aligned to the procedures for advancing policies in the Union. Through her position she is able to exercise social justice issues and commitment to the public sector. Given the congruence between Anna’s personal values, and those of the workplace, it is not surprising that she has not looked elsewhere for work. However, she commented that a quality of her working life that could cause her to consider leaving would be the breakdown of personal relations in the workplace. More than the volume, intensity and complexity of her work, the deterioration of workplace relations (affordances) presents the key threat to the continuity of her practice. She also has concerns about how those affiliated with her may also be subject to workplace contestation. She is concerned that in the intensely contested work environment, these newer workers may be targeted or marginalised because of their associations with her. In terms of her participatory practice, the work pressure and the shifts in affiliations have meant she has to “make more of an effort to contribute”. So despite her growing workload outside the union, she needs to maintain her standing and engage closely within the workplace.

Jim, is a grief counselor working in the forensic pathology center. He is engaged in work for which he is professionally-prepared, experienced, finds interesting, challenging and, at times, rewarding. His interest in working directly with clients and providing a public (i.e., free) service is central to his beliefs about counselling. He possesses a strong commitment to the public provision of counselling services and the obligation for government to fulfil its social obligations. However, despite his commitment to counselling, he remains skeptical about and adopts a criticality towards his work, which he believes is open to questions about its processes and values. These qualities may be in contrast to the professional medical values and scientific discourses that permeate and are influential in the forensic pathology centre. At the beginning of the project, Jim was a casual employee. However, a permanent position was created that Jim was able to secure. This permanency has permitted him to practice counseling in ways more consonant with his personal and professional beliefs. One of these ways has been to include more face-to-face counselling and to offer his services to a wider clientele. So, he has extended the scope of the counseling practice through the exercise of his agency in a way that is consistent with his beliefs and values.

As noted already, Aden is an IT consultant for 5 primary schools. Working in schools sees Aden engaging in a familiar environment. His parents both work in primary education (as a principal and teacher). So all his life he has been involved in discussions about and often physically associated with primary schools. His competence with computers and information technology arose from an interest he developed as an adolescent through having access to a computer at home. While still at school he undertook a period of work experiences that permitted him to extend and demonstrate his competence with computers. Initially, he viewed this employment as paid work experience, but it has grown to full-time employment. He remains concerned that working in schools as a consultant may exclude him from more interesting, prestigious and highly remunerated work in the corporate world. So although quite content with the work in schools, he could be tempted by an offer from elsewhere, although he is not actively seeking such offers. The job has now been classified within the education system (i.e., Technology Officer) and he is included in staff listings and has his superannuation paid for by the department. So, while still a contingent worker, the workplace is now inviting his participation and involvement more strongly.
The concepts above, which relate these individuals' life direction, are linked to their subjectivity. That is, the sense of self that individuals projected in their responses was consistent with many aspects of their practice, and, in particular, how they conducted their employment. So, whereas Anna had never sought out alternative employment, Jim would not consider working for a private sector company in a counselling role, yet Aden could be tempted by an offer that would allow him to extend his practice further in the kind of corporate direction he cherished. What is identifiable here are the bases associated with individual subjectivity. These shape their participation in work activities and the exercise of their agency. However, how this exercise was afforded in each of the workplaces was quite diverse. That is, the intersection between the trajectories of the workplace's bases for continuity and those of the three workers were the bases that determined the reciprocally-constructed participatory practices at work. In order to illuminate these practices the following section describes there practices.

**Constructing Workplace Participatory Practices**

Diverse instances of participatory practices were identified across these three workplaces. These have consequences for the conduct of their work and others' practices. For instance, in the highly demarcated professional work environment of a forensic pathology centre the counselor was permitted to exercise considerable discretion in his work activities, without the need to consult or seek permission. The workplace comprises a number of separate areas where quite distinct forms of work are conducted (e.g., dissection rooms, laboratories where scientific testing and analysis are undertaken, storage areas for cadavers and samples, counselling facilities, and police facilities for investigation and administrative purposes). So the workplace is characterised by distinct divisions of labour premised on the possession of particular specialist knowledge. Professional autonomy is prized and practised in this workplace. Staff designated as professionals enjoy discretion within their demarcated area of work. Given the relative standing of counselling work, Jim was able to control and direct his work. Much of his work might be described as routine (e.g., only the conduct of a few standard functions — assisting with the identification of cadavers, counselling next of kin, and assisting with coronial processes). Yet, given the emotionally demanding and distinct character of each event, its requirements go beyond the mere repetition of frequently performed tasks. It also involves him interacting with other staff. This includes the mortuary attendants who provide information, and make the cadavers ready for viewing; working with pathologists to ascertain information to pass on or withhold from next of kin, discussing with the police officers in the centre about the deceased and their relatives. However, there is little opportunity for boundary crossing because many of the work functions are so discrete.

Anna's work practice was far more homogenous in terms of activities to be undertaken, but with far more complex workplace interrelationships premised on negotiations, collaborations and consultations. Within the union, highly democratic workplace practices are in place. However, there are also cliques and affiliations that were often the basis for negotiations and the working through of contested ideas and practices. Hence, unlike the grief counselor, Anna's standing and capacity to make decisions is constrained by and tightly interrelated with workplace relations and affiliations that are constantly being renegotiated, and to decision-making processes that are open to scrutiny and contestation. Also, although her work encompassed a broad range of tasks and discretionary actions, the executive authority that is largely vested in the union Secretary's position limited her authority.
So although Anna enjoys wide discretion in her work, she is denied a commensurate level of authority, which is embedded in consensual arrangements at one level, and highly centralised executive authority at another. So she lacked the capacity to take the kinds of relatively unilateral actions that Jim was able to take in his workplace.

The work requirements of Aden were constructed through the interactions with the five schools he serves weekly. As a contingent worker, he seeks to maintain relationships with administrators and teachers in the five schools. However, as the schools have converted to a departmentally-mandated standard system of computer operation, his work has become more focussed on establishing and maintaining that system. As the implementation of this system became a key strategic goal for the schools, the basis of Aden's tenure has changed. He is now less dependent upon maintaining his tenure through the good will of the teachers, and more focussed on his capacity to establish and maintain the SOS in the school. For the schools’ administrators this is currently taking precedence over routine requests for assistance for classroom teachers. So, as the goals have changed, so too have the participatory practices and range of tasks with which he has to be involved.

As indicated, over the duration of the project, each participant was afforded the opportunity to exercise his or her vocation. However, different bases existed to exercise their agency. Over the 6-month span of this study, Jim and Aden experienced expansion in their affordances that permitted them to extend the scope of their practice, and their discretion within those practices. Anna on the other hand, although enjoying wide discretion, did not experience an extension of her practices. Instead, she felt the need to give extra time to workplace relations, despite her growing workload and a requirement to be externally and strategically focussed. Taking account of the changes in work requirements and participatory practices seems important. Social practice is dynamic, as are the relations that constitute them. The dynamic qualities of workplace activities and participatory practices were evident in these three workplaces. Jim is able to exercise agency and make changes to his practice so that it and the practices of the counselling service have become closely aligned. Aden’s bases of accountability and continuity have changed and firmed up as well. By the conclusion of the project, he has clear goals and lines of authority and his vocational interests and the requirements of the workplace had become closely aligned. Anna’s participation continues to develop as staff change and affiliations of interest change in her workplace. So there is some evidence of associations between changes in work and participatory practices, which illustrate the dynamic social ecology of workplaces and what shapes engagement, participation and learning.

Workplace Participatory Practices

The data provide illustrative examples of how individuals’ socially derived practices and workplaces reciprocally shape participation and learning. It supports the contention that participation, and the learning that arises from workplace participation, is premised on intentions. So while there will always be unintended learning, there is an intentional basis to workplace experiences. That intentionality arises from the kinds of micro-social processes identified above. Corresponding with the intentionality of the workplace (its affordances) is the individuals’ decisions about how they elect to engage in the workplaces. For example, the decision of Jim the grief counsellor to conduct face-to-face, rather than phone-based, grief counselling was a product of his earlier practice. This decision transformed the work of the counsellors and the work of others. Because clients were more frequently on-site and for longer periods of time and the behaviour of his co-workers had to change. Also due to
the extended periods of face-to-face counselling Jim was less available to take phone calls that resulted in clerical staff having to take calls from distressed next-of-kin. Significantly, the counsellor's change in work practice coincided with his movement from temporary to permanent employment. That is, the workplace afforded him permanency which provided the platform for him to exercise his agency. So, this change in practice illuminates a complex of factors comprising the enactment of the individuals' agency, premised on the capacity for relative autonomous practice that arose from a change in employment status (a workplace affordance), yet which was of a kind not afforded to all other workers. In all, this single change transformed work practices, bases of participation and requirements for performance. This example of workplace participatory practice illustrates how opportunities for change, learning and development are distributed across the workplace. For instance, workers with less discretion (e.g., the administration's staff) may be subject to the changes of others and not be able to intentionally transform their participatory practices and learning, as others in that workplace were able. So, just as the teachers in the schools experienced a reduced level of technical support when the schools' priorities for information technology changed, the clerical staff in the forensic pathology centre had to learn about Jim's schedule and develop the skills to take call from distressed next-of-kin. This example indicates how, when the opportunity was afforded, the bases for the continuity of the individuals' practice are exercised to ensure its continuity. These bases reside in its participatory practices.

In all three cases there was evidence of the exercise of individuals' agency in shaping the organisation of their work. This agency was associated with preferences, beliefs and values — their subjectivities. Linked to these values is individuals' subjectivity, how they view themselves in relation to the workplace's activities and tasks. This subjectivity, like individuals' goals and values shapes their agency. The exercise of personal agency, varied over time and circumstances, and for some more so than others. In this way, the study illustrates and elaborates the inter-psychological processes occurring through work as well as their distribution. Given that micro-social practices play such a salient role in this analysis it may be timely to reconsider the social ecology of workplaces more fully (and perhaps revisit some of the earlier work in ecological psychology). As in Somerville and Bernath's (2001) study, individuals' subjectivity provides an explanatory principle for the direction and shaping of individuals' agency. This agency appeared to be most exercised when there were threats to their subjectivity and identity, brought about by changes in the workplace, or where the individual had the opportunity to exercise that agency.

New activities for all three participants (e.g., considering responses to arising from the Anthrax scare, involvement in an on-scene disaster response, involvement in decision making about superannuation, implementing the SOS) led to significant new learning. These opportunities arose from events that were structured by workplace practices. They were not ad hoc or incidental. Instead, they were central to the workplace's practice and were afforded by workplace circumstances. Some learning is likely to be unintentional on the part of the workplace (e.g., Anna's learning about shifting power structures, Jim's capacity to compare disaster-support incidents and Aden's heightened sense of worth). Along the way they also elaborated on or refined their knowledge about work that had arisen through everyday work activities.

In conclusion, this initial analysis of the micro-social processes that comprised the three workers' work activities and participatory practices, illuminates the multifaceted bases for participation in and learning through work. It also emphasises the
complex array of contributions that shape microgenetic development (Rogoff, 1990) — the moment by moment learning that occurs through engagement in conscious thought which draws upon historical precedents, cultural requirements, and situation contributions. So when considering learning through work or the development of a workplace pedagogy it is necessary to account for the relations between the kinds of micro-social processes that constitute workplace participatory practices and their consequences for micro-genetic development.

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References


Re-Envisioning VET Practice: Practitioners and the Experience and Implementation of Change

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There has always been change and VET practitioners have always had to respond to it. Being situated as they are at the interface of industry and the academy, and being required as they are by those who fund them to be responsive to shifts in those industries, many have, of necessity, re-envisioned their own practices and re-invented their own identities several times in their working lives. They have done so as comprehensively as the most adaptive of their industry colleagues. What’s more, it has been their educational practice that has facilitated the adaptiveness to technological and managerial change of a huge proportion of the Australian workforce. In debates about ‘the VET professional’ this leading role in the change process is too often overlooked. In fact, VET practitioners are adept at managing vocational identity shifts. Those who began their working lives as industrial practitioners fashioned new identities for themselves when they moved into the field of education. In addition, the technologically driven changes of the ICT revolution required them to make fundamental modifications to both their industrial and pedagogical practices. At the same time, they have been continuously incorporating the altered professional practices that have evolved in their industries-of-origin into their own repertoires in order to continue to base their teaching practice on current industry practices. Thus VET professionals accommodate and envision dual professional identities for themselves, which richly and uniquely equip them to sustain their ongoing dual professional allegiances and obligations.

VET practice and its practitioners are variously ‘envisioned’, both by researchers in the extensive literature on the subject of ‘the VET professional’, and, reflexively, by themselves in their own reflections on themselves and their practice. The VET professional’s identity is a complex one, informed by dual professional allegiances that involve loyalty to the discipline in which they were first trained and to that of education as well.

This duality requires the VET professional to be able to integrate, within his or her teaching practice, the two “different discourses and different sense-making constructions” that characterise industry and education. As Chappell points out, this positions the VET professional in ways that are both uniquely challenging and contradictory. Challenging, in that VET learners are often themselves workplace practitioners, able to critique the currency and applicability of their teachers’ industry expertise; and contradictory, in that “the implicit and contextual nature of working knowledge... does not fit with traditional educational practices that rely on knowledge conceptualised as explicit and generalisable.” (Chappell, 2000a, p. 76)

Thus VET practitioners experience conflicting epistemological demands which are further compounded by the, at times, seemingly inimical requirements that they be at once compliant agents of government policy and creative, autonomous interpreters of pedagogy. The NSW Ministerial Advisory Council on the Quality of
Teaching noted the dialectic between these two modes of being — the former as 'technician-teacher'; the latter as 'reflective teacher.' Further, they observed that these models 'are closely related to perceptions of the fundamental purpose of schooling. The technician-teacher is in a good position to protect and reproduce the social status quo; the reflective teacher is likely to be a better agent of social transformation.' (MACQ, 1998) Experienced as stressful by some practitioners (e.g., see Seddon, 1997; Simons, 2001; Walker, 2001) these twin demands are nonetheless accepted by others as merely the two sides of the coin of what it means to be a professional. They would agree with Day that “the twin pillars of professionalism” are autonomy and accountability. (Day, 1999, p. 14) As Robson succinctly puts it, “professional practitioners do not have licence but a licence.” (Robson, 2001)

If the resulting images of “the VET professional” are often difficult to reconcile, the picture is further complicated by the observation, made by researchers engaged in a recent substantial study on this topic, that ‘the term 'VET professional' was not familiar to participants, nor did they particularly identify with it.” (Harris et al., 2002b, p. 45)

What then, are some of the performative consequences of the ‘VET professional’ discourse? If practitioners themselves do not use the term in order to help frame their own identity, what purpose does it serve for others? What does it mean to behave professionally, especially when implementing change? How may an appreciation of the organic nature of change help practitioners understand the context in which they operate today and prepare for those in which they will be operating in the future?

Marginson identifies six interrelated elements as characterising the changes which are occurring in technology and work: the globalisation of the economy and culture, international competition producing ICT-driven productivity increases, the shift in balance from predominantly blue-collar to white-collar work, uneven organisational change, the increase in non-standard, ‘temp’ and ‘flexible’ work, and polarisation in access to technology, work and income. (Marginson, 2000, p. 5) To these, (Waterhouse et al.) add the changed rates of workforce participation by men and women, the decline in union influence paired with the rise in individual workplace contracts, and the increased numbers employed in small and medium sized enterprises. (Waterhouse et al., 1999)

These global experiences of change are felt by TAFE teachers, in particular, as:

...a set of policies and related discourses that have not only changed their educational institution but have challenged their understanding of their educational roles, privileging new pedagogical practices, new knowledges, new skills and new relationships with students and employers.' (Chappell, 1999, p. 3)

In Australia, training reforms, in conjunction with the above social shifts, have led to changes in the composition and credentials of the VET workforce. These changes are seen by some as ‘de-professionalising’ and by others as ‘re-professionalising’ VET practitioners. Those who argue for the de-professionalising effect note the reversal of Kangan’s push for professionalisation via qualifications (i.e., higher education teaching qualifications), evidenced in today’s bar being set at the level of Assessment and Workplace Training certification. They further note the ‘disaggregation’ of the VET professional’s role (e.g., into separate roles for trainers and assessors) and the simultaneous ‘differentiation’ of the VET workforce (i.e., into a permanent ‘core’, surrounded by a growing number of ‘peripheral’ contract and casual staff.) (Harris et al., 2002b, p. 40) However, not all observers see a threat to the professionalism of VET in this differentiation.

The sector’s increasing reliance on what Chappell describes as a ‘contingent VET workforce’ of casual and part time staff is
not only a response to economic imperatives, but also a strategy 'to facilitate rapid responses to changing market conditions, training requirements and emerging skills deficits.' (Chappell, 2000b, pp. 6–7) As such, it is a climate in which there are both threats and opportunities for the traditional VET practitioner, despite the apparent confusion as to questions of professionalism and professional status that are to be expected when the profession itself is in a state of evolution and flux.

For Day, the threats may be summarised as having to live with change, and with the mismanagement of change; and having one's professional judgement discounted or undermined. On the other hand, the British participants in his study saw that changes could bring certain benefits, such as the opportunity to experience the supportive culture of a learning organisation, to become a lifelong learner engaged in reflective practice, to change roles, and even, have the time to reflect. Dealing with the challenges was also seen as providing opportunities for personal and professional growth, as expressed by those who described themselves as having learned to 'negotiate the swamp' and to 'open windows'. (Day, 1999)

Those observers who claim that, on the contrary, a re-professionalisation of the VET workforce is underway (such as Avis, Attwell and Ray, quoted in Harris et al., 2002b, p. 41) point to evidence of new opportunities for teaching and learning practice, for identity and for collaboration with the greater numbers of personnel who are now “concerned with the task of building the skills of the workforce.” (Harris et al., 2002b, p. 44)

Although supporting Harris et al’s observation that no traditional VET practitioners ‘would identify themselves as VET professionals,’ Chappell defines the ‘new VET professional’ as ‘the group of professionals who are engaged in education and training activities that focus on preparing and developing workplace capability but which extend beyond traditional teaching or training roles.’ (Chappell, 2000b, p. 2)

What must be recognised is the extent to which many in the remaining ranks of permanent VET teachers have, indeed, taken charge of their own evolution as practitioners, ensuring that they and their students have moved well beyond the boundaries of what was once circumscribed by the ‘traditional teaching or training role’. For example, the reports on the several hundreds of Framing the Future and Reframing the Future projects that have been conducted around Australia are but one form of witness to the capacity and enthusiasm of great numbers of VET practitioners for a re-envisioned professionalism in their practice. These practitioners are described as being ‘high-skilled VET practitioners’ rather than as ‘VET professionals’, but they exhibit all of the characteristics that mark practitioners as ‘professionals.’ (Mitchell & Wood, 2001)

Seddon points to a resolution of these divergent positions in the de-professionalising/re-professionalising debate, suggesting that indeed a ‘new professionalism’ needs to arise in the VET sector. This new professionalism is predicated on practitioners being empowered by those changes which can be seen as opportunities, at the same time refusing to be disempowered by those which are seen as challenges to previously constructed identities. (Harris et al., 2002b, p. 43)

As Chappell notes, much of the call for increased professional development for VET practitioners is instrumentally-based, resting on the assumption that changed knowledge will result in changed practice. It fails to recognise that the call to practitioners to change their practice is actually a call “to change their identity.”(Chappell, 1999, p. 4)

Whether and how VET practitioners might change their identity is itself the subject of several other studies, some of whose organising metaphors (of practitioners as ‘ostriches, snakes, chameleons’ and ‘dinosaurs’) are indicative of the complexity both of the VET professional’s identity and of the task of
 altering it into something else. (Harris et al., 2001; Seddon, 1997) The identity of the TAFE teacher is already marked as being constructed differently from that of other teachers. Chappell identifies three discourses whose influences have brought about this unique identity: the possession of industrial skill; the provision of liberal education; and the adherence to the principles of public service. (Chappell, 1999, p. 6)

Professional status brings with it a number of obligations and responsibilities, chief of which is to be conscious of the choices to be made and the implications of those choices. Professional behaviour, rather than the possession of a professional qualification, is the mark of a professional. (Cram, 1995) Professional knowledge includes both a strategic dimension (contributing to the social recognition of a professional group) and a pragmatic dimension (the ability to perform an activity proficiently). (Martineau, 1998)

The literature identifies six characteristics of professions. A profession is an intellectual activity that requires professional accountability. It is a learned activity, not a mechanical one, and requires judgement and reflection. It is not only learned, but practical, because its aim is not theoretical speculation and development. It is learned in part through lengthy study, usually at a university. There is an internal organisation and cohesion among those who practise it, evidenced often in practices of collegiality and collaboration. Finally, professional activity is a service to society. (Martineau, 1998)

So wherein does true professionalism lie? A recent Emmerson cartoon reminds us that it is neither in superficial appearance nor in statements of claim to status (see Figure 1). Hargreaves distinguishes between being professional, which is related to the conduct and demeanour of individual workers and the standards guiding what they do, and being professionalised, a process whereby the whole of the occupational group improves its status, standing, regard and level of reward. He proposes that "collegial professionalism" is the most appropriate response teachers can make to the pressures of constant change, and observes that as teachers' roles have expanded to embrace consultation and collaborative planning with colleagues, they have begun to turn more to each other for professional learning, for a sense of direction and for mutual support.

"In a world of accelerating educational reform, this kind of working together helps teachers to pool resources, and to make sense of and develop collective responses towards intensified and often capricious demands on their practice." (Hargreaves, 1997, p. 95)

Walker proposes 'a view of professionalism that acknowledges and celebrates the complexity of professional judgements in which outcomes may, but cannot always be determined in advance, and where reflection and improvement is integral...'. For her, 'uncertainty is part of the job, not a troublesome process to be expunged through 'performance indicators'.' (Walker, 2001, p. 2) She describes engaging with colleagues in 'reworking our professionalism' through dialogue and action research, by means of which they 'worked to rebuild professional identities...more consistent with our educational values.' (Walker, 2001, p. 3) The process of action research facilitates 'becoming practically critical'
The central function of the moral dimension to this perspective on professionalism is articulated in the work of Nixon and Ranson (1997; cited in Walker, 2001, p. 2), who coin the term ‘emergent professionalism’ to describe an occupational group’s awakening to moral concerns, particularly in a context of opposition to marketisation.

Day cites the work of Woods (1994) and Troman (1996), who “found that teachers have regained control of decisions regarding their teaching by first complying and then strategically redefining the work so that it remained underpinned by their own values and identity as professionals with moral purposes.” (Day, 1999; emphasis in original.) He takes issue with those who see practitioners as the victims of change, claiming that “…the teachers in this study recognised precisely what was happening and were able to find ways of asserting their professionalism after a temporary period of shock, innovation fatigue and in some cases disillusionment.” (Day, 1999, p. 13) Similarly, Simons found that those practitioners who were successfully navigating change had “internalised the shifts in practice that were required of them” and had also accepted that “it is an on-going responsibility of each teacher to act as a change agent.” (Simons, 2001, p. 212)

However, despite the widespread application of these professional practices, Martineau notes that several factors continue to contribute to society’s reluctance to recognise teaching as a profession. Among these are: the way in which teachers have chosen to associate through unions rather than professional associations; the lack of control that practitioners as a group have over their training; and the trend toward increased fragmentation of teaching tasks. He also argues that teaching’s failure to develop a body of professional knowledge that earns societal approval also hinders its wider recognition as a profession. (Martineau, 1998) It has also been argued that the teaching profession’s own reluctance to “distinguish between successful and unsuccessful practitioners” is detrimental, not only to the quality, but also to the status of teaching. (Boston, 1999, p. 13)

Thomas notes that the morale of VET practitioners would be improved were the workforce to be professionalised. However, she insists that it is imperative that the profession itself accept responsibility for its own management: “if the lead for professionalising the workforce is taken by the sector itself and is not imposed, the result is likely to be an increase at least in the perception of the professional status of the sector from outside its ranks.” (Thomas, 2001, p. 19)

It is commonly argued that increased professional development is necessary for the improvement of both the quality and the status of the VET professional. However, professional development is cast in two very different moulds, one vastly more satisfactory for the practitioner than the other.

One — deficit training — views teaching as technical work and seeks to improve it by training teachers in a set of techniques and discrete behaviour. This approach has, in fact, been dominant. The other approach — growth and practice — defines teachers as professionals, views them as having requisite knowledge to act on behalf of the students, and seeks to develop structures to enable them to collaborate with colleagues and participate in their own renewal and the renewal of their schools. (Lieberman & Miller, 1992)

What is missing from the former model is the growth which is implicit in the dynamism of the latter model. The deficit model addresses practitioners’ needs only superficially, but worse than this is the damaging sub-text of what can be regarded as ‘remedial PD’: the message that it is practitioners themselves who are personally lacking. In contrast, the dynamic model of professional development which fosters such approaches as action research, work
based learning and communities of practice, does not pretend that individuals alone are responsible for any lack of skills. It acknowledges that systemic challenges can be met and successfully dealt with by people working together, where those people have the incentives and the motivation to do so. Where the deficit model of professional development is driven from the outside, in response to an externally-identified need, the dynamic model is owned and cultivated from within, in response to an internally-perceived need.

While professional development programs such as Reframing the Future, Flexible Learning Leaders and Learnscope are leveraged with national funding, there are also ample cases of professional practice which are the products of individual and local initiative. (Bateman & Clayton, 2002; Clayton et al., 2002; Harris et al., 2002a) They are not nationally-driven, but rather, are independent responses to the new contexts in which practitioners find themselves. Many of these practitioners are torchbearers, leading the way for others by testing various strategies that can be employed when translating policy into practice. In the absence, often, of clear guidelines as to how policy directives ought to be interpreted at ‘the chalkface’, they exercise their judgement, reflect on their practice, and work collaboratively with colleagues to arrive at mutual understanding and mutually-determined modes of practice. In doing so, they exemplify Grundy’s practical professionalism — the reading and interpreting of situations, followed by “action involving hermeneutic understanding guided by judgment... and knowledge.” (Grundy, 1987, p. 185) This process, which occurs in what Hargreaves refers to as ‘the crucible of collaboration’ (Hargreaves, 1997, p. 95) demonstrates professionalism in action and shapes much of the change in VET.

Hargreaves describes the further implications that might follow from a systemic commitment to ‘collegial professional learning.’ One is that ‘professional learning must be seen as a continuing process for teachers’ and that this entails matched commitment from individual teachers and the systems in which they work. While “individual teachers must commit seriously to career-long professional learning... too many teachers are starved of good quality professional learning because managers or policy makers have insufficient commitment to providing it.” (Hargreaves, 1997, p. 99) Thinking along similar lines, Seddon reflects that capacity building, which she has long valued and promoted (e.g., see Modra & Seddon, 2000; Seddon, 1997) is a strategy which is currently being sustained only by resting on ‘longstanding cultural and public infrastructure.’ (Seddon, 2000, p. 383) The long-term viability of such a strategy requires long-term financial and political support.

Hargreaves also suggests that “teachers must have and endeavour to meet an exacting set of professional standards of practice.” The teaching profession, he argues, must become self-regulating, giving teachers “the privilege and responsibility of establishing their own collective professionalism, so they are the vanguard, rather than the victims, of educational reform.” (Hargreaves, 1997, p. 100) In thus anticipating what the teaching profession could look like in the future, Hargreaves is again joined by Seddon, who defines ‘emergent professionalism’ as entailing self-management, capacity building, the configuration of new educational spaces, lifelong learning, and an enhanced social and financial appreciation of the value of teachers’ knowledge and expertise. (Seddon, 2000)

Professional VET practitioners see change as a challenge and a mechanism for personal renewal. They have responded to change, both in industry and in the academy, and in doing so, have of necessity, re-envisioned their own practices and re-invented their own identities. Their uniquely dual professional identities richly equip them to sustain dual professional allegiances and obligations. While adeptly
managing their own responses to change, they have also, through their teaching and training, facilitated the adaptiveness to change of learners in the workplace. They have thus played a leading role in the change process.

For professional development to contribute to the re-envisioning and reinventing that these practitioners are engaged with, and for it to have any real impact on their practice, it must offer the opportunity to work through their own issues, to make their own mistakes and to come to an agreed position on what can work in their context. Constraining professional development options within carefully tailored boundaries of national policy is not the answer for innovative action nor the means to ensure the professionalism of Australia’s VET practitioners.

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At the centre of contemporary reforms to post-compulsory education and training sit a variety of views, usually unstated, about what constitutes a 'good worker'. This paper surfaces some of these assumptions through considering some past efforts to use education to construct 'good workers'. Following a very brief introduction the paper presents a dialogue-in-progress among the contributors, whose historical and theoretical concerns developed through their distinct but overlapping doctoral research. The 'paper,' the associated Conference presentation, and the discussion it generates among the authors and participants is part a stage in an ongoing collaborative research process which itself aims to model 'good work,' in an intellectual sense. We hope that other adult education researchers will be 'drawn into' our collaboration, which is seeking to learn from the past, by revisiting and revising the history of Australian adult and workplace education.

Vocational education and training in Australia has not been well-served with critical historical analysis, a position the authors arrived at from different directions we took in our doctoral studies. Rather than project an artificial unity among our disparate perspectives, we present here a compilation retaining their distinct character. Peter begins with a reflection on similarities between key elements of current training reform agendas and earlier 'revolutions' in Australia's training system. Bob takes us back another forty years, to the writings of Bill Earsman, a 'good worker' in the sense promoted by the socialist and syndicalist tendencies within the international labour movement during WW1. Mike, like Earsman, was a sheet metal worker, several generations on. He presents two contradictory images of the 'good worker' of the 1970s, one from a union delegates' training program, the other embedded in TAFE curriculum development models. Finally, Teri uses an 1880s anarchist text, Why Wurk? to re-affirm the importance to adult education of utopian vision as an antidote to obsessive vocationalism.

Part 1. Re-engineering the Past
Institutions, as long-term patterns of thought and practice leading to socio-cultural continuity and change, are rarely
capricious. By nature conservative, they meet challenges by applying and reinforcing time-honoured traditions, norms and the lessons of collective memory. Vocational education and training, as an enduring and formal set of institutional practices, is no exception. But our newly developed discipline seems afflicted with collective amnesia, rarely acknowledging its past (Rushbrook & Brown, 2001). One consequence is that the so-called 'training revolution', beginning in the late 1980s and continuing unabated into the new millennium, is falsely regarded as a new paradigm of national training redemption. However, historians trying to unravel connections with the recent past have identified a number of vocational education and training 'revolutions' which experienced varying degrees of success. The post-WWII Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme, the 1954 Wright Report, the 1960s–1970s creation of middle-level paraprofessional and technician courses, and the early effects of the 1975 Kangan report are all examples of institutional challenge which help place in perspective the 'key elements of continuity and change in... the structure of occupational education in Australia' (Barker & Holbrook, 1996, p. 223). Let me be more provocative: significant elements of what historically prove to be examples of vocational education and training 'revolutions' which experienced varying degrees of success. The post-WWII Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme, the 1954 Wright Report, the 1960s–1970s creation of middle-level paraprofessional and technician courses, and the early effects of the 1975 Kangan report are all examples of institutional challenge which help place in perspective the 'key elements of continuity and change in... the structure of occupational education in Australia' (Barker & Holbrook, 1996, p. 223). Let me be more provocative: significant elements of what historically prove to be examples of vocational education and training institutional continuity are regularly touted as harbingers of change. Three examples serve to illustrate this: Tripartite sectoral cooperation, Competency-based Training (CBT) and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

On sectoral cooperation, the relationship between Harold Holt, the Menzies' government Minister for Labour and National Service and Albert Monk, the President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) throughout the 1950s was known as the 'Holt-Monk Axis'. Menzies considered it impossible to govern Australia effectively without the consent of the trade unions (Hagan, 1981, pp. 318–319). The war-time partnership of government, unions and employers continued into the post-war years through a global capitalism dominated by the Welfare State and Keynesian economics. Led by the metal-trades unions, several post-war generations of tradespeople enjoyed increasing award wages won through federal and state authorities, as conditions of prosperity contrasting with pre-war economic hardship ushered in an age of tripartite industrial conservatism (Rushbrook, 1995). Vocational education training and change was not to be made through the tried and true institution of apprenticeship, but through the creation of tradition-less technician and paraprofessional education (Barker & Holbrook, 1996; Rushbrook, 2000). The relationship continued through the post-Australia Reconstructed (1987) era into the new millennium where, in spite of ebbs and flows of dominance, the traditional tripartite parties continue to dictate the production of workplace vocational education and training outcomes and certification. CBT and the AQF are likewise directly linked to the discourse of post-WWII industrial training. The same adverse conditions of total war that produced tripartite cooperation affirmed Scientific Management or Taylorism as the preferred method of industrial production. When machine parts were required to be produced accurately, often and in great numbers from a range of producers, and assembled into the weapons of war, Taylorism provided an efficient solution (Rushbrook, 1995, pp. 80–106). In the process, the separation of production conception from production execution (Braverman, 1974) produced also a now taken-for-granted separation of 'white-collar' management from the 'blue-collar' workforce, at least in large manufacturing sites. Post-war managerial theorists reinforced this distinction through management education courses and journals such as Personnel Practice Bulletin (1946–1972), a Department of Labour and National Service (DLNS) publication
edited by Myer Kangan. This discourse not only sought efficient means of production, but also the construction of the good worker, through psychological habituation to the production process. Henry Bland, 1950s DLNS Secretary, saw this as creating ‘a new attitude of the worker to his [sic.] equipment’ (Bland, 1962, p. 24).

By 1960, a revolution had taken place in enterprise management discourse in relation to workplace structures, training and theory. A received memory, manufactured and legitimised through the experiences of total war, along with the spectacular success of mass manufacturing, generated a self-referencing paradigm of industrial development. The segmentation of labour into functional divisions from managers through to professional technologists, to tradespeople and semi-skilled and unskilled operators was justified according to claims of efficiency and the rightful separation of product design from execution (Brown & Rushbrook, 1995). Two hundred years of positive science and its application to human organisations appeared to demonstrate the veracity of an objective and profit-inducing division of labour. Because the enterprise ‘owned’ and controlled a worker’s labour time (Cochrane, 1985) it assumed claim also to his or her workplace attitudes. Training thereby assumed as legitimate the right to manufacture ‘correct thinking’ as a counterpart to the manufacture of marketable products.

In the new millennium, many vocational education and training ideas developed in the 1950s and 1960s are embedded in VET practice as ‘commonsense’. The AQF segments workplace activity based on degrees of separation from the ‘conceiving’ role of the professional manager. Modern Training Package outcomes successfully emulate 1950s training practices of psychological habituation and the re-placement of management priorities within workplace value structures. CBT reflects the functional segmentation of workplace training tasks and its outcomes-based measurement. Arguably, many aspects of the contemporary National Training Framework are simply re-engineered practices of an institutionally embedded but forgotten post-war workplace revolution. What goes around...

Part 2. Bill Earsman: A ‘Good Worker’ Resists

For nearly a decade, I have been researching an underground current in workplace education which played a substantial role since the earliest days of scientific management in Australia. An interest in contradiction, informed by my marxist training within this alternative tradition, sent me in search of empirical answers to some simple questions: What were workers themselves doing to educate themselves, while scientific managers and adult educators were trying to train them? Were they blank slates on which others wrote education programs and history? Or did they have their own educational programs and traditions, with which the so-called experts were forced to engage?

The questions now seem obvious, but answering them posed some challenges. Historians of adult education rarely acknowledge dissident traditions, and to the extent they were part of the culture of less academically-literate classes within society, they left fewer traces in the usual places historians look. Moreover, because these traditions are ‘underground’, part of their capacity to survive depended on their not coming to the notice of official agencies. My work was only possible because in 1990 one such dissident tradition gave up its records for posterity, when the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) ended seventy years of political organising, dissolving itself and surrendering its enormous archives to the Mitchell Library in Sydney. With the help of Symons (1994), I began searching for evidence of the educational work of Australian communists. This is how I discovered Bill
Earsman, a name to remember in the history of working class education. Earsman was the CPA's first General Secretary, elected at a meeting of twenty-six founding members in Sydney in 1920. Following his election, he travelled to Moscow for a meeting of the Third International, the Comintern established by Lenin and the Bolsheviks, where he successfully argued the case for the recognition of the CPA as a section of that international movement. The security police got wind of his activities, and he was denied entry back into Australia, whereupon he returned to Moscow to become an educator with the Red Army (Macintyre, 1998; Turner, 1981).

Earsman aroused my interest when I discovered that he had been a radical educator well before he helped establish the CPA. In deference to Mike, I want to acknowledge firstly that Earsman was a metal worker. And in a connection back to the tradition about which Teri writes, he was also associated, like many soon-to-become communists, with the Industrial Workers of the World, the IWW. Born in 1884 in Edinburgh, he grew up there and completed his apprenticeship as a turner. At 22, he emigrated to New Zealand, moving on from there to Melbourne in 1910, where he found work in the Victorian Railways. He joined the Victorian Socialist Party, taking over the running of its Socialist Sunday School in 1912, and was its acting secretary in 1913. By 1915, he was secretary of his union, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, and took part in the major industrial disputes of 1917–1919, brought on in no small part by the employers attempt to introduce the principles of scientific management in the name of ‘national efficiency’. In 1919, Earsman helped found the Victorian Labor College, an independent working class education institution, modelled on similar colleges in the UK, which survives to this day. He then moved to Sydney with his partner, the radical feminist barrister Christian Jollie Smith, founding a Labour College there. In the CPA archives, I found a faded pamphlet he wrote in 1920, The Proletariat and Education. It begins:

In writing this pamphlet I wish to show two things. Firstly, I wish to point out the dead end to which the present education system is leading, viewed from the point of view of the working class, and second, I want to show one way out by which the working class may have and hold education, if they wish. Personally I believe the Labor College Movement to be a way out... it is an instrument which the working class may develop for the acquiring of knowledge and intellectual training to make us more fit not only for the bringing about of the Industrial Revolution, but also for the more efficient working of Revolutionary society when we have won.

He was nothing if not forthright about the universities, which were reaching out to workers through the WEA, and the working men's colleges, the forerunners of TAFE:

The university is no more and no less than a training ground for servants to enter the service of the capitalist... (it) ranks with our working men's college. The one trains mental workers, and the other manual workers for the service of the capitalist... (Earsman, 1920, pp. 6–7).

Most people in Australia today find such language, of class and class struggle, antiquated. But Earsman meant it. Moreover, it grew from his experience fighting against the scientific management movement, which directly contradicted and opposed his movement's objective, which was to increase, not decrease, workers control over the manner and pace of production. And who were industry's advisers on scientific management? None other than the university lecturers who were offering classes in history and economics through the WEA, the founders of modern adult education (Taksa, 1997; Boughton, 1997).
Part 3. A Good Worker
Sidetracked, For a Day
at the Races

Steve, a sheetmetal worker at an aircraft factories at Fishermen's Bend in Melbourne during the 1970s, was a punter who loved horse racing. Like all punters, he was convinced his day would come. He knew that he had to persist. He had favourite trainers and jockeys that he followed closely. He read up on all the form guides. He was extremely knowledgeable about every facet of horse racing, and he attended race meetings as often as he could. In fact, it was the mid week race meeting that caused all the trouble. You see, Steve came to work by train, and each morning he needed to change trains in the city at the central station. Wednesday was no exception, but walking past the platform for the train to the mid week race meeting was just too much of a temptation and Steve was often sidetracked from work to go off to the races. Before long, 'often' became every Wednesday. Most of the people that Steve worked with thought this was funny. He was a single person who earned tradesman wages, lived cheaply at home with his family and could probably afford to gamble more than some. So to the other workers at the factory, Steve's preferences were entirely understandable.

His bosses were less sympathetic. They noticed Steve's absenteeism from checking the time cards. To them, having someone missing from work each Wednesday was some kind of crime, and a challenge to their authority as managers. Between them they decided to confront Steve, give him a stern warning and scare him into mending his ways.

The next week on the Wednesday, again Steve was a no show. But this time on the Thursday when he waltzed into the factory, he was immediately summoned to the Foreman's office. Here he was confronted and asked to explain where he had been. Steve was always one for the truth, so when asked it was a matter of honesty that he looked the foreman in the eye and said he had been to the races. The foreman went into some spiel about Steve having responsibilities to the firm but Steve did not share these feelings. He suggested that Steve should get his union rep and report back. The foreman explained that he was going to take this further and call in his own superior, the factory manager to give an official reprimand. They meet back at the Foreman's office about half an hour later. Steve had the factory union rep and the foreman had brought the factory manager. The office, on the perimeter of the huge shopfloor area, had a large glass window facing onto the workshop. Production continued but most workers had twigged.

The factory manager started like a barrister in court warming to the task. He made some very general comments which hardly seemed relevant, yet he was clearly heading for the security of the high moral ground. Steve tuned out a bit. Suddenly he heard the phrase 'every Wednesday', then not quite sure of what was expected of him he heard the same words repeated 'every Wednesday'. The factory manager looked at Steve quizzically. He seemed to be rewording his question in order to get an answer: 'So why?, he said.

'Why?', asked Steve.

'Why is it that you only work four days a week?'

Steve lightened and responded carefully, 'Because I can't survive on three!'

At the Certificate IV in Workplace Leadership training program for union activists in 1997, Steve was the model we used to introduce and explain our Troublemakers award, for which course participants vied with accounts of worker resistance and self-activity. In the context of this program, it was workers like Steve who were considered the good workers!

VET & CBT — Is it an Education Worth Having?
Present day vocational education and training programs are designed for an occupation or
job role following the analysis of what good workers in that job do, where ‘good workers’ are those that are generally considered to be competent. This analysis of the job becomes the basis of the curriculum. For the past decade, the dominant approach to VET curriculum has been competency-based training. Various contributors to the literature detail the development of CBT over the last century. Some have traced the origins and development of CBT from the earlier applications of scientific management (or Taylorism) to the field of education, in a way similar to the arguments presented here by my colleagues. In the US, Joe Kincheloe (1999, p. 58) refers to W. W. Charters as an apostle of Frederick Taylor for the way he applied his doctrine to schools. Charters analysed the role of secretary by identifying twelve basic secretarial duties, which he further divided into 871 specific steps. Each step was then taught to the young women undertaking secretarial education. Shortly after this, the Stephens College for Women asked Charters to create curriculum for the job of being a woman. He identified 7,300 categories and devised a scientific training program.

My story in relation to the Australian setting begins in the 1970s with innovations in trade apprenticeship training at Richmond College of TAFE (Brown in Kenway 1994, pp. 153–184). During the early 1980s, TAFE in Victoria began to institutionalise the Instructional Systems Model (ISM) for developing courses (Stevenson, 1994, p. 19). Developed from training within the US Armed Forces, ISM encapsulated behaviourist psychology in its application to vocational training, its approach underpinned by a belief that effective learning leads to a change in behaviour. The concepts of changing behaviour as a result of training, and improving performance in workplaces, were soon put together. Under the ISM, training programs were outcomes-based with the intention that learners/trainees achieve the requirements pre-specified in behavioural objectives, which had three component statements. The first described the performance requirement, the second described the conditions under which the task was to be undertaken, and the third outlined the standard to which the task had to conform (Mager, 1962). The ISM had a dozen or so steps arranged into five phases, namely analysis, design, implementation, evaluation and validation. ISM, it seems, moved from being one institution’s approach to curriculum development to a widely held belief guiding practice throughout the VET sector. The features of the ISM and its historical predecessors are now being repackaged, ‘rebadged’ in the jargon of modern marketing, to confront us once again in the guise of Training Packages, programmed instruction kits for the state’s favoured image of the good worker.

Part 4. ‘Why Wurk’: A ‘Wobbly’ Challenge to the ‘Good Worker’

Capitalism’s central doctrine of ‘work’ as a universal ‘good’ is challenged here with a call to utopian thinking because, as Levitas has argued, ‘[t]ransformative utopianism requires not just the projection of desire... [but requires] us to think seriously and creatively about the conditions for a sustainable and equitable future’ (Levitas, 2000, p. 199). Simultaneously, as capitalism seeks ways to reduce labour costs, adult education fixates on vocational training, urging skill-upgrading and competition in an ever-shrinking job pool, goaded on by an escalating, anxiety-ridden hyperbole of ‘change discourse’ of ideas that Bradley et al. remind us are part and parcel of a commodity market which thrives on novelty. When the hyperbole is filtered from this discourse, an ‘equitable future’ remains as the core of adult education (Merlyn, 2000).

A commitment to knowing our history is an essential component of envisioning how the future might be better and the historical development of the ‘whimsical concept’ of the good worker is under a
more radical investigation here; one that asks why should we work?

Throughout the struggle of 'the making of the English working class', one significant theme of the class dialectic has been the resistance of the working class to its 'making' (Thompson, 1968). Traditional patterns of work had engaged the variety of seasonal necessity in a sensuously aesthetic web of dignity and belonging. The shift to the artificial work rhythms and social alienation of industrialism brought massive cultural dislocation. However, cultural traits can be remarkably durable. In his study of Australian culture, Waterhouse (1995) frequently refers to colonial employers' frustrations with workers' traditional work-leisure patterns and drinking behaviour. Like British peers, colonial workers preferred to labour in periodic and seasonal cycles, enjoying a steady stream of alcoholic beverages that peaked at community events. The belief that 'free' Englishmen had an inalienable right to enjoy their lives proved remarkably difficult to extinguish.

The Celtic-Anglo-Saxon capacity for the sheer enjoyment of living, an ancient cultural characteristic that Weber (1930) saw as the progenitor of the pre-capitalist tag, 'Merrie old England', is still with us, though in a much subdued and controlled form. An early Australian warrior in this cause, Francis MacNamara's ('Frank the Poet') one-man campaign of civil disobedience against arbitrary and onerous convict work allocation is legendary (Meredith & Whalen, 1983). While few had Frank's sheer cussedness and capacity to endure the punishment he incurred for such monumental recalcitrance, his rebellious verse became a favourite of bushmen's campfires, its resonance in the ballad of 'The Wild Colonial Boy' and Ned Kelly's 'Jerilderie letter' (Hodge & Mishra, 1990, p. 123) McQueen's (1970) assertion that the dominant characteristic of Australian culture was petit bourgeois may be correct, but this derives more from an ethos of the 'sturdy and obstinate insistence upon a principle' of independence and the iconography of Macnamara and other favourite rebels, rather than any innate conservatism.

Slower industrial development in Australia established meaningful communities around miners, rural workers and artisan guilds and by the 1880s an industrial working class identity had emerged that retained its locus of dignity within such societies. The more difficult and dangerous the work, the more apparent the need to develop an aesthetic of the work that encompassed its 'dignity', hence the most militant unions arose in the toughest fields of industry: mining, shearing, and shipping. Oral historian, Lowenstein observes that, '[w]hat emerges when people talk about work is the search for dignity of labour' (cited in Moore, 1987). And, despite the best efforts of postindustrial capitalism to commodify every human exchange, for many workers intrinsic values such as dignity and meaningfulness remain at least equally important to their idea of themselves as good workers as financial reward.

The ideology of work as righteous, obligatory, rather than dignified meaningful action has been essential to the development of modern capitalism, producing a dogma so effective that most people never seriously question its validity. Those fighting against the hegemony of this paradigm become alienated from their peers, the massed adjusted so well that the right to work is demanded. Australian Wobblies published Lafarque's treatise, *The Right to be Lazy*, critiquing bourgeois educator's manipulation of proletarian perceptions of work, so that they 'think themselves fortunate to be allowed to labour 12 hours per day' (Lafarque, 1883/1917).

Where adult educators now might lessen the grip of this hegemony we are instead in the grip of an obsessive focus upon vocationalism. Surely we can aspire to something better? Adult education's history is in the battle between the inculcation of the doctrine of forbearance and an education for a freedom rightly theirs. Lafarque expressed the belief of his age, that 'the
machine is the saviour of humanity, the god … who shall give us leisure and liberty'. Well, machines are now incommensurably faster and smarter, but workers clinging to employment through over-work or for whom work is elusive or entirely absent, are either denied knowledge of that heritage of struggle or persuaded it was just some utopian socialist delusion.

References


A Vision for the VET professional

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The paper offers a rather blurred vision of the emerging role in the VET system of the VET professional. The vision is not clear because of the way a professional role in VET has developed in a rather ad hoc way. The nature of situation for the VET professional is developed by comparisons with older and newer professions as they have developed in Australia in the late 20th century and in the new century.

The fact that National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) has commissioned research on the VET professional in 2001 is evidence to indicate that a new profession in VET has been identified and recognised. Further the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) in its 1996 edition (1997) includes a category in the professional education sub-major group, 2422 called Vocational Education Teacher. This indicates, in labour market terms, that the VET professional as teacher is recognised. Among the group that have been called 'VET practitioners', some or all are now professionals. Perhaps some rejoicing and mutual back-slapping but beyond any initial positive feelings there appear to be many problems facing the VET professional.

Some General Observations

Some initial observations are made about the identification and emergence of this new profession. VET is really a creation of national government policy and the VET professional is an afterthought of that creation. While government policy initiatives may have contributed to the emergence of other new professions, the VET situation is different. There were VET teachers, for example, before VET. They were called TAFE teachers: they were quite numerous. So the new profession does have historical links to predecessors. It is not intended to trace the steps in the emergence of VET or how VET has changed TAFE but both of these aspects should be examined to illustrate from whence the VET professional has come.

The development of VET has been smooth and effective in some areas. In the area of providing the human resources to service the sector the planning has been less effective. The planning for the 'officers of the VET army' has been haphazard and reactive rather than forward-looking. The flurry of activity in the early 90s by providers to offer Train the trainer programs is evidence of this lack of forward
planning. The grafting of what is designed as a new professional species onto the well-established vine of the professions was never going to be an easy task.

What has complicated the process is that the professions themselves have undergone dramatic change in the past two decades. One simple illustration of these changes is the fact that in the past professions were not allowed to advertise their services. It was forbidden. Under the new dispensation professions are not allowed to forbid their members from advertising. As recently as 1993 a dentist was fined for advertising her professional wares in a series of what may be reasonably considered as personal postcards. Now the newspapers regularly and boldly announce in their advertising columns that this legal practice specialises in helping clients, former medical patients, to litigate against medical practitioners. So, professionals now not only advertise but advertise to gain clients who they will help to take members of one of the oldest and most honoured professions before the court.

The VET profession suffers from a similar lack of consideration that all those who become members of 'second' (or third or fourth) professions experience. Where does the VET professional 'fit' within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), a product of VET. The AQF caters only for those who leave school and enter a profession and stay there. The writer's impression is that many of those who seek to qualify as a VET professional do not choose to enter that profession on leaving school but 'wander into it' somewhere along their career, as a second or third profession/vocation. VET professionals have tended to become involved in 'training' in their work as tradespersons, technicians or professionals and choose to pursue their career at the professional level in training. They may be, in the writer's view, better trainers because of their earlier experience but the VET mechanism, the AQF, does not adequately represent their career development.

Six Ongoing Features

The following discussion first examines the VET professional and their situation from the point of view of some of the ongoing features of the status of being a professional. The following aspects are noted: their practice: territory and foundational disciplines; the first degree; code of ethics; professional association and CPE.

The term 'practice' is associated with professions. It describes what they do and where they do it (Brennan, 1999). Professional practice is therefore a very appropriate focus for the VET initiated workplace learning research (Brennan, 1997).

For the VET professional, there is the problem as to the degree to which the key VET term ‘competencies’ is relevant for their practice. Another feature of the way professional practice has been described is through the hierarchy of novice to expert in which the expert’s performance is described as ‘excellent’, from the initial work of Benner (1984). This latter approach conflicts with the accepted VET concept of adequate or competent performance.

The definition of the VET professional's practice highlights some of the difficulties many professions have faced in adopting VET concepts to describe their practice.

Professions have been obsessed with their ‘territory’ or as the Americans term it, ‘turf’. In the 80s, physiotherapists and chiropractors fought in the public arena about who owned, and therefore had the right to treat, ‘the back’. New open-market regulatory regimes have terminated to some degree this focus on territory but the war continues for architects and draughtspersons and solicitors and conveyancers. What is the VET professional’s ‘territory’? Training, the actual hands-on work, or the planning or management of that training? Or is the work essentially that of assessing workers on site? Or is it the counselling of trainees or their employers or the negotiation of training programs in specific sites or with particular enterprises? Or is it brokering between those requiring training and
those who provide it? Each one of the areas may be the turf for some VET professionals but do any VET professionals cover all these areas? Perhaps also, there may be some other professions that may wish to ‘contribute to the discussion’ of who is responsible for the particular tasks, or just claim the territory for themselves?

Nationally approved courses in Workplace Assessment and Training in the 90s suggest that the territory was expanding, especially with the Diploma. The question remains: Have the boundaries been set for the VET professional?

One reason why the territory question is important and needs to be known, and hopefully agreed upon, is that the territory should help to define those initial preparatory courses that give an introduction for the person into the profession. A major factor in the development of professions in the 20th century — and this applied to the older as well as the newer professions — was that entry to the profession through a recognised university award became mandatory. For engineers and social workers as well as those in the IT industry this was the established pattern. What has happened for the VET professionals? There are numerous tertiary courses. How often are these a requirement in advertisements for VET professional positions (Whatever that means?), or does the Category IV Certificate suffice — at least as a minimum?

The university schools and units that seek to develop the initial awards for VET professionals have less guidance than those who sought to provide similar awards for librarians or occupational therapists in the 20th century. In traditional terminology, the question was: What are the foundation disciplines? Now that may be a little old-fashioned but it does highlight some problems. Is a narrowly defined approach based on cognitive psychology or a broader adult learning approach to be the basis or some new emerging cross-disciplinary approach? How are those preparing these students going to acknowledge (and reward) the learning and experience of those planning to be VET professionals within the VET preparation course? For what specific roles — according to what answers regarding territory are made — will the ‘students’ be prepared?

So the territory issue — though officially off the legally-based agenda — still requires some attention.

One of the on-going issues for traditional professions is that of the profession’s Code of Ethics. The problem for the professions here is that the larger question of ethical behaviour and the nature of ethics has changed — and there are no professional ethicists that can be blamed for this. In the past the profession had its Code — the surgeon’s or dentist’s or civil engineer’s version of the 10 Commandments. Simply ‘do this’ or conversely ‘don’t do this’ and you are covered. Universal generalisations, the basis for the 10 Commandments, are not longer valid in practice situations. In the complex, multi-cultural society in which we live applying universals does not solve the ethical dilemma. In fact applying general principles may exacerbate a difficult situation.

If VET professionals deal with people, if they plan activities that are designed to change people’s lives, if they have to deal with varieties of people in different working settings, then they too will be faced with ethical questions. They need some guidance. Some of the older professions, for example, nursing (RCNA, 2002) and social work (AASW, 2000), have devoted extensive research and resources, both within Australia and in global collaborations, to develop guides that are able to help the individual practitioner in the specific situations of their practice. These guides — no longer a single page of “Do’s and Don’ts” — have become important resource documents. Where are the ethical guides for the VET professional? Who is preparing them?

One of the important understandings about professional life in the 20th century was that the initial preparatory degree did
not prepare the practitioner for their whole professional life. Further study was required. When that happened in individual professions is open to argument. The writer has used Barry Jones’ (1982) *Sleepers, wake! Technology and the future of work* as a reference point for Australia. In the two decades since that time, it has been accepted that further ‘training’ is required. For professionals that have come to be known as continuing professional education (CPE) or development (CPD) or the profession’s own name is included to form continuing medical (or veterinary) education (CME/CVE). In the dynamic world of VET in Australia, and globally, some form of CPE will be required. Is there some overall plan for this educational provision for the VET professional?

In the areas that have been examined above, from the courses of initial training, the ethical guidance to CPE, the question is implied that someone or some body needs to be doing research and lobbying as well as perhaps providing or arranging for the provision of courses and chatrooms. In the traditional professions, these sorts of tasks have been assumed by a body usually called the professional association.

An ongoing part of the life of professions, both the traditional and the newer, has been the professional association. Sometimes portrayed as a bastion against the clients and defender of its members against all complaints, nevertheless the professional associations generally have fulfilled the sorts of roles that appear to be necessary for the support of practitioners and the advancement of a profession. Traditional professions have a professional association. Some professions have more than one. Accounting has at least three and medicine has a plethora.

What about VET? Are there unions for the older TAFE teacher people? Is there scope within the groups organised by university VET people for the practitioners? Is Adult Learning Australia (ALA) or the Australian Institute for Training and Development (AITD) appropriate for VET professionals? There is the Australian College of Educators (ACE). It is dominated by school teachers but has devoted attention to VET in schools. Does the development of ACPET suggest even stronger reasons for a VET professionals’ organisation?

The strong hand of the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments in the development of VET has probably contributed to the lack of impetus for the establishment of an NGO for VET professionals. But what is needed for individual as well as VET professionals as a group is a member-based, NGO in the traditions of the professional association but with a parallel focus on contemporary issues. VET professionals cannot as individuals carry out the functions noted above, and others added below. The functions also are inappropriate for governments to carry out. The interest in the movement from VET practitioner to VET professional by NCVER is praiseworthy but research agencies cannot fulfil the role of a professional association.

Three Contemporary Concerns

In addition, then, to traditional concerns of professions, other issues have appeared recently on the agendas of professions. Three have been selected: career development, the global dimension and the major issue, self-regulation.

In the emerging vocational and industrial climate in which VET, and all other, professionals practise the issue of the career development of the individual practitioner has been identified as an issue. People do not necessarily practise in the same profession all their lives as was the old assumption about occupations and especially the professions. Accepting this new situation, is there an agency that provides information, advice and support for practitioners while they serve in a particular profession? There is a need for information on positions available, advice on new individual employment contracts and legal
support when a practitioner is faced with court action. Who is to assist the VET practitioner in these areas? In other professions, for example occupational therapy, librarianship and engineering, it is a role being taken on by the professional associations.

Many traditional professions were happily confined within state or national boundaries. Globalisation has removed their security. The global training agenda impacts on the individual VET professional in Australia. How are these individuals to be represented at, or have links to, the global dimension of the VET? Once again, national, regional and global professional organisations provide information and representation for individual practitioners.

The major issue for professions at the end of the last and beginning of the new century has been the process of regulation/registration. The rather irrational old system where some but not all professions were required to be registered to practise (and in some but not all states/territories) has passed. The new system which focuses on the regulation of practitioners so that they are given the right to practise but have to have this right renewed regularly is not fully established. The new system has governments supposedly withdrawing from direct involvement in this regulatory process and leaving it to self-regulation by the professions with client and community inputs. No more professional association cabals!

As school teachers appear to be proceeding towards some form of national registration, then VET professionals may expect a similar process. The old system was a sham in most cases. Practitioners in new professions such as the VET people cannot afford to allow the new regime to become a sham.

What is important, and the reasons why these points have been discussed above, is that the new regulatory regimes require a linking of initial certification and renewal to adherence to a code of ethics and CPE. They also try to cover the practitioner’s liability against litigation through the concept that adherence to an ethical code and participation in a prescribed level of CPE will reduce the risk of the individual practitioner for litigation.

Clearly the task of linking these issues into a system and providing efficient services to manage such a regulatory system require extensive expertise and resources. This task has become almost a mandatory requirement for professions in the new century. Who serves the VET professional in this way? In other professions, a professional association is responding to the challenge on behalf of its practitioner members.

Not a Happy Vision

There is a vision for the VET professional in the new century. It is of a self-regulating group within the VET system as part of the Education and Training industry. Making that vision a reality is a superhuman task. Those who muddled through the planning, introduction and development of VET made two significant errors. They did not plan ahead for the personnel to service their scheme and secondly in their muddling through they did not take notice of the changes that were taking place in the broader labour market as they applied to their VET workforce, especially at the professional level.

There is also a problem with the title. What does the ‘VET professional’ mean? Educators believe, incorrectly, that everyone understands their policies and terminology. For some the term ‘VET professional’ would invoke ideas of animals and their illnesses and even possible turf clashes with veterinarians. VET teacher, the ASCO term, may not be favoured because of the link with the school and classroom and the failure to recognise other roles (mentor, role model) and the work-based location.

What cannot be denied is that there is a need within the VET sector for a professional level practitioners who are seen as representing some form of leadership for the sector. Perhaps the overall assessment
of VET will be made on the degree to which it is able to deal — more effectively than in the past — with its own practitioner personnel.

The vision for the VET professional may not be very clear, rather blurred and not promising successful outcomes for VET professionals. Whatever may be the reason for the current problems, several pointers to a clearer vision appear to be that the problems of the past are identified, that the VET professional practitioners will need to take collegiate action to confirm the vision and finally that the experience of other professions, especially in the role of the professional association, will be important guides for the VET professionals in their endeavours.

References


Online delivery is a significant educational innovation. Like the telephone, the car and the television, there are very different views about its potential, its future and its impact on education and training in Australia. As with ant innovation, the opinions, ideas and research which surround it are often contradictory and more ideological than empirical. We are surrounded by hyperbole, beguiled by the prophecies of future possibilities and upset by some of our own experiences. Getting the 'here and now' right is an issue which is lost in this obfuscation.

The new technologies represent challenges to the traditional ways of delivering education and training. Firstly, there is the potential loss of work if the scenario of teacherless classrooms comes anywhere near reality. Secondly technology, by its very existence and its degree of present and predicted permeation of education and training, throws all existing methods up to scrutiny. Practitioners are forced to examine and justify their existences. This ‘forced reflection’ is an uncomfortable status for both individuals and systems.

Some see technology as being definitely not in their interest for both these reasons. It is also true that the new technologies require lots of ‘new learning’ as teachers and trainers come to terms with the pedagogy and the technical prowess demanded by delivering and supporting Online learners.

Online delivery of VET raises a multiplicity of questions for practitioners, policy makers and managers. These include questions about:

- improved student outcomes
- impacts on teachers and learners, beneficiaries and casualties
- teacher/trainer preparation
- pedagogy
- materials design
- learner diversity

Few studies to date have integrated the answers to these questions into a theoretical framework that makes Online pedagogy an apprehendable and discussable concept.

This project, and in particular the meta evaluation of the literature and the interviews and the workshops, encouraged the

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development of a list of indicators of pedagogical effectiveness. This first step towards integrating the pools of data was followed by the application of the 'productive pedagogies' framework to both quantitative and qualitative data. This produced major findings that reflect the complexity of the processes involved in Online pedagogy.

What is 'Pedagogy'?  
'Pedagogy' covers the function, work, or art of a teacher or trainer. It includes the process of teaching and instruction. It is useful to think of pedagogy as being reflected in the arrangements made in order for someone to learn something for a specific purpose. These arrangements are influenced by:

- the general orientation of the teacher or trainer
- the kind of knowledge to be developed
- the nature of the learner
- the purpose the learning is to serve.

This study explores each of these aspects of Online pedagogy. It builds on the work that is currently being done by other researchers for NCVER. In particular, the projects that examined learner experiences and expectations (Clayton, 2001); quality online learning (Cashion & Palmieri, 2000); Australian online education and training practices (Harper et al., 2000), and the evaluation of web based flexile learning (McKavanagh et al., 1999a & 1999b) are referred to in order to produce a body of knowledge relating to online pedagogy in Australia.

Overview of the Study  
The issue of Online pedagogy has been poorly researched to date. For this reason, this project has assessed the effectiveness of current Online pedagogy from the viewpoints of those involved in policy development and management of Online delivery, the literature, students, teacher practice, course content and delivery styles. It has analysed these results in terms of an Australian framework which has been developed by Education Queensland. The practice of 'Productive Pedagogy' (Ailwood et al., 2000) relies heavily on an extensive quantitative analysis of student and teacher interactions in classrooms using a process of structural equation modelling. This wide reaching study has resulted in the distillation of features that contribute to effective student learning. The resulting dimensions of effective student learning have been used as a filter to analyse the current practices of Online delivery of the VET courses sampled for this study.

Data has been collected from a wide variety of sources in a number of key locations across Australia. Teachers, students, educational designers, policy makers, and managers have been involved. A range of courses across a range of AQTF levels have also been analysed using a tool developed specifically for this project. The project has relied on a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and the information that has been collected in the course of this project helps to answer the three key questions: which are at the core of discussions of Online pedagogy:

1. How does current Online pedagogy in VET match the principles of effective pedagogy?
2. What constitutes effective Online pedagogy in VET?
3. What are the suggested recommendations for change?

Report on the Findings  
What does The Literature Say?  
The literature indicates that online pedagogy is a relatively new area of study and that educational issues relating to teaching and learning online have been caught up in the whirlwind of technological change and euphoria. In the VET sector, as in others, there is a growing awareness that effective online pedagogy involves issues such as interaction, changing teacher roles,
student access and matching articulated teaching skills to the needs and preferences of students.

Kemshal-Bell (2001) identifies the technical, facilitation and management skills required by online practitioners. He identifies that the facilitation skills that a teacher needs to have available to them to ensure equivalent or improved student outcomes in an online environment include:

- Engaging the learner (p. 12)
- Questioning (p. 12)
- Listening and feedback (p. 13)
- Providing direction and support (p. 13)
- Managing discussions (p. 13)
- Team Building (p. 14)
- Relationship building, including virtual relationships (p. 14)
- Motivating (p. 14)
- Planning, monitoring and reviewing (p. 15)
- Time management (p. 15)

...Most importantly, it is a combination of these skills that is essential. Online teachers need to know not only how to use the technology effectively, but also how to harness the power of technology through facilitation to achieve learning. On top of this, online teaching also calls for strong management skills to deal with the range of administrative and functional issues that arise... (Kemshal-Bell, 2001, p. 15).

What do Online Teachers say?
The literature is beginning to focus on the role of the teacher and teaching activities online and there are some differences and similarities in opinions (Schofield, Walsh & Melville, 2000; Kemshal-Bell, 2001). The Schofield, Walsh and Melville (2000) study showed that most teachers believed that:

...good online teaching is about building community, caring for students and being responsive...[it is about]...being imaginative and creative, a lateral thinker. This was most frequently coupled with the attribute of being a risk taker, someone who was prepared to get out of their comfort zone and try new things, to experiment... (Schofield, Walsh & Melville, 2000, p. 6).

What do Online Learners say?
Choy AND Delahaye (2001) found that student evaluations of the quality of their own learning focused on issues of:

...regular contact with teachers/tutors; quick responses from teachers/tutors; regular support for learning... They believed that regular communications with teachers/tutors as well as peers through emails or telephone was important to motivate and encourage them to continue with their learning. As the technologies that support on-line delivery are recognised for speedy communication, learners expect quick responses...According to the interviewees there were two main limitations in the current on-line services that related to facilitation and the technical system. Many believed that teachers did not provide clear guidelines or explanations of their expectations from learners. The interviewees shared a common view that many teachers/tutors are not adequately trained for on-line delivery. Some learners identified limitations in technical knowledge (of teachers) in the use of on-line delivery (Choy & Delahaye, 2001, p. 11).
should be; how are knowledge and skills acquired online?

Interviews with Policy Makers, Practitioners and Online Learning Managers

The Literature Review for this study showed that the subject of Online pedagogy is complex and multi facetted. For this reason, it was important to capture the voices of a variety of people working in the Online environment in a range of different capacities. Their reactions to the research questions and the general topic of pedagogical effectiveness informed the development of the Pedagogical Effectiveness Indicators (PEIs), clarified the focus areas for the questionnaire and contributed to the development of the working framework.

The interviews were conducted with policy makers, practitioners, curriculum designers and managers, all of whom have an influence over and an appreciation of the importance of Online pedagogy in the delivery of VET.

The participants discussed the issue of Online pedagogical assumptions. These included assumptions about:

- the learner and their skills
- the ‘art’ of teaching
- formal and informal learning
- learner control
- the role of the teacher
- the sustainability of current Online teacher practice.

Figure 1 represents the high level of competence that underpins assumptions about learners. They are assumptions that go with mature and confident learners and the distance between these characteristics and those demonstrated by Vet sector students raises questions about the appropriateness of the medium.

Assumptions About the Teacher

An online environment makes some significant assumptions about the role and skills of the teacher. They are assumed to be technologically competent, available and flexible enough to make the transition into a new medium with relative ease. They are also assumed to have the time and capacity to evaluate their practice and make changes in response to this. These assumptions are intertwined with the idea that the

Figure 1

Pedagogical assumptions that underpin assumptions about learners.
teacher is crucial to effective learning and that their Online presence has to be created and maintained.

**Course Analysis**

**Introduction**

A number of at-desk activities were carried out in conjunction with other data collection strategies in this project. These activities were designed to complement the information gathered from teachers and students via the questionnaire and focus groups. These sites were selected to ensure a coverage of:

- AQF levels
- accredited/non accredited courses
- content areas
- learner levels

The analysis was designed to make explicit the implicit pedagogies that underpin these courses. The analysis showed that:

- Text is the predominant feature of Online delivery.
- Communication and interactivity constitute a relatively small proportion of the total online activities required of the learner.
- Some degree of learner self management is needed in all the courses with medium to high levels being an important prerequisite for success.
- High and medium levels of student self monitoring are required in all courses
- Assessment is 'mechanical' in courses where there is limited teacher support and interaction.
- Courses assume technological experience and teacher support in a face-to-face or online environment.
- The type of feedback students receive is contingent on the level of teacher support.
- The indicators suggest that courses display a wide range of pedagogical effectiveness.

**Questionnaire Results**

Two hundred and ten questionnaires were distributed to teachers and students. The questions were developed collaboratively to provide answers to the research questions above. The following themes emerge from an analysis of the qualitative data as it specifically relates to teachers and their practice.

1. Teachers felt that the Online environment meant that students had to take on a lot of personal responsibility, and for this reason student orientation programs where the teachers helped students to set goals; prioritise tasks; time manage and use the particular technology, were important to ensure a healthy match between Online delivery and good practice.

2. A large number of teachers mentioned that the flexibility implicit in Online learning matched their ideals of good practice. However a number qualified this response by mentioning offsetting factors such as low student performances for face to face contact and interaction. These comments intersected with teacher commitment to building 'student community' as good practice which required consistent communication and large amounts of teacher effort which was not always sustainable.

3. A number of teachers commented on the characteristics of the students that would guarantee a solid match between Online delivery and good practice. Factors such as motivation, independence and technological acumen were regarded as prerequisites for success. The acceptance that 'student learning is diverse and difficult to do Online' often are cited a sense of teacher frustration at the gap between what they know works and the realities of Online teaching and learning.

4. Participants felt that teacher confidence and support are critical features of practice which are equivalently important Online and face to face. Others felt that the isolation of the teacher when students did not use the communication
tools created a new environment for teaching practice.

5. Some teachers commented that their ideas of good teaching did not translate easily to an Online environment. "Generally I teach by identifying personal preferences/values and experiences in students and I tailor my delivery appropriately. This is somewhat difficult Online".

6. A number of teachers discussed the differences between Online teaching and their previous experiences of good practice. "Online delivery implies that the rules of teaching are different". Other teachers cited isolation and access as ways in which Online delivery matched their concepts of good practice. The ability to deliver courses and modules remotely was regarded as a move in the direction of greater equity for all students.

7. A number of teachers also mentioned that the distance between course/module design and teacher implementation mitigated against teacher autonomy and the ability to follow their own principles of good practice. "To effectively match my Online practice to what I know about good teaching I would need to have been involved in the construction of the two Online modules I teach. In other words, my Online practice is restricted by the design of these subjects and the platform".

8. A lot of teachers recognise what they need to do to carry over good practice to the Online environment. Features such as developing Online relationships, questioning strategies, providing feedback, developing and creating a learner centred environment were mentioned as goals that they were working towards.

9. Teacher preference was clearly for a mixed mode delivery and that this allowed them to take the best of both worlds.

The Role of the Teacher

Teachers were asked to describe their role as an Online teacher. The responses provided were categorised and it was clear that the most common description of individual teaching roles were related to:
- Facilitating
- Motivating
- Mentoring
- Guiding students' learning

This was summarised by one teacher who described the role as a "sounding board to self discovery learners". The focus on the role of the teacher was clearly on providing respect for students rather than on furnishing content or initial resources. The materials contained in the Online courses/modules removed the pressure to 'deliver' and teachers were concentrating on being available, flexible, communicative, responsive and co-operative.

A number of teachers described their role as 'inexperienced' or 'average'. For some teachers their role was 'difficult, time consuming and exhausting'.

Some teachers felt that their role had been reduced to that of an 'assessor rather than a teacher', although these responses were relatively few. Others commented that their input into student learning was minimal.

A number of teacher regarded their Online teaching role as developmental and clearly could see the potentiality for their own professional growth in Online delivery.

Other Teacher Skills and Understanding

Teachers were asked to list other skills and understandings that they had developed because of their Online teaching.

The skills provided by teachers can be clustered in the following way.

Technical skills.
- Understanding and refining site design
- Multi media resource production
- Using a discussion board
- Authoring skills
- Instructional design skills
- Program development in Web CT
- Advanced email skills
- Distribution lists
- Powerpoint use
- Coping with new programs and packages
- Faster keyboard skills

**Curriculum skills.**
- Program development
- Development of course materials
- Assessment needs to be face to face

**Management skills.**
- Time management
- Need to be available at regular intervals

**New skills.**
Teachers focused most frequently on the development of their technological skills. For some teachers this meant that their first encounter with Online teaching required them to become familiar with basic computer usage. Other teachers added to their existing skills and became more involved with course/module modification and design.

Relatively few teachers referred to the development of new curriculum and assessment skills and this can be related to the frequent prescriptive nature of the course/module materials provided.

The new management skills that teachers developed related to time management and the demand to be available at regular and predictable times for their students.

**Teaching skills.**
- Motivating
- Listening
- Coaching/mentoring skills
- Mediating chat
- A more active role for teachers
- Strategies to create fun
- Need to be more reflective
- Improved communication with students
- Use of precise and unambiguous language

The new **understandings** cited by teachers that have resulted from their Online teaching experiences included those listed below.

**Personal/Affective.**
- Patience
- Persistence
- Coping with frustration
- More flexibility
- Problem solving
- Coping with time demands

**Understanding students.**
- Students require more support
- Telephone and counselling skills
- Need for constant feedback
- Understanding the needs of NESB students
- Focus on one to one communication
- Engagement with students
- Appreciation of different learning modes

The new understandings that teachers described as resulting from their experiences in Online teaching were most frequently associated with personality traits such as persistence and coping with frustration.

Teachers also focused on their new understanding of student needs in an Online environment. They felt that engagement, communication, and the need for constant feedback were now understood in a new way. They also felt that they appreciated the needs and learning modes of their students in a different way.

**Summary**
The evidence suggests individuals and groups are committed to creating a pedagogically sound Online environment for students. The move from predominantly text based delivery to more interactive forms of student engagement is a sound beginning. However this trend must
be supported by equivalent attention to the dimensions of pedagogy which are relatively underdeveloped or non-existent in this environment. The capacity of present technology to facilitate these changes is a contestable question.

There are a number of indicators of pedagogical effectiveness that are clearly expressed by all stakeholders involved in the Online delivery of VET. However pedagogical practice does not always conform to these principles. The dominating influence of the technology has created assumptions about the nature of learning, the role of the teacher and the student characteristics, and these are poorly matched with teacher and learner expectations.

Teachers are holding firmly to sound principles of pedagogy and students are reiterating the importance of these. Communication, interactivity and the development of social cohesion are regarded as laudable goals in an environment that frequently mitigates against their achievement. A large number of teachers are not only struggling with the demands of the technology, but also with an often unfriendly teaching context that is predetermined by course content, material presentation and the nature of the platform that their institution is tied to. It is a credit to teacher/trainer professionalism and dogged persistence that Online delivery works as well as it does.

Courses frequently make unequivocal assumptions about learner characteristics and traits and unless these are matched to the skills and attributes of the learners, any form of suitability cannot be guaranteed. In the present environment, suitability is more likely to be achieved in a situation where Online learning, content and face to face contact are ‘blended’ to suit both the circumstances and the levels of resource provision.

Teaching styles that facilitate effective Online delivery of VET are fundamentally attitudinal but the understandable mistake is still being made that the acquisition of technical proficiency will guarantee sound teaching practice. Interactivity is unequivocally regarded as the most effective teacher/student relationship to develop in an Online environment. Teachers regard ‘interactivity’ in a specific way and the use of medium to encourage more critical thinking through debate and discussion is a relatively untapped strategy. Problem solving, investigation and research, and the pursuit of a theoretical understanding of content are regarded as contributing to effective Online learning at the individual learner level.

The roles and skills of teachers and learners are different in degree, depending on whether the Online delivery of VET supplements classroom time or replaces it. In both cases there are new definitions of time and work patterns. The literacy demands and cultural homogeneity of many Online courses and modules raises questions about the adequacy of the skills of students from non English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups. Fundamental issues such as the cultural appropriateness of questioning, conversational conventions, language acuity and delay, and student attitudes towards interaction with authority, take on a heightened importance in an Online environment. In face to face classrooms, diversity is an asset. In an Online environment it may be a distinct disadvantage.

The research findings show that in terms of what we know about the factors that contribute to effective student learning, Online pedagogy needs to address ALL the dimensions of practice. In particular, Online pedagogy in VET needs to be able to create teaching an learning environments where students have the opportunity to:

- Reduce their reliance on text.
- Explore and value their intellectual, social and cultural backgrounds.
- Develop their knowledge beyond the transmission and assessment of content.
- Reflect on their own learning.
- Be part of an inclusive learning environment.
• Communicate extensively with their peers and their teachers.
• Become self-regulated and engaged with their own learning.
• Develop a group identity that connects them with their learning and with the broader social environment.

The issue of Online pedagogy needs to be taken beyond the iteration of skills circumscribed by out of date working conditions and viewed as the central feature contributing to the effectiveness of Online VET delivery.

References


Learning, Teaching and Curriculum Development Across a Dual Sector University: A Selective Review of the Literature

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This paper reviews the literature on learning that is related to post-compulsory education and training and deemed relevant to those working as educators within a dual sector university. Implications are identified and discussed with respect to teaching and curriculum development. The work was conducted as part of the developmental phase for a subject to be taught to VET sector teaching staff as part of a Graduate Diploma in Industrial Education and Training (GDIET).

The purpose of this review is to analyse some of the writings about learning that may be relevant and useful to the development of pedagogical practices within a dual sector university. Implications for educators are discussed in regard to teaching and curriculum development. Learning is the goal and the primary purpose for the existence of these institutions. In recent years, Victoria has developed a handful of dual sector universities. These universities provide programs in both higher education and vocational education and training. Most have developed in this form due to interesting and unique histories and circumstances.

The educational institution where the two authors of this paper are involved in learning, teaching and developing curriculum is one of these dual sector universities. Located in and around the centre of Melbourne, this university has a past history as 'A Working Person's College'. At this institution, the various sections and teaching departments have very unique histories. Similarly aspects of these histories can carry through and impact upon pedagogical practices within departments. Self-paced modular training in some trade programs is an example of residual approaches that were adopted and implemented as departmental initiatives and where pockets still exist today.

Significantly, a plethora of approaches to learning, are utilised across a dual sector university and the implications for teaching and curriculum development are numerous. Put another way, a sector of education, a department, and a program or even at the level of the individual educator, there are no guarantees of homogeneity across the pedagogical practices being employed at any given time.

In fact, we suggest that just the opposite is the case — that diversity is necessary and useful in fostering co-participation in the production of robust knowledge for work. From a research point of view, the breadth of diversity also makes a dual sector university a unique laboratory for the co-production of robust knowledge and for gaining understanding of the range of pedagogical practices that are aligned to work-related learning. This paper stands to map some of this range with an emphasis on identifying interesting and effective possibilities for learning.
Metaphors Can be a Way
Bruner (1996) describes two distinctively different approaches to learning and knowing. The first was computational and involved symbol, and information processing. The second was cultural learning derived from social activity and described as situated. Both of these support different metaphors for learning, teaching and curriculum development.

Associated with the information/symbol processing approach goes the metaphor for learning of acquisition, and for teaching, the dominant metaphor is delivery. Similarly, curriculum development is founded upon the notion of analysis of a desired role, which in turn underpins both the intentions and the outcomes.

In contrast, the second form of knowing that Bruner described is socio-cultural learning. This is learning that is embedded in the context, and therefore deemed situated. This approach has a different set of metaphors. Here learning is described in terms of active participation. Teaching is described as being about facilitating engagement and cognitive apprenticeship. Curriculum development is deemed to be about fostering development and movement from being a novice, on the periphery of a community of practice, towards membership of the core group of experts, (Billett, 2001; Wenger, 2002).

Mapping out a Shared Understanding of Learning for the Workplace
Within post-compulsory education and training, there exist numerous approaches to learning and learning theories. One of the most notable of the learning theories of the past was behaviourism. This approach argued that learning could be assured to have taken place only if it resulted in a change of behaviour on the part of the learner. Hence the study of behaviour and the bringing about of a change in a student's behaviour became the fundamental concern of teachers, curriculum developers and even students themselves. The emphasis of pedagogical practice was on performance. The change in behaviour was verified and documented through results in pre and post testing activities. Classrooms and teaching spaces were considered in terms of being environments that could influence behaviour.

Dominant approaches to curriculum development started by documenting ideal performance within given work roles and great emphasis was placed on being able to break down the intended role into its constituent parts. Next the parts were broken down yet further with the identification of the full range of steps needed within each part. These formed some kind of behavioural pathway to successful performance in that job. Significantly, teaching was very much a secondary activity for applying the strategies required for learners to successfully complete each step of each stage.

Victoria Marsick (1987 & 1988) described behaviourism as being oriented towards performance outcomes that were observable, quantifiable, and measurable and criterion referenced. It separated the personal from that which related to work. Within this approach, training was usually classroom based and designed to remedy the identified deficits of the individual.

Bloom's (1956) work in identifying three domains of learning, namely the cognitive, the psychomotor and the affective and the three corresponding types of learning — knowledge, skills and attitudes, remains intact. Within more academic literature about learning theory these get renamed as propositional, procedural and dispositional knowledge respectively. Following the analysis of jobs, the dictates of the curriculum use these categories to differentiate between intended outcomes.

In contrast to this, Marsick (1987, 1988) argued that a paradigm shift was required. Instead of training that was based on behaviourist thinking, instead what was needed was the inclusion and recognition of learning that occurred in the course of
actually doing work. In terms familiar to adult educators this meant recognising and fostering informal learning that occurred outside of educational institutions. Argyris and Schon, Marsick argued for the utilisation of reflection and critical reflection to assist in fostering this learning.

Reflection has been used very productively for work-related learning particularly in ascertaining the effectiveness of an action. Boud and Walker (1991) argue that there is always reflective activity occurring that are based on the perceptions and experiences of the learner. Critical reflection on the other hand involves the consideration of the values and assumptions that underpin an understanding or point of view. Aligning with reflection and critical reflection are the notions of single and double loop learning, (Marsick, 1987, 1988; Brockbank & McGill, 1999). Single loop learning looks for neat cause and effects. Double loop learning asks the more fundamental questions like, are we asking the right questions? An analogy of a thermostat is sometimes used to illustrate these concepts. In a single loop situation the thermostat senses a fall in temperature and so sends a signal to get more heat. While within double loop learning, we ask is the thermostat set on the right temperature.

Donald Schon (1983) in his seminal work on the reflective practitioner distinguished between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. These are differentiated by their immediacy. Reflection-in-action is associated with when a practitioner stops mid stream in their practice to consider or reconsider what they are doing and as a result immediately changes course. It is often the basis of practitioners deciding to ignore their planned or intended direction and follow up on opportunities that arise or for seeking out other alternatives. In contrast, reflection-on-action is more retrospective and involves mulling over and reconsidering an action or practices to ascertain the often deeper meanings and understandings that are involved.

Based on the critiques of behaviourism, approaches to learning broadened and other approaches became popular. Two emphasis that we developed further were learning from experience and, cognitive and information processing. Both of these approaches in their different ways emphasised that the learner was actively involved in the construction of meaning. With respect to work-related learning the first of these looked at how experiences could be mined for effective learning, while the latter looked at thinking processes and how learning could be used to foster the development of these thinking processes.

Kolb (1984) completed major studies on different professions and different types of knowledge, which he aggregated to support the development of a four-staged learning cycle. The first stage of this experiential learning cycle is the concrete experience. This is reflected upon and generalisations are derived. The final stage involves a testing of the generalisation for its robustness and applicability to other situations. Pedler (1992) saw further implications in Kolb's learning cycle and developed an experiential learning process of experience, understanding, planning and action. This became the basis of what he described as action learning. Managers, acting in their own interests, argued that learning couldn't take place without an action being taken.

Basic information processing models take an opposing line and instead claim that learning can occur and remain hidden and an enacted. This theory describes systems of processes and storage points. The storage points are memories of different types. Three forms of memory are most often described as immediate, working and long-term. The processes most often described in a simple system analogy are a selective perception process, which selects and processes the relevant information from storage within the short-term memory to the working memory. Storage processes are utilised to transform the information from the working memory to the long-term memory. Retrieval processes
retrieve information from the long-term memory either back to the working memory or else to organise a response that activate effectors as an output. Higher order control processes oversee all of these processes, (Gagne, Yekovich & Yekovich, 1993).

Learning theories associated with information and cognitive processing attempt to develop appropriate and effective selection, storage and retrieval of relevant information. In part this occurs through an internal indexing and retrieval is dependant on context and previous retrievals. Hence practice and repetition have been seen as significant to learning. Interestingly repetition of day-to-day routine activities and their reinforcement is considered vital to the development of robust knowing within other conceptions of learning also. The socio-cultural view for example argues that reinforcement leads to the ability to chunk together linking information making common responses instantaneous.

Research over a decade into effective approaches to work-related learning has tended to identify that there needs to be a mix between structured off the job, structured on the job and structured off the job learning of work roles and activities, (Hager, 1997). Interestingly this is argued to be just as applicable to apprentices and novice practitioners as it does for the professional development of VET practitioners, (Carter & Gribble, 1991; Henry, 1999).

Stephen Billett (2001) has been pursuing a substantial research agenda with respect to understanding learning in the workplace. Using a socio-cultural framework for his project he offers a means of organising and utilising a series of concepts and notions derived from the work of others but which he has verified and refined through a series of empirical studies that span the last decade.

Some may already be familiar with Billett’s model of curriculum for workplace learning, (Billett, 1996a). In brief, his learning curriculum consists of four key elements. These are:

- **Movement from participation in low to high accountability work activities.**
- **Access to knowledge that would not be learnt by discovery alone.**
- **Direct guidance from more experienced others and experts.**
- **Indirect guidance provided by the physical and social environment.** (Billett, 2001, pp. 105–106)

These four elements can be arranged as two main components, activities and guidance. The basis of the curriculum is that it attempts to provide access to goal directed activities and forms of guidance that are conducive to the development of forms of knowledge which are applicable to specific circumstances but yet which are robust enough to transfer to other situations.

Authentic activities need to be devised which provide a developmental pathway of work activities allowing learners to access and progress from a novice situated on the periphery of the community or culture of practice to become a competent, and full participant. The developmental approach to the selection of activities is very important.

The argument is put that learners need to develop and gain a sense of both the process and the product of the various goal directed activities. If the worker/learners are employed assembling cars then they need to see how the part(s) that they manufacture fits together with and alongside, all the other parts and assemblies. The worker/learner needs to understand how their parts, their job roles and work processes all build up and how they all come together as a whole. Billett refers to this as experiencing the process and the product of their work.

The second component of the curriculum is guidance. This has two parts — proximal or close guidance and more distal guidance. The first is associated with Vygotsky’s notion of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky wrote, ‘the ZPD is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined
through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers', (1978, 1986).

Billett explains that in his research he found that worker/learners reported that access to experts was valued very highly. Though he cautions that who is regarded as an expert is a decision that is made by the learner and this occurs irrespective of any title. Significantly, those designated as being trainers are not necessarily going to be considered experts by the learners.

Guided support of experts provides learners with access to goals and procedures through joint problem solving. The intention is to get the learner doing the thinking and learning. The problem solving is what facilitates learning. In terms of guiding the learning rather than saying 'now we are going to do this job this way', the expert can guide this process by asking questions of the learner. This might involve asking the learner 'what do you think we should do here, in these circumstances, in this situation, and why?'

Guided learning is also associated with the process of cognitive apprenticeship. Cognitive apprenticeship consists of four phases. These are modelling, coaching, scaffolding and fading. Although, Hansman (2001) citing, LeGrand Brandt, Farmer and Buckmaster, (1993); describe this in terms of five stages, which they describe as modelling, approximating, fading, self-directed learning and generalising. The strategy is that the guidance of a more expert worker assists in making opaque knowledge more accessible. Guidance and instructional interventions by more expert others includes providing descriptions, analogies and using diagrams. Thereby bringing this to the attention of the learner and making known what might otherwise have remained hidden from the learner.

The final aspect of the curriculum model that he explains is the role of the workplace setting. Included in this are other workers and their work activities and practices, under this model these become forms of distal guidance. Billett argues that there is a very rich indirect guidance that comes from everyday activities and participation. It makes a great deal of sense that the specific equipment and practices of a given workplace are going to provide a kind of framework for learning how to go about doing a particular job in that workplace environment.

Interestingly, Billett in his recent work has extended the notion of guidance through the modelling, coaching, scaffolding and fading of the cognitive apprenticeship to develop and underpin mentoring. Amongst other things Billett provides an evidence-based analysis and discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the various roles in the mentoring process.

**Learning in Higher Education**

Some theorists argue that learning theory cannot be separated from the purpose of universities. Barnett (1997) critiques the idea that universities are for critical thinking and instead extends this role to say that universities are for developing 'critical being'. This is about students continuing 'to reflect critically on knowledge but they also develop their powers of critical self reflection and critical action', (Brockbank & McGill, 1998, p. 50)

The work of Marton and Saljo (1976) is often cited in describing how students approach learning differently. More superficial approaches result in surface learning, while a more detailed engagement with concepts and meaning leads to deep learning. Interestingly most educators argue that they are aiming to foster and encourage deep learning, yet some of their own pedagogical practices stand to inhibit this from occurring.

Like learning, teaching in higher education is a smorgasbord of diversity. At one end of the continuum lectures still get delivered to huge classes of up to 200 students. Methods of teaching and learning using more flexible approaches are also common as is also online and web-based teaching and learning. At the other end of the continuum are approaches that utilise
discovery methods such as problem-based and project-based learning. But even within each of these methods a range of approaches remains apparent.

Curriculum Development Process for Higher Education

Susan Toohey (1999) argues that there are probably as many approaches to higher education curriculum development as there are higher education departments. Yet despite this, commonalities and generalisations are possible. Toohey reviews how some curriculum theorists describe a range of philosophical orientations and how these translate into different approaches to curriculum development. She lists five main variations. These approaches are, a traditional or discipline-based approach, performance or system based, a cognitive approach, personal relevance/experiential and a socially critical approach. Clearly the inference is that educators or teams of educators have some degree of autonomy over their choices with respect to how they develop their curriculum.

According to Toohey, each of these orientations takes a different view of, knowledge, the learning process, the role of teachers and learners, the approach to and description of learning goals, how the content is chosen and organised, right through to their approach to assessment and the kinds of resources and infrastructure needed. She goes on to describe a linear six step approach to course design that starts with establishing the need for the course, establish student characteristics, determine content, set goals and objectives, choose teaching and assessment methods through to implement, evaluate and adjust components as necessary. Next however she notes that this is rarely the approach that occurs. Instead she uses some vignettes to exhibit marked variation and complexity to that of the linear approach.

John Biggs (1999) uses a quote from Schuell to explain that it is not so much what the teacher does that matters to learning. Biggs also offers advice to educators by describing the notion of constructive alignment. This means that educators need to ensure a consistency or alignment between the intentions as expressed in the aims and objectives of the subject with the teaching and learning activities and through to matching with the requirements of the assignment and/or assessment.

Curriculum Development Process for VET

In contrast to the approach in higher education, the national and state authorities mandate the curriculum development process within the vocational education and training sector. In addition there is a division of labour around the phases of design and implementation. It is one group of people that design the curriculum and it is the job of another group of educators to implement it. Significantly, autonomy over design is not there for the VET practitioner in the same way that it can be for the educator within higher education.

The competencies that are the intention and the outcomes for the specified curriculum are derived from an analysis of the occupation or job role. These are detailed with the training packages. Educators make interpretation of these outcomes and what they mean to the learners in their programs and for the contexts where these learners will end up as a result of obtaining the qualification associated with their education and training program. Having specified outcomes means that the assessment is tightly coupled to what has been specified. Tightness, rigidity and control seem to be present as themes within the specified VET curriculum.

Yet this is not so for all programs and some examples of good practice using models that integrate language, literacy, and workplace change being described by Sefton (1993), Sefton et al. (1995), Virgona et al. (1998).
Conclusion
This review has described a number of different approaches to learning. Significantly, these cover the three areas of structured off-the-job learning, structured on-the-job learning and unstructured on-the-job learning. It has begun to explore implications for teaching and curriculum development leaving professional educators to explore this further. Interestingly, the paper has identified some discrepancies in teaching and curriculum development that seem to be different across the two sectors of education. These relate to degrees of autonomy, discretion and control.

References


The Governmental Formation of “Youth” in Post-Compulsory Education and Training

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In recent years, a range of post-compulsory education and training interventions designed to address problems of school retention, youth unemployment and underemployment have emerged to entice young people into a variety of types of full-time participation with the stated purpose of increasing their employability. For example, new institutional spaces have been created in NSW to match new ideas about the needs of young people — flexible programs of study, adult learning environments, close links with industry and a range of credentials and outcomes are some of the apparent attractions of such settings. In seeking to understand the nature of these ‘innovations’, this paper uses Foucault’s concept of governmentality (1991) and the subsequent work of Rose (1999) and others to look at the issue of how young people have been problematised in relation to post-compulsory education and employment. In doing so, the paper will briefly examine the ways knowledges associated with education, training and the labour market play a role in positioning youth as the object of government. In this way, the arguments and interventions which are presented as answers to the problem of youth will be seen not only in terms of the questions they seek to address but also the contingent nature of their intelligibility (Rose, 1999).

In a recent paper, Edwards (2002) stated that “[w]hile there has been much written on the governance of educational institutions, less attention has been paid to the governmentality of education practices” (p. 353). In this statement, Edwards echoes Hunter’s earlier claim that “Foucault’s later work has, to date, had relatively little influence on education research” (1996, p. 143) since the field had been traditionally dominated by psychological research and “a ‘progressive’ educational sociology characterised by its critical disavowal of the system” (p. 143). The goal of this paper, therefore, is to join these theorists and their likeminded colleagues in using Foucault’s concept of “governmentality” to suggest ways in which a new perspective on post-compulsory education and training initiatives in New South Wales (NSW) might be gained and to propose new directions for research in this field.

Young adults in education in NSW are offered a range of post-compulsory education and training choices that have begun to effectively blur the boundaries between traditional general education, vocational education and workplace training. High schools offer programs which include traditional general education qualifications such as the Higher School Certificate (HSC) with or without the matriculation assessment known as the University Admissions Index (UIA), as well as vocational credentials. Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges offer similar ranges of programs (on a more limited scale in most instances) for young people who wish to complete their post-compulsory schooling (years 11 and 12) in a non-school environment. In addition to these offerings,
new institutional spaces, known generically as senior colleges, have more recently been created to match new ideas about the needs of young people. Flexible programs of study which include general and vocational education as well as workplace training, adult learning environments, close links with industry and a range of credentials and outcomes are some of the apparent attractions of such settings.

The promise of governmentality as a framework for examining these education and training arrangements is the possibility of a more critical understanding of the ways in which young people are being shaped in these sites. As Rose (1999) suggests, "in showing the contingency of the arrangements within which we are assembled, in denaturalising them, in showing the role of thought in holding them together, they also show that thought has a part to play in contesting them" (p. 59). And if it is possible to think differently about current arrangements, there is also the possibility of resisting their implications.

**Governmentality**

Foucault wrote and lectured on his concept of governmentality in the last years of his life. In a discussion which begins with Machiavelli's sixteenth century treatise, *The Prince*, and maps the transformations in thought on the issue of government to the eighteenth century, Foucault traces the process he calls "the governmentisation of the state" (Foucault, 1991, p. 104). In doing so, Foucault demonstrates how the central concern of sovereignty over a domain articulated in *The Prince* is challenged, through historical shifts such as the end of feudalism, the Reformation and Counter Reformation and the rise of capitalism, so that the concept of "the art of government" (p. 90), with a focus on the population, emerges. According to Foucault:

In contrast to sovereignty, government has as its purpose not the act of government itself, but the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health, etc.... it is the population itself on which government will act either directly through large-scale campaigns, or indirectly through techniques that will make possible, without the full awareness of the people, the stimulation of birth rates, the directing of the flow of population into certain regions or activities, etc. (p. 100)

Through the use of techniques such as statistics, a technique of government newly applied to the population in the eighteenth century, as a method of calculating and problematising the activities of the population, the art of government emerges. And so from a "study of the theme of government in sixteenth-century political theory, Foucault develops a new paradigm in which to understand the operations of power in modern society" (McNay, 1994, p. 117).

In Foucault's conception of government, it is necessary to look beyond the state and politics to understand the "range of multiform tactics" (Foucault, 1991, p. 95) employed to shape the lives of the population. As Rose states:

Government, here, refers to all endeavours to shape, guide, direct the conduct of others... and it also embraces the ways in which one might be urged and educated to bridle one’s own passions, to control one’s own instincts, to govern oneself. (Rose, 1999, p. 3)

Therefore in studying the workings of government on the population it is necessary to look at "programmes, techniques and devices which seek to shape conduct so as to achieve certain ends" (Rose, 1999, p. 3). Hence an analysis of government looks at the practices "that try and shape, sculpt, mobilise and work through the choices, desires, aspirations, needs, wants and lifestyles of individuals and groups" (Dean, 1999, p. 12). Of particular interest to this paper is the fact that governing "is also a matter of space, of making up of governable spaces" (Rose, 1999, p. 31). Thus it with the governable spaces of post-compulsory education and training institutions,
the ends which they are designed to achieve and the range of experiences these spaces make possible that this paper is concerned and will now take as its focus.

Governing Youth Through Education and Training

In a recent study utilising Foucault's notion of governmentality, Tait (2000) presents a forceful argument for understanding the category of youth "as an example of the governmental formation of a specific status" (Tait, 2000, p. 6). Tait's thesis is that "the category of youth has been formulated as an object of knowledge within a series of diverse disciplines that have posited youth as a problem" (Tait, 2000, p. 45). Specifically, this section of the paper will examine the ways knowledges associated with education, training and the labour market play a role in positioning youth as the object of government and how these knowledges have been utilised in current interventions. Although a genealogy of the problematisation of young people in relation to education and training is outside the scope of this paper, a few key governmental strategies will be explored so that the arguments and interventions which are presented as answers to the problem of youth can be seen not only in terms of the questions they seek to address but also the contingent nature of their intelligibility (Rose, 1999).

In taking this approach, a number of tasks emerge from an understanding of governmentality. Firstly, it is necessary to understand the ways young people have been problematised since "governmentality is a problematising activity" (Tait, 2001, p. 63) which identifies points of failure to govern effectively and hence produces sites and opportunities for interventions. However, as Dean and Hindess (1998) point out "problems do not exist in themselves. They become known through grids of evaluation and judgment about objects that are far from self-evident" (p. 9). In the case of post-compulsory education and training, young people have been problematised due to their propensity to opt out of education and training in the post-compulsory years without necessarily moving into full-time employment.

The outcome of this problematisation is the constitution of youth as either the victim of an inept system (Sweet, 1998) representing the failure of government (in this case meaning the State) to effectively intervene or as resistant to the "right" types education and training. It is in these ways that knowledgeable discourses begin to constitute youth as problematic (Dean & Hindess, 1998). In the case of young people in transition, one of the most powerful knowledgeable discourses of youth to emerge is that of "youth at risk." This broad-based label has been utilised to diagnose a variety of "problematic behaviours" in young people ranging from homelessness and drug use to failure to engage with education, training and employment opportunities. As Kelly (2001) points out, the discourses "of youth at risk are framed by the idea that youth should be a transition from normal childhood to normal adulthood" (p. 24) and in terms of school to work transition, normal adulthood presupposes independence and active citizenship through full-time employment.

The calculation of risk associated with the many areas of youth studies is an important strategy in the governing of young people, since as Tait (2000) argues "the preventive policies associated with risk permit a broader distribution of preventative action. That is, a greater number of young people can be brought into the field of regulatory strategies" (p. 8).

In addition to exploring the reasoning which guides the government of young people, it is also necessary to explore the subsequent interventions, the technical aspects of government, used to shape the conduct and the identities of youth. These technical aspects of government provide "the means by which objectives are to be realised, programs are to be implemented, and the
interventions and withdrawals of a multiplicity of agencies are to be made” (Dean & Hindess, 1998, p. 10). In the case of problematising young people and their relationships with education, training and work, a brief overview of the introduction of workplace competencies into school education will demonstrate how the technical aspects of government operate to achieve governmental objectives. In the years following the 1978 OECD education conference announcement that a convergence between general education and vocational education was needed, a “new conception of general-vocational education” (Marginson, 1997b, p. 174) was forged. In Australia, developments in this area eventually led to the formation of the Finn committee which in 1991 ‘examined the whole of post-compulsory education and training from “a perspective of employability” ’ (Marginson, 1997b, p. 175). The committee’s focus on education as preparation for work resulted in the proposal of “a system of generic “key areas of competence,” essential to employability” (Marginson, 1997b, p. 175). From the introduction of what became known as the Mayer Key Competencies, the new vocationalism (Marginson, 1997b) cemented the relationships between school and work in Australian schools and furthered the broad governmental objective of preparing young people “for an effective and satisfying life as an individual or as a citizen,” and shaping them to meet “the requirements for a productive and satisfying life at work in today’s world” (Australian Education Council Review Committee, p. 55, cited in Bartos, 1993, p. 153). In the post-compulsory education and training context, this governmental manipulation involved creating and smoothing the pathway between school and work. As a governmental intervention, the Key Competencies sought to provide part of the answer to the governmental problem of school to work transition. In this approach, the term government “also embraces the ways in which one might be urged and educated to bridle one’s own passions, to control one’s own instincts, to govern oneself” (Rose, 1999, p. 3). In the case of young people not in full-time education or full-time work, who traditionally have been constituted as embodying resistant positions, technologies aimed at encouraging self-government have had to work to make the objectives of government attractive to a “difficult” group. The governmental “answer” to the question of how to encourage young people to maintain their connections with full-time education and training can be seen to operate through the enticement of choice, flexibility and autonomy. Here, Rose’s (1999) argument concerning the ways government occurs through freedom in advanced liberal government takes on particular relevance.

I term such strategies of governing autonomous individuals through their freedom ‘advanced liberal.’ In different ways, the problem of freedom now comes to be understood in terms of the capacity of an autonomous individual to establish an identity through shaping a meaningful everyday life. Freedom is seen as autonomy, the capacity to realise one’s desires in one’s secular life, to fulfil one’s potential through one’s own endeavours, to determine the course of one’s existence through acts of choice. (p. 84)

One of these acts of choice available to young people in NSW education currently includes new institutional spaces, known generically as senior colleges which have recently been created to match new ideas about the needs of young people. Flexible programs of study which include general and vocational education as well as workplace training, adult learning environments, close links with industry and a range of credentials and outcomes are some of the apparent attractions of such settings. Furthermore, emerging research appears to reveal the “success” of these new senior college models. A recent report on the original five colleges established in
NSW (Polesel, Teese & O'Brien, 2001) found that these sites are “highly regarded by the majority of their students and their teachers, and are perceived as effective learning environments which also impart a range of social and personal skills” (p. 23). The report found that students feel productive, autonomous and that they have choices about the management of their education for the first time in their lives. Adult learning environments, with an emphasis on positive relationships between young people, teachers and administration create a better fit between participants’ sense of themselves as young adults and their educational needs. As such, it would appear that these sites play an important role in the range of interventions aimed at keeping young people in education and training (and out of unemployment statistics). In particular, they are noted in the report for being successful in attracting and retaining groups traditionally resistant to mainstream offerings and therefore most likely to contribute to youth unemployment statistics — ‘drop-outs’, re-entry students who have previously not completed high school qualifications and disaffected young males (Polesel, Teese & O'Brien, 2001).

However, (inevitably) questions remain. Since one of the features of the collegiate model within NSW which distinguishes it from senior college arrangements in other states in Australia, is the fact that these sites are set up as alternatives to mainstream offerings (i.e., there are no arrangements with ‘feeder’ institutions), they therefore attract young people who wish to exercise some choice in their post-compulsory education arrangements. But what meanings do young people attach to this exercise of freedom of choice? Edwards (2002) offers an insight into the nature of this type of intervention when he states that “current forms of governing mobilise subjects in ways that promote a self-reliance that differs from those of a previous era. This self-reliance promotes consumption and enterprise” (p. 354).

Also, given the fact that many of the young people who exercise this choice might traditionally have been said to have embodied resistant identities, what new types of youthful identities (Tait, 2001) are being shaped in these environments? What type of citizenship are young people being prepared for? In making up these new “governable spaces” (Rose, 1999, p. 31) what new types of experiences, perceptions and attractions are created (Rose, 1999)? Using the concept of governmentality and the arguments of Rose (1999) and others concerning the ways advanced liberal government works through the concept of freedom, an interesting perspective might be gained on these new governable spaces and the citizens they produce.

In understanding the decision to implement a new range of interventions in the education and training of young people in terms of governmentality, senior colleges can be seen as an example of a technology of government. Rose (1999) states that a technology of government:

...is an assemblage of forms of practical knowledge, with modes of perception, practices of calculation, vocabularies, types of authority, forms of judgement, architectural forms, human capacities, non-human objects and devices, inscription techniques and so forth, traversed and transected by aspirations to achieve certain outcomes in terms of the conduct of the governed. (p. 52)

In unpacking this definition, one of the key considerations to begin with should entail an examination of what outcomes, in terms of conduct, are aspired to. From this perspective, the senior college model should perhaps be seen in relation to the desired outcomes of schooling in general, that is as a “form of social administration which mediates between child and adult: children are required to be schooled into adulthood” (Bartos, 1993, p. 158). But what type of adult is being schooled through these new
governable spaces (Rose, 1999)? From the emerging research on these sites, it appears that the young adult is an autonomous, individualistic, enterprising, consumer of education and training.

How does this happen — how are resistant subjects enticed into conducting themselves in ways more amenable to advanced liberal government? According to Dean and Hindess (1998) government is achieved through an:

...inventive, strategic, technical and artful set of 'assemblages' fashioned from diverse elements, put together in novel and specific ways, and rationalised in relation to specific governmental objectives and goals. These assemblages comprise a whole host of mundane and humble practices, techniques, and forms of practical knowledge which are often overlooked in analyses that concentrate on either political institutions or political thought. (p. 8)

Therefore, understanding how these young people are constituted within these new governable spaces involves exploration of the practices of government evident in such sites. As yet, very little empirical work has been done in this area in Australia. However, the potential of the concept of governmentality to provide a useful framework for understanding the nature of education and training interventions in the lives of young people seems clear and more importantly, it holds the way open for a more critical understanding of the outcomes of governmental manipulations of this segment of the population. The now commonplace acceptance of the vocationalisation of post-compulsory schooling and the need for educational institutions to compete to attract "consumers" of their products perhaps bears some scrutiny at this stage. Similarly, the production of citizens whose chief characteristics are a sense of autonomy best exemplified by their right to consume and to shape "individualised" identities through such consumption might be questioned. Specifically, of interest to this researcher is the role post-compulsory education and training might play in questioning these assumptions.

References


Researching the Pedagogies of the New Vocationalism

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Changes in work and work organisation have led to an emphasis on the development of new kinds of working identities, but there has been little empirical research on how these new identities are being constructed in different sites. In a major project, supported by the Australian Research Council (ARC), we are undertaking a large, qualitative and comparative study of pedagogies of the new vocationalism. This paper outlines previous research and ideas being brought together in this new project.

Broadly speaking, many current theoretical analyses converge on the changed demands being placed on workers in the new economy. Moreover these analyses place greater significance on 'the self' and 'identity' in understanding contemporary social forms such as education and training for work. This paper discusses these matters, which form the foundation for a new 3-year research project, Changing Work, Changing Workers, Changing Selves funded by the Australia Research Council (ARC). The project is concerned with contemporary forms of Vocational Education and Training (VET) across a range of sites in relation to learners, to broader social changes, and to productive work and education practices.

It develops out of three diverse but inter-related sets of theorisations of change that have significant implications for Australia. These include the rise of new economy discourses and the emergence of new vocationalism in education and training; new forms of identity and new interests in the construction of self; and the contemporary re-conceptualisation of knowledge that is now occurring both inside and outside of educational institutions. These three areas of research, theory and public debate have significant implications for contemporary educational policies and practices. Yet no previous research has embarked on a broad and comparative study of the new work-related pedagogies that have developed in their wake. Moreover the theorising of new forms of knowledge has been weakened by a lack of empirical, grounded research that investigates new forms of 'working knowledge'.

Changing Education and Training — The New Vocationalism

The emergence of new knowledge-based, post-industrial forms of work caused by the globalising tendencies of capitalism and the impact of new technological innovations, particularly in information and communication technologies, has been central to new economy discourses. These discourses suggest the contemporary economies have entered new and uncertain times.

Given the urgency of adapting to these new economic conditions, educational systems have been the focus of much public policy debate. The domination of economic discourses in the educational policy formulation of governments has
been labelled the new vocationalism (Grubb, 1996). New vocationalism is based on the idea that economic performance is intimately connected to the level of skill and ability of the workforce and are a common feature of the educational discourses of many OECD governments (Papadopoulous, 1996). After 15 years of effort by Australian governments to integrate all forms of work related learning (public and private, formal and informal, structured and unstructured) into an industry-led, coherent and unified skill formation system VET has greatly expanded its institutional reach.

One of the outcomes of all this activity has been the emergence of an Australian VET system that is much more diverse and complex. Technical and Further Education (TAFE), once the publicly funded near monopoly provider of Vocational Education and Training is now one player in a competitive VET market that straddles the public, private and non-government sectors. VET policies and practices are now cross-sectoral influencing:

- educational institutions including schools, TAFE, Adult and Community Education (ACE) and universities.
- public, private and non-government providers of education and training industry, in-house and organisation specific training
- small business and private training consultants.

In contemporary Australian VET practitioners are expected to develop appropriate pedagogical strategies in response to learners' needs, abilities and circumstances. The new Australian VET system therefore focuses on outcomes rather than learning processes and in many ways the journey to vocational competence is regarded by many as less significant than the arrival, with the quality of the journey largely left to the professional competence of the teacher or trainer.

Based on training packages vocational programs that lead to particular qualifications in specific occupations or vocational areas such as Information Technology and Hospitality can be undertaken in a variety of institutions including schools, TAFE colleges, universities and private colleges. They can also be provided in-house by industry providers. Moreover these qualifications can be gained wholly in the workplace or in educational institutions or through a combination of both.

This diversity of provision raises a number of significant issues in the context of this research project. Firstly, providers that now deliver vocational programs have traditionally constructed themselves as different from each other in a variety of ways including having different purposes, values, outcomes, organisational norms and cultures, client groups, accountabilities etc. (Seddon, 2000; Chappell, 2001). How these differences play themselves out in terms of pedagogical practice and what impact this has in terms of constructing the learner-worker is a major interest of this research. Secondly, the diversity of site may offer significantly different learning opportunities and experiences. These sites may have different relationships with industry and business. They may have different levels of resources. They may have different groups of learners. They may mandate different types and level of qualifications for staff involved in delivering these vocational programs. How these factors impact on the pedagogical practices adopted and what this means for learners is a second area of research interest.

Finally these sites may have quite different understandings of changing workplaces and changing workers. They may have quite different views concerning contemporary vocational knowledge and skills. They may well have quite different orientations to pedagogical practices that are designed to deliver the knowledge and skills needed at work. All of these factors are also the subject of interest in this research project.
Changing Identities

In the human and social sciences theories of the 'self', the 'subject' and 'subjectivity', have recently been the focus of unprecedented critique. (Giddens, 1991; du Gay, 1996; Bernstein, 1996). A new interest in identity and 'technology of the self' as a key issue in understanding social and economic formations has also emerged. The tendency to represent the 'self' as a unified construct, at the centre of the self-sustaining individual, has been problematised as have notions of the 'self' that constitute it as the product of social relations. Increasingly, discourses to do with ideas of the 'self' use terms such as 'contingency', 'multiplicity' and 'fragmentation' and the term 'identity', in particular, has come to the fore in contemporary discourses that speak of subjectivity.

In psychology too the rise of 'critical psychology' (Walkerdine, 1996) is a related recognition of the socially shaped demands on contemporary psychology, on how individuals experience themselves and their interests. Other commentators have focused on identity and subjectivity in relation to education and training from a specific interest in difference and forms of social exclusions and disadvantage (Yates, 1999, 2000; Hansen, 2000).

The reasons for these theoretical shifts involve, among other things, the assertion that concepts of the 'self' should not be seen as neutral representations of the subject-person but rather as discursive interventions that do important political and cultural work in constructing, maintaining and transforming both individuals and their social world. Contemporary feminist, post-colonial and cultural studies commentators, for example, point to the way in which conceptions of identity that are based on notions of gender, class, race and national or cultural allegiance, work to obliterate difference through the discursive construction of sameness (Butler, 1993; Hooks, 1990).

Others highlight the fragility and constructed nature of the 'self' arguing that it has no enduring meaning but is subject to continuing cultural and historical re-formation (du Gay, 1996). Commentators such as Rosaldo (1993) point to the connection between identity and cultural formation and this, in turn, has led to renewed interest in the relationship between the workplace as both a site of cultural formation and a site where identity is constructed.

All of these commentaries in different ways influence the focus and direction of this project. The term 'identity', for example, is used in this study to distance it from conceptions of the self that posit a unified and essential core at the centre of subjectivity. It signals that this research understands the formation of identity to be a contingent and constructed concept, one that is subject to continuing social and historical transformation. The study also rejects a conception of identity based on the recognition of some naturally occurring set of similarities, common characteristics or shared understandings that characterise particular individuals or social grouping at particular historical moments.

This position has a number of implications. Firstly, it suggests that identities are never unified but consist of multiple processes of identification that are constructed by different, often intersecting and antagonistic discursive practices that make particular identifications possible. This leads to the idea that the formation of identity cannot be justified on the grounds that it merely reflects pre-existing patterns of sameness, but rather owes its existence to particular discursive interventions. This in turn suggests that identity formation is both a strategic and positional process. Identities are constructed through the deployment of specific enunciative strategies and are produced in specific institutional sites at particular historical moments.

In the discourses of new vocationalism the learner-worker is being asked to acquire and internalise sets of general behaviours or dispositions seen as essential in the new work order (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996). New vocational outcomes focus as
much on the characteristics, subjectivity and orientations of the person as on vocational skills and knowledge as more traditionally understood. New economy workplaces are said to require new kinds of people with new knowledge, skills and dispositions (Champy, 1995).

These discourses therefore imply that workers in the new economy need to change. They need to 'do things differently' in their everyday work practices. That is, they have to have different understandings of their role at work, to construct different relationships with colleagues, managers and the organisation. They need to conceptualise their knowledge and skills differently, to change their understanding of who they are at work. In short, to change their identity. 'Changing selves' has therefore become an aim of new vocationalism and in the context of this research we look to the ways in which different pedagogical practices deployed at different sites make up the learners of new vocationalism and the workers of the new economy.

Changing Knowledge

The vocational education and training system in Australia has often been characterised as a site where learners are provided with opportunities to access existing knowledge and to apply this knowledge in vocational contexts. VET has therefore been traditionally constructed as a system for 'knowledge users' rather than 'knowledge producers'(Kinsman, 1992).

However, recent talk of the 'new economy' has highlighted the importance of knowledge and knowledge production in the contemporary economic environment. Indeed, for many, a distinguishing feature of the 'new economy' is its reliance on the creation and application of new knowledge in workplaces. (Johnston, 2000; OECD, 2000) Increasingly 'knowledge work' within industries and organisations is seen as the critical ingredient to economic success and the 'knowledge worker' has in some senses become the star of the 'new economy' (Cairney, 2000). This emphasis on 'knowledge production' and the 'knowledge worker' in the new economy has resulted in a number of commentators questioning the adequacy and utility of the content, organisation, production and transmission of knowledge that traditionally takes place in education and training institutions including VET. (Senge, 1991)

This position proposes that the knowledge of the new economy is different from that which has occupied traditional education and training programs. Today, thinking about knowledge has moved to emphasise knowledge constructed as practical, interdisciplinary, informal, applied and contextual over knowledge constructed as theoretical, disciplinary, formal, foundational and generalisable. As Gibbons (1994) puts it, there has been a significant shift in emphasis away from 'culturally concentrated' (academic) knowledge to 'socially distributed' knowledge.

In some ways, this take on knowledge can be seen as supporting the traditional position that VET is about the application of relevant knowledge required in vocational contexts, however this is not quite so straightforward.

As Tennant (2001) points out, today: “relevance no longer equates with the ‘application’ of knowledge to the workplace, rather the workplace itself is seen as a site of learning, knowledge and knowledge production”.

Workers within the new economy are now expected to contribute to new knowledge production within the workplace rather than merely applying existing knowledge to workplace activities. Moreover this 'new knowledge' is significantly different from more traditional conceptions.

The production of new knowledge within organisations and enterprises is different from the knowledge outlined in traditional subjects or disciplines, which are common in education and training programs. This new knowledge is high in use value for the enterprise or organisation. Its deployment has immediate
value for the enterprise. Moreover, this knowledge is context specific and its value may well be short-lived within the enterprise or organisation. This new knowledge is not foundational and cannot be 'codified' into written texts such as competency standard descriptions, procedural manuals or textbooks but is constructed within the context and environment of the immediate workplace. This knowledge is therefore rarely the product of individuals but is constructed through collaborations and networks that exist within specific sites and particular contexts.

The implications for VET of these new ideas concerning knowledge remain unclear. As Cairney (2000) points out, the emergence of the 'knowledge economy' is highly contested, with some commentators arguing that its proponents are more in the business of mapping the future than describing the present. However, he suggests that all industries — be they predominantly high, middle or low skilled — have become more knowledge intensive. Competitive pressures have resulted in firms moving to flatter structures. This has resulted in increased work expectations for all employees. At the same time, knowledge is seen as the vehicle through which productivity gains can be achieved within organisations. Moreover, this 'productive knowledge' is generated within specific contexts.

This perspective leads to the idea that all workers irrespective of the industry in which they work, now require higher levels of cognitive and intellectual abilities than those once expected. This scenario suggests therefore that the VET system has a major role to play in terms of developing 'productive workers' albeit a different one than that which it has traditionally undertaken.

Project Design and Methodology
This research uses these contemporary theorisations to undertake a new comparative and qualitative empirical study of pedagogies deployed across a range of Australian sites involved in the new vocationalism.

Our preliminary investigations have shown that much of the insightful theoretical literature in this area to date has been macro (analysis of broad cultural trends) in orientation, or confined to one particular site. This literature draws attention to demands for a new working 'self' that is flexible, autonomous, self-regulating and orientated to life long learning in a context of change and uncertainty at work. It also foregrounds capabilities such as an orientation to problem solving, teamwork, adaptability, information analysis, self-reflection etc.

The focus of our research is on how pedagogical practices are deployed to shape this new self, with an interest in detail and local specificity. We wish to document a range of characteristics for each site including:

- learner identities (e.g., the basis on which they enter)
- institutional histories and traditions
- the relationship of the learner to the provider (e.g., employee, student, compulsory/non-compulsory, guaranteed job outcome or not, etc)
- physical setting (including geography)
- level of award

In terms of new vocational skills and transformations of self, we want to analyse whether capabilities such as 'communication', or 'enterprising self' or 'flexibility' are being enacted in programs today, and how they are or are not affected by local specificities. Finally understanding the repertoires and complexities of 'working knowledge' and what this means in terms of the construction of new learner-workers is another focus of both the empirical investigation and the theory-building intent of this project.

Our focus is on the way in which and extent to which the learner participates in the knowledge-producing process. For example, with respect to 'team-work': How is teamwork being constructed by different pedagogies? How is it being framed and
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interpreted? What techniques are used and with what effects? How does the relationship between the learner and program influence the teamwork pedagogies?

The overall focus of our empirical work will be framed by some broad research questions:

- How are new work requirements being understood and acted upon by the vocational programs and teachers?
- How is the learner understood and acted upon through those pedagogical techniques?
- How is the learner positioned with respect to the generation of knowledge and what is seen as the source(s) of knowledge?

More specifically we wish to generate:

- a mapping of the work-related educational practices directed at shaping the self towards certain ends across a range of different sites;
- an analysis of what is asked of learners in different contexts, drawing attention to issues of inclusion and exclusion, privilege and marginalisation..
- an analysis of what types of worker and learner selves are being produced in different sites.
- a comparative analysis of pedagogical strategies and approaches in the new vocationalism, with attention to generic knowledges and local specificities.
- a new, empirically-grounded theorisation of directions for education practices in relation to working knowledge.

In order to investigate the impact of diversity the empirical research will be centred on a number of different vocational learning sites including schools, TAFE, universities, and industry-based providers. It will focus on vocational programs delivered at these various sites in the areas of Information Technology and Hospitality. The decision to focus on two industries offers a chance to compare programs in a particular industry sector as they are developed in different educational sites; and also to compare programs at a particular education level across two industry sectors. We chose hospitality and IT as the focus because these are important areas of contemporary work opportunity, with each having programs available at each of the levels we wish to study. We also chose them because they have significant differences in 'work-skills' and history.

References


The Westminster system of government presupposes the existence of a relatively permanent public service that offers independent and fearless advice to government ministers. The stability of the public service in the Westminster system is intended, among other things, to counterbalance the potential disruption to government function caused by changes in ministers and governing parties. The introduction of contracts for senior managers in the Australian public service in place of permanency has substantially changed the nature of government in the direction of a politicised public service, as in the American system, although the impact of this fundamental change has not been widely acknowledged or recognised. There is evidence that VET policy making and management of policy implementation has been considerably affected by these changes. Drawing upon available evidence from a variety of sources, this paper critically examines the changes to the system and the impact that these changes have had upon the management of VET policy in Australia.
independent, permanent public service, the issue of accountability and the ways in which changes to the public service have had a deleterious effect upon vocational education through inept policy formulation and implementation.

Changes to the Public Service
There have been sweeping changes made to the public service by both Labor and Liberal Coalition governments over the past thirty years. Many of the changes which have occurred can be traced to the frustration encountered by Gough Whitlam in trying to have public servants implement new policies after a very extended reign by Liberal Party Coalitions (see Stone, 1992). The inertia and lack of sympathy from a public service experienced by a newly elected government could reasonably be interpreted as an existing public service which had been politicised. However, there is more than some truth in arguments which have been expressed by Stone (1992) that were fearless independent advice available, rather than that offered by a Whitlam public service appointee, then the Khemlani affair involving Rex Connor, which brought down the government in a very short space of time, may not have occurred.

Both the Hawke and Howard governments in the federal sphere have made important efforts towards change in the public service, with major changes occurring under Hawke’s leadership (Davis, 1997). The path of reform has involved the various states as much as the federal government itself, with the Wran and Greiner governments in New South Wales and the Kennett government creating models for change. The Kennett government in particular was used by the Federal government under Howard to act a model for other governments for reforms and cost cutting of the state public service and services to the community within that state, particularly in the area of education.

The general arguments that have been advanced to support the changes have basically fallen into two categories, notably the economic savings resulting from cutting a supposedly bloated public service, and increased efficiency and satisfaction of client and/or market needs and thereby greater accountability (e.g., see Hughes, 1998; Stewart, 2002). On the surface these seem exemplary reasons for urges to reform by governments of both political persuasions. These issues, which have been promoted by powerful institutions like the OECD and World Bank as cure-alls for economic and social malaise, are very much part of the political ideology of economic rationalism (Ernst, 1999).

The essential mechanisms applied to drive change have been commercialisation and privatisation, which, as Ernst (1999) has pointed out, are each quite different and have resulted in major changes to the conceptualisation of the nature of public service and the carrying out of its roles. Of the four manifestations of privatisation enumerated by Ernst, the last, deregulation through the removal of statutory constraints and regulations on the behaviour of organisations and individuals, has considerable implications for accountability in political and public service spheres (see below).

The dominant creed underlying the application of economic rationalism has been one that everyone is governed by self interest and hence allowing the market place to achieve efficiencies and competition has been viewed as an appropriate driver of change. The creation and implementation of competition and privatisation policies have seen the out-sourcing of all kinds of functions and services and the abolition of areas of the public service. The other most noticeable changes the major have been to increase political appointments to top bureaucratic and management positions, quite apart from direct political adviser positions, and to place these individuals on relatively short-term
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contracts. This has meant the disappearance of the permanency for working life in these more powerful positions and the protection for individuals in giving direct, independent and fearless advice. While this does not fully approximate the American system, where there is a total change of both executive and bureaucracy with a change of party, it has in fact meant in practical terms the clear politicisation of the upper levels of the public service (Hughes, 1998). Johnston (1999, p. 15) in her study of the NSW Senior Executive Service for the NSW Audit Office concluded that 'it would appear that the public interest is often secondary to the self-interest of the relevant actors'. Added to this has been the use of incentive or bonus payments in the federal system as scarcely disguised rewards to senior bureaucrats by the political masters when their needs are met. Also, in effect, monetary means (the need to stay within budget) have been used to achieve the reforms and to control the bureaucracy (Stewart, 2002).

Privatisation and Competition: Some Evidence of Effects

Painter (1996, pp. 297-8) has argued that: 'Critics will have to wait for market liberalism to disprove itself by patently failing as a strategy for adjusting economic and political realities before even eminently sensible dissenting ideas can dislodge it.' While accumulation of significant bodies of evidence may take some time, evidence has started to emerge of results from the privatisation and marketisation of the public sector. It is widely recognised that the results from privatising public utilities such as rail and energy in the UK have been far from satisfactory and certainly not in the public interest (Ernst, 1999). Recently the NSW Energy Minister, Kim Yeadon, announced that electricity privatisation had been a failure in Australia. He claimed that it was not assisting in increasing competition or resulting in lower prices. It is widely known that the supply of electricity available to consumers in Victoria and South Australia at peak periods is inadequate and probably contributed to the demise of governments responsible for privatisation in those states. However there are other important effects emerging with serious implications for good governance and public policy. Yeadon now has claimed that 'key national electricity market regulators were (are) acting as policy makers, when this was (is) a role of governments' (Hepworth, 2002, p. 5)

Old Public Service Ideals

The Westminster ideal included dedication by civil servants to the welfare of the whole county, not just to the ruling politicians and the political adherents who voted a particular party into power, and the supplying of independent advice to their minister. Stone (1992, p. 368), who served both as a high level public servant and a politician, has argued that 'what Ministers most need from them is dispassionate, non-sycophantic analysis of the issues. They need... people who feel sufficiently secure to tell them, when appropriate, what they don’t (emphasis in original) want to hear, not what they want to hear.'

These old public service ideals supported important functions. Ministers of cabinet are elected by their political party colleagues on the basis of their perceived loyalties to their party, and their popularity within that political party, or appointed by the Premier/Prime Minister. They rarely have anything approaching expertise in the subject area of their portfolio although some may certainly lay legitimate claim to administrative ability. Stone (1992, p. 369) indeed lamented the fact that the 'quality of politicians is so low as to produce quite clear psychological problems of the ‘inferiority complex’ kind.' Professional public servants provided expert advice relating to public policy formulation in specialist areas as well as advice on actual administration of the policies thus ensuring that the more loopy political enthusiasms...
of politicians were counter-balanced by more impartial and objective reasoning. They also provided information to ministers on the operation of the system over which they presided, with there being considerable doubt about the depth of knowledge of the politicians on this issue (see Stone, 1992).

Because of their permanency, public servants also provided transition and consistency between and within governments after ministerial changes and changes in political parties (Hughes, 1998, p. 323). Career paths, permanency and experience in their roles enabled them to develop corporate memory, essentially enough knowledge and wisdom concerning past events to advise of pitfalls originating from failures in previous policies. This ability is increasingly being recognised as of vital importance in the functioning of businesses in the private sector following the vicious rounds of cost cutting through staff redundancies that occurred particularly in the early nineties.

Selection to the highest levels of the public service was generally through open competition, with outstanding university, business and industry performance often key determinants. Because they collected a vast amount of data related to the functioning of the country and thus policy decision making, they also carried out a great deal of research relevant to that decision-making and advising their minister. There were certainly those whose dedication to self-interest assumed priority over the welfare of the whole country, just as there were those who were lazy or incompetent, although, as has been pointed out by Stone (1992), effective mechanisms existed for eliminating those people from the public service if those in top authority positions had the will. However in the ranks of those older style public servants were the likes of Sir Arthur Tange and H.C. (Nuggett) Coombs who made immense contributions to public policy and the governance Australia under a variety of governments and prime ministers.

Increased Political Power for Politicians with the Changes

The destruction of the public service as a countervailing force to political enthusiasms has been of mutual interest to all ruling political parties regardless of political persuasion. There has been the accrual of more real power to ministers and premiers/prime minister. With top bureaucrats on contact, and vulnerable because of this, politicians can easily create and/or implement policies of direct benefit for themselves and their parties without the hindrance of unbiased analysis and advice. Also ministers can now deal directly with special interest/pressure groups without having the public servants providing countervailing pressures and in effect screening lobbyists and their policies as they once did (see Lovell et al., 1995, p. 269). An example of this at the time of writing is the direct approach to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, Senator Ian Campbell, by the Insurance Council of Australia to use the public liability crisis to remove basic customer protection from many other categories of insurance (Wade, 2002, p. 4). Such direct approaches no doubt could be more directly linked to donations to political parties or individuals and now become harder to detect.

The benefits of the politicisation of the public service largely flow to the party in power. This causes major problems for an opposition party, particularly one which might like to think itself likely to regain power, as it risks working with a politically aligned, (i.e., partisan, public servants), or having to replace them and lose the expertise as is the case usually with the American system. In something of an ironic turn, no doubt partially calculated to ‘show up’ the Carr Labor government, the NSW opposition leader John Brogden recently ‘warned the state’s most senior public servants to keep out of politics or “they will be held to account”’. (Totaro, 2002, p. 10). Brogden’s concerns as reported by Totaro centred
upon the fact that increasingly top public servants were speaking for their ministers, thereby shielding ministers from accountability when the statements were incorrect. Had ministers themselves released the statements, they could have been forced to resign for misleading parliament.

Accountability
Accountability is regarded as being one of the fundamentals supporting a democratic system. Though the electoral process politicians are judged by the electorate and are supposed to be accountable to it. Yet as has frequently been pointed out (e.g., Hughes, 1998) the actual level of direct accountability is relatively small with electors quite unable to directly elect or punish particular ministers for the policies that they have introduced. There is also the problem that given the time intervals involved and the election cycles very few electors are focused fully enough to appropriately reward or punish politicians and they have little control over who becomes premier or prime minister anyway.

The push for competition and privatisation of the various federal and state public services has been accompanied with a great deal of rhetoric concerning accountability. The general argument has run that the public servants had too much power and were unaccountable directly to the public. In theory the Public Service Board regulations provided the opportunity for holding public servants accountable, although as Stone (1992) has pointed out many managers within the public service and also ministers lacked the will to make use of the available mechanisms. There is always the mechanism of the use of direct legal procedures by aggrieved private citizens although that has never been used except by the very few wealthy enough to afford it (Stewart, 2002).

Where the accountability for public servants has moved to, especially with the Senior Executive Service being placed on contracts, is to the politicians, particularly cabinet ministers. In practice, because of the contact system which denies permanency and the use of bonuses which offer rewards (certainly in the federal system), accountability has been transferred to meeting the needs of cabinet ministers, the premier/prime minister and in effect the ruling party. Also because of the politicisation of the public service senior public servants and political advisers serve as the expendable first line when there is a political miscalculation. This is despite ministers having more direct power over their departments. A recent example involved the former NSW Education Minister, John Aquilina, whose adviser 'got the bullet' when a scheme clearly involving Aquilina had gone astray. Aquilina did not resign but was moved sideways. It is doubtful whether this can be interpreted as real accountability of government to the electorate.

In effect, in almost inverse direct proportion to the rhetoric, the actual accountability of politicians has decreased in proportion to the introduction of the new systems that are trumpeted as increasing accountability. The convention of ministerial responsibility in terms of the Westminster system has become a dead letter (see Stone, 1992). No matter how blatant the ministerial transgression with party support the culprit can bluff it out until the careful management of the media either distracts attention or the issue is superseded by another scandal. Changes introduced by politicians now also let them off the hook. As the circumstances regarding Yeadon’s comments reveal (see above), ministers can now claim that they do not have direct control, that is, cannot be held accountable because private organisations or other governments are making policy. In the federal sphere, the Senate Estimate Committee hearings, senate inquiries and the Auditor-General appear to be the only real checks capable of maintaining some degree of accountability. As but one example of how politicians have manoeuvred to reduce accountability, one only has
to examine the Keating Labor government’s ‘fixing’ of the Auditor-General whose statutory authority is to investigate the effective spending of taxpayers money. In a consummate act of bastardry, Keating ensured that the Auditor-General and his department were locked into an extended lease of a Labor Party owned building at above market rental value. By so doing, Keating ensured that there were vastly fewer funds available for the Auditor-General to scrutinise government policy and effective policy implementation (Lagan, 1993. Also see O’Reilly, 1995).

**Vocational Education Policy and Implementation**

Vocational education is of vital importance for Australia. It is a critical area for national prosperity and it also provides important evidence on the way the older Westminster ideal of an independent public serving the interests of the public and accountable to the electorate has been demolished. The area is in crisis and careful examination of the use of research in the VET sector by Selby Smith et al. (1998) revels why so much in policy making and implementation is a shambles.

Research would logically be presumed to be an important tool for developing and implementing VET policy as well as evaluating policy effectiveness. Selby Smith et al. (1998, pp. 113–120) found that the contracting and politicisation of the public servants in the area have resulted in many senior managers and policy decision makers being employed who have little understanding of research conducted in the area. Many of the managers and decision-makers surveyed had been in the positions for only short periods of time with often very limited, specialised knowledge of VET. The middle management and advisers at lower levels were found to have a much higher understanding. It is possible to draw a number of important conclusions from this research. These lower level public servants of course still retain tenure. Clearly

The selection of higher levels has been related to ability to satisfy ministerial whim and meet ideological requirements rather than demonstrable expertise. The chaos in policies in turn resulted in considerable churning hence no corporate memory of past policies and little understanding of the overall VET system.

In terms of accountability there are two important areas which need to be considered. The first is the use of research evidence as a basis for policy and the second is the evaluation of policy without which there can be no effective basis for policy change or the evaluation of the effectiveness of policy and whether goals have been met. Party politics and ideology prevailed in VET decision making with little account being given to research. Selby Smith et al. (1998, p. 8) found that with decision makers: ‘two-thirds considered that, in reaching decisions, that political and strategic considerations played the greatest role, with research-based information being used (in half the cases described) to support or validate a decision taken on other grounds’.

With regard to policy evaluation, the situation is well illustrated with what has occurred with the CBT policy that serves a major framework for other layers of VET policy. There have been few attempts at policy evaluation in the area. Those few evaluations that have been undertaken are either private individual’s attempts to tackle important issues or studies commissioned by quasi-government authorities which have very serious limitations (Mills & Cornford 2001). The serious limitations of the officially commissioned studies can be traced to either complete determination to leave Pandora’s box unopened or total incompetence on the part of those in senior positions deciding on the scope and nature of the evaluation should be. The author is personally included to believe that the underlying motivation is that it is better not to know the truth as you might then have to do something to fix it also thus

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revealing the incompetence of leadership and decision making to this point.

Conclusion

The Westminster conventions that many Australian considered as essential elements to support Australian democracy have been substantially changed behind the veil of rhetoric concerning the benefits of competition and privatisation. What has emerged is a system frighteningly devoid of checks and balances and means of holding politicians accountable while in government. The VET sector, which has perhaps been most affected because of its importance in linking technical change to production, serves as an important example of the lack of accountability and the way the independent public service has been highly politicised thus resulting in poor policies and policy implementation. There is a need for all Australians to demand more, not less accountability from the political system.

References


Far Transfer for Complex Problem Solving: Some Important Issues

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Development of practical training programs to ensure effective transfer of learning is hampered by the fact that there are a number of different types of transfer. Of these different types, the one which may be considered by many to be the most desirable is far transfer which is involved with difficult, that is non-routine problem solving. This paper briefly examines the different types of transfer before focusing upon some of the key issues surrounding far transfer. In particular the paper considers the important issue of the degree of variability from the originally learned stimulus and the ability of humans to continue to recognise this stimulus as connected to the original learning. Recommendations are made for the development of a new, more inclusive theory of learning that better accounts for factors involved in the transfer of learning.

Effective transfer of learning lies at the heart of effective vocational education. It is a common, implicit assumption underlying vocational education that the skills learned in one context will be applied in a variety of contexts. In essence it is assumed that the skills and knowledge gained will be used in problem solving activities in activities related in some ways to the original learning/teaching. These assumptions concerning transfer of learning are very commonly held and constitute folk wisdom and understanding. However, on many issues folk wisdom does not stand up to rigorous empirical scrutiny, and these attitudes to transfer of learning in particular are at least partially fallacious. Achievement of the effective, positive transfer of learning constitutes one of the major challenges of effective teaching/learning (Cox, 1997; Cornford, 2002) although it is indubitably of great interest in vocational education when national prosperity is contingent upon high workplace productivity and problem solving.

The problems with understanding and fostering transfer of learning are the complexity of the issues and the 'common-sense' attitudes to training that have prevailed and thereby have gotten in the way of teachers/trainers working explicitly to foster positive transfer of learning. Stokes and Baer (1977) were correct in identifying the problems in part as being the assumption that transfer is a passive, naturally occurring phenomenon when patently this is not the case. The extreme position held by Lave (Lave, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991) is that transfer does not exist independently of contextual and socio-cultural factors. This position although fashionable in some circles clearly does not withstand rigorous scrutiny and has been seen as linked to the older behavioural psychology positions. The logic and arguments underlying Lave's and similar approaches on transfer have been substantially challenged by Anderson, Reder and Simon (1996, 1997) and are seen to be inappropriate in vocational education...
where the existence of transfer has never been seriously doubted although ensuring it through training, is as always with transfer, a major concern (Cornford, 2002).

**Types of Transfer**

There are a number of different types of transfer which have been identified in the literature. These include near, far and more general transfer (Detterman, 1993). Near transfer involves the application of previous learning to relatively similar situations. Far transfer involves more difficult problem solving and applications of previous learning where the applications are much less obvious. General transfer would appear to underlie any notion of far transfer and involves the use of general strategies of learning to assist in the new situation (see Detterman, 1993, p. 9) thus it includes the learning-to-learn phenomenon. There are also other types of transfer identified in the literature by Gage and Berliner (1992) including substantive and procedural transfer. These two types of transfer correspond respectively to the two longest recognised approaches used in training for transfer, namely identical elements (stimuli) and teaching general principles or rules (see Cox, 1997; Gage & Berliner, 1992).

Of these types of transfer the one which is the focus of this paper is far transfer. This is because far transfer involves difficult problem solving and is considered of great value in establishing greater productivity through workplace efficiency and effectiveness on the job. The point that needs to be borne in mind is that for the novice or relatively uninformed individual all transfer is going to be difficult. Detterman (1993, p. 2) has attempted to argue that true far transfer involving major new discoveries is in fact extremely rare. This definition is somewhat limiting and is taken from a position of analysis of the history of ideas and social progress. For this reason a more middle-of-the-road definition of far transfer is adopted, one in which far transfer occurs where the stimuli are somewhat different from the original situation but the responses needed for successful solution of the problem are similar to previous learning. This definition takes into account the difficulty for the learner/performer.

**Some Conceptual Issues**

There are at least three important, related conceptual issues that need to be addressed as they are pertinent for better understanding transfer of learning. These are: (a) the identification of learning as being of a similar or identical type to what has been encountered before and thus can serve as a direct base for transfer of previous learning; (b) attempting to categorise and establish the inter-relationships between different examples in the process of transferring previous learning; and also (c) adopting a theoretical position regarding the nature of transfer of learning. As the following arguments will reveal, the third issue is logically related to what is arises from the first two but also requires consideration of more recent conceptualisations of the nature of intelligence and skill development and the stages in the development of expertise.

**Identifying Similarity Between the Past and Present Situations**

The first issue is stimulus identification and how the human mind comes to accept minor discrepancies and makes judgments about the situation being classified as being similar or identical to previous learning and thus permitting a decision to engage in transfer application of previous learning. This issue was identified in Sigley and Anderson (1989) as an important one, but since 1989 there appears to have been relatively few attempts to examine critically what is involves and the decisions which need to be made by the individual. The work of Anderson (1982), along with that of other cognitive theorists, would indicate that where the situation is not recognised as identical or very similar, and in fact similar enough for previous learning to be directly
applied, then there will be a need to engage in various cognitive activities. This will add another step in additional learning that will consume attention, short term/working memory capacity, energy and time (Anderson, 1982) before effective action can be undertaken. In terms of skill learning theory (Cornford, 1999), this will mean a new set of skills will need to be learned before there can be any effective action undertaken to solve the problem(s) confronting the individual.

There would seem to be a number of possibilities in the process of identifying a situation as identical or similar and deciding to act on the basis of similar previous learning. First, there is the issue of identification and whether there can be recognition of the situation as corresponding to the same stimuli as with previous instances. An example of this could be where we identify as identical the print in the newspaper over subsequent days of the same newspaper from memory search. However, as Detterman (1993, p. 4) has pointed out, the difference in time from between the initial learning and the second exposure creates an immediate difference itself.

Stokes and Baer (1977) included this aspect of different time in their definition of what constitutes transfer although their definition derived from consideration of atypical learners. However, it is argued here that with normal learners any problem in identifying identical stimuli as identical is an issue of acquisition, the depth of previous learning and effective storage in long term memory rather than a transfer of learning issue per se.

Second, there can also be a search of long term memory storage of previous experiences and cognitive activity to determine whether the situation corresponds very largely to previous similar situations. This activity can proceed on the basis that the two situations are close to identical although some stimuli which form the identification complex are slightly or more different from the original learning situation. In this case I am presuming that more than a difference of time is involved but a difference exists in one or more of a cluster of distinguishing stimuli. The decision that the previous and present situations are similar enough to enable action to occur on the basis of previous learning effectively circumvent the lengthy time needed for mastering and additional skill (Cornford, 1996) and mental energy and modification of existing cognitive structures to a point at which effective performance is not unduly delayed (Anderson, 1982). This direct action is of course dependent upon the individual consciously identifying that there is a close relationship between present stimuli and past learning.

The third situation is where the instance prevents some difficulty in terms of categorisation into ‘similar to previous experiences’. This in effect corresponds to far transfer. What may also be involved however is the issue of generalisation. Generalisation effectively involves consideration of critical elements which lead to judgement being made to proceed on the basis of acceptable similarity without major modifications necessary to existing schemas. This third point involves the logical difficulty of deciding at which point the transfer involves only a small incremental change in awareness to a similar situation or it becomes effectively difficult problem solving and thus genuinely far transfer. In this paper far and transfer are conceived of as lying on the same continuum. It is probably best to consider the effects of learning as negative transfer then zero transfer and subsequently near and far transfer along the same continuum.

Generalisation

It would appear that the process of generalisation (Kalish, 1969; Cornford, 2002), or tuning, in Rumelhart and Norman’s (1978) terms, is critical to the process of applying previous learning to new situations. Generalisation is essentially the process of learning that original learning
can be applied to other situations with relatively minor modifications to existing schemas (Cornford, 2002). Historically, there is a considerable body of older behavioural psychology research that explored issues of stimulus variation and stimulus discrimination (e.g., Kalish, 1969). Unfortunately most of this research is essentially limited in that it is laboratory based and seems to have explored the notion of a dominant stimulus rather than what seems most likely to occur which is there being a cluster of stimuli in real world transfer. However, what this earlier research does alert us to, is the way we have previously been reinforced may substantially close off for us certain possibilities as avenues of exploration. That is to say we carry into any situation a learned predisposition to not select certain alternatives when a choice is necessary. This is of course a need for training to overcome these limitations.

The initial information processing problems are to identify the stimulus or cluster of stimuli and then decide whether the stimulus or stimuli are identical or different to those originally encoded with the original learning. If there is only one stimulus then the decision is an identical, very similar or considerably different decision. If the decision is that the stimulus is identical then the application of previous learning can proceed. If the decision is that the stimulus is very different then there will need to be further learning to develop the appropriate skills and knowledge as well as schemas capable of leading to a problem solution, that is it is a far transfer problem. There could also be the possibility of a decision of relative similarity, thus involving generalisation, in which case there would need to be further exploration of stores in long term memory. This would be done to determine whether enough evidence exists to suggest that the previous learning can be applied, in total, partially and in terms of what modifications need to be made to extant schemas to enable a satisfactory solution to be reached. This may certainly be considered as a process of tuning the existing schema(s) in Rumelhart and Norman’s (1978) theory. However, if major modifications are needed, as in a scrapping of existing schemas as they are incorrect and not compatible with effective functioning, this is really a case of restructuring.

Where there are multiple stimuli involved in identifying the critical features of the situation, and this is far more realistic than there being simply one stimulus, the processing will be more complex. If there are some stimuli which are identical, but others which differ, then there will need to be the a determination of to what degree and how much of the original learning is applicable to this modified situation. What presumably frequently comes into play is a comparison of similarities and differences between previous schemas and the new situation and decisions concerning employment of parts or total other schemas already established through previous learning. What may be involved are depth of processing of previous learning and individual differences since, if the individual has identified one stimulus as dominant this, at least in some cases, results in a quicker judgement and solution. The organisation of existing knowledge structures would appear to play an important role as does the degree of experience or expertise attained. For example Murphy and Wright (1984) in examining the conceptual structures of real-world experts and novices found that richness of categories of experts increased as a function of increased experience/expertise but also that category distinctiveness decreased also. Not only are experts more likely to make correct connections between past and present situations but also they appear to better understand the interrelationships between the different schemas that in toto constitute their expert knowledge in a specialist field. The establishment of these interrelationships can be considered as involving the process of generalisation — from one instance to other, similar instances, and tuning of existing
schemas to make them more effective for real world adaptation. It also involves the establishment of logical relationships between schemas or groups of schemas.

The Role of Training

Research has clearly established that well planned training can facilitate the development of knowledge and problem solving skills associated with complex, specialty areas such as avionics troubleshooting (Gott, 1994). It is interesting to note that, while research reported by Gott (1994) was very successful, transfer of learning was not identified as a specific feature of training in complex problem solving. Careful examination of her reporting of the research procedures clearly indicates attempts to integrate on-site training and on-site work in such ways as to increase the advent of positive transfer of theory to practical situations. However, it is interesting to speculate to what degree the findings may have been enhanced if transfer had been included as a specific training objective. This speculation is based on Cornford's (1991) research that indicates that specific inclusion of transfer as a learning objective can assist in practical ways in the facilitation of transfer in complex skill learning, at least with novice teachers.

From a skill learning perspective, research by Cornford (1991, 2002) indicates the need for training for understanding generalisation even with what could be considered near transfer. Cornford's research indicates that for reasonably complex skills novice learners can benefit from specific training to identify that some situations involve the stimulus being essentially the same when the responses may have substantially different content, although embodying general, underlying principles. From a considerable body of research we know that novice learners fix on surface features and do not often appreciate underlying (deep) structures and principles (Cornford & Athanasou, 1995). Furthermore, one of the general conclusions that can be drawn from the problem solving literature is of the need to identify the nature of the problem since so much that follows is contingent upon this accurate framing (Gage & Berliner, 1992). Taken together, these findings and positions suggest a process of stimulus identification and classification with reference to past learning is going to be a critical part of any teaching likely to facilitate far transfer.

The work of Perkins and Salomon (1989) also has implications for training in generalisation and transfer. They have argued that one of the important issues in successful transfer of learning is high road transfer, that is developing a conscious awareness of the possibility of generalisation beyond the example that was the basis for initial learning. This realisation is seen by them as of great importance in encouraging the development of positive transfer of whatever kind. Perkins and Salomon's concept should be seen as somewhat different from the old formal discipline doctrine where the general study of a field of learning, (e.g., mathematics), was supposed to develop certain nonspecific skills which enabled transfer to occur more generally (Ellis, 1969). This older formal discipline approach, which really was based upon all kinds of class based assumptions about the benefits of specific types of subject matter, has been repeated attacked over a long period of time and appears generally discredited (see Cox, 1997; Detterman, 1993; Ellis, 1969).

Conclusion: A More Inclusive Learning Theory?

There would appear to be a need to synthesise a range of existing theories into a more satisfactory philosophical framework and general learning theory to move beyond seeing transfer of learning as a passive, naturally occurring phenomenon. Nothing is probably more important in effective vocational education and training than adopting a more pro-active approach, yet clearly the issues are often
poorly understood by both teachers/trainers and managers in situations to which the transfer is expected to occur (Cornford, 2002).

Leaving aside Lave’s (1988) denial of the existence of transfer, there are also current problems with some conceptualisations of transfer. Detterman’s (1993) attempts to restrict definition of far transfer to only situation of completely and radically new advances fails to account for the importance of many day to day activities where individuals are faced with problems in transfer. In effect he fails to take into account he importance of stages of the development of expertise and skill learning in developing the ability to transfer learning. Detterman also seems to argue that true far transfer should not involve attempts to train individuals for application of previous learning. In his view some illegitimate coaching is involved and not true adaptability by the individual. This stands in considerable contrast to other positions that recognise the need to foster expertise (Gott, 1994; Cornford & Athanasou, 1995)) and transfer through effective training using previous learning (see Cornford, 2002).

Probably two of the more sensible approaches to more general learning for effective, positive transfer stem are to be found in the recent work of Sternberg (1999) and the earlier work of Rumelhart and Norman (1978). Elements of their work would seem important inclusions in any more general theory or philosophical position. Sternberg (1999) has re-conceptualised intelligence to see it as chiefly involving continuing adaptation to the environment. His work in this area links into the earlier conception of three distinct types of learning proposed by Rumelhart and Norman (1978). Their three types of learning were accretion, tuning and restructuring. Accretion involves adding on new information to existing schemas or mental models. Tuning involves the ‘tweaking’ of existing learning to include additional features encountered thereby ensuring more effective functioning. In effect, tuning may be viewed as the process of generalisation of learning. Restructuring is where previous learning is so incorrect that the mental structures need to be completely replaced by new, more functionally appropriate learning. The process of tuning in learning in particular, which Rumelhart and Norman viewed as a common form of learning would appear to be totally congruent with Sternberg’s conception of continued learning for adaptation.

Both Rumelhart and Norman’s types of learning and Sternberg’s concept of adaptive learning over the longer time frame also fit comfortably within, or alongside, a skill learning and development of expertise framework. The general need for skill refinement over lengthy periods of time and the way in which stages in the development of expertise develop reflect long term acquisition of specialty occupation skills (Cornford, 1996, 1999). Together these elements may help form a new theory which can provide better guidance for practitioners in seeking to attain transfer in its various forms through vocational training.

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Between the Ideal and the Reality Falls the Shadow: Role and Workload of Principals in Changing Times

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Since the 1980s, several significant reforms have taken place in post-compulsory education and training as well as the compulsory or schooling sector in western countries including Australia. This study is concerned with the schooling sector and takes as its focus the intensification of the work of school principals due to a range of pressures emanating from a changing and turbulent environment. The study investigated the roles and workload of secondary school principals with a view to understanding whether there was a discrepancy in how they view their current practice and how they would desire their practice to be. Questionnaire responses were received from 105 principals with additional data provided via interviews with three secondary school principals and three systems officers from Queensland, Australia. The findings indicated that the majority of principals reported that pressure in the role and hours worked per week had increased compared with previous years, and role overload, role ambiguity and role conflict now characterised the job to some extent. Although the findings suggest that the demands of the job have intensified, 80% of principals reported to be satisfied or very satisfied with the role. Principals reported that currently, their typical activities included management/administration, parent/community issues and staffing issues, yet their ideal week was described as one where they could dedicate more time to strategic leadership, curriculum leadership and parent/community issues.

This study is concerned with the role and workload of secondary school principals in Queensland government schools. It reports on questionnaire responses from over 100 principals and interview data with three principals, one district direct and two system officers. Principals’ perceptions of roles, responsibilities and workloads were investigated with respect to current change agendas such as the Queensland State Education—2010 policy (Education Queensland, 2000).

Literature Review

In order to try to understand the role and nature of the principalship today, it is necessary to consider the school restructuring movement that began in the 1980s in many western countries around the world, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Beare, 1991; Whitty, Powers & Halpin, 1998). Essentially, these reforms have been characterised by the strong interventionist role of national governments in education; trends towards school based management and devolution of decision making; and the restructuring of school systems in line with a managerial model (Beare, 1991, pp. 13-22). While devolution has been a feature of Australian government reform since the 1970s, it was not until the early 1990s in Queensland, Australia, that significant restructuring of the education system occurred. These changes resulted in the introduction of school-based management,
extended forms of assessment, and new forms of accountability for staff and leaders via competencies and standards.

School-based management has had significant implications for the principalship as schools and their communities engaged in increased decision making over the planning and management of resources. Principals, as the formal leaders of their school communities, are now facing the challenge of engaging a wide group of people (staff, parents and community members) in participatory decision-making. Coupled with their greater decision-making powers is an enhanced accountability to the system and to the community. Within a policy environment characterised by demands for accountability and adherence to policies and practices emanating from the system, Webb and Vulliamy (1996) aptly note that school principals are likely to find themselves faced with competing interests. The challenge facing principals to reconcile these contrasting expectations is unlikely to be straightforward.

Role and Workload of Principal

A considerable number of studies have investigated the changing nature and role of the principalship within an environment of school reform and restructuring (see Baker & Dellar, 1999; Boyle, 2000; Cranston, 2000; Holdaway, 1999; Knight, 2000; Wildy & Louden, 2000; Wildy & Wallace, 1997). An implication of the changing role of principals has inevitably resulted in an increased workload and tensions in the role (Baker & Dellar, 1999; Boyle, 2000; Knight, 2000). For example, in a study of Australian Capital Territory principals’ perceptions of a self managed school, Boyle (2000) noted that an increased workload came about because of the expanding role principals were now expected to play. From his study of the principalship across a number of states in Australia and overseas, Holdaway (1999) reported that the increased stress and workload associated with the principalship explains in part, at least, the reason for declining application numbers for principal positions. The principal shortage in Australia is also due to the large numbers of principals who are retiring and expected to retire over the next few years (Richardson, 2002, p. 13).

Some studies from Australia and elsewhere have highlighted that one of the tensions facing principals is role ambiguity in terms of leader or manager (Cranston, 1999; Leithwood & Menzies, 1998; Wildy & Dimmock, 1993). Studies by Cranston (1999), Leithwood and Menzies (1998) and Wildy and Dimmock (1993) found that the dominant role played by principals was more managerial than oriented towards educational leadership concerns.

Standards Framework for Leaders (Education Queensland)

Many systems throughout the world have begun to identify standards and competencies for leaders. For example, the Teacher Training Agency in England and Wales (1996) prepared a set of competencies based around key characteristics of the principalship. The set of standards that are being used in Queensland, the Standards Framework for Leaders (Education Queensland, 1997), identifies six key roles played by principals and these are also concerned with the dual issues of leadership and management. The roles include (1) leadership in education; (2) management; (3) people and partnerships; (4) change; (5) outcomes; and (6) accountability. Across these standards are roles which relate to leadership (i.e. people and relationships, strategic leadership) and those that relate to management (outcomes, accountability and efficiency). While the six main roles stated in the Standards Framework provide a framework for establishing expectations of the principalship in Queensland, the prescriptions do not and cannot possible capture the complexity of the role of school leaders.

In sum, the literature points to principals being required to draw on both leadership
and management skills and competencies in response to the raft of educational reforms that have led to enhanced responsibilities and accountabilities for principals. More than in previous decades, there is a greater need for principals to consult with their communities regarding decisions affecting schools and an almost pragmatic imperative to delegate and empower others in the school to share leadership responsibilities. This study, then, investigates these issues for principals of state secondary schools in Queensland. In so doing, it provides another piece of the research puzzle in understanding the principalship in this new millennium.

Methodology
The data discussed in this report are drawn from interviews conducted in 2001 with a small sample of principals, district and system level education department officers; and questionnaire responses collected in 2001, from a sample of principals from state secondary schools in Queensland.

An interview schedule was developed after reviewing the literature as well as specific statements about the principalship developed by the education department (e.g., Standards Framework for Leaders). Interviews were semi-structured in nature, based around a number of items addressing issues such as the main roles of principals; the main challenges for principals; skills and competencies necessary for the principalship; and perceptions of others' view of the role. Interviews took about 45 minutes to complete. Interviewees were assured that they (or their schools) would not be identified in any reporting of findings. Notes were taken at interview with comprehensive summaries developed following the interview. These were returned to interviewees for their review and endorsement as accurate records of the discussions.

The instrument for this study, called the Role of Secondary Principal questionnaire (ROSP), was developed from a number of inputs including the educational literature, the Standards Framework for Leaders document (1997), inputs from the above interviews, and ideas from other similar studies. The final version of the ROSP questionnaire comprised 18 closed items, about half of which contain several subsections within each item and three general (optional) open-ended items. No names of respondents or schools were required on the questionnaire, although participants were invited to indicate contact details if they were willing to take part in possible follow-up interviews and/or focus groups. It was anticipated the questionnaire would take about ten minutes to complete. The questionnaire was provided to participants electronically via email.

Sample
The interviewed sample of six comprised one female and two male principals; a district director (i.e., supervisor of principals); and two officers from Education Queensland's Central Office engaged in facilitating professional development for principals throughout Queensland. For the questionnaire, the email addresses of all state secondary school principals in Queensland were obtained from the employing authority, Education Queensland. In all, the ROSP questionnaire was distributed to 312 principals. One hundred and five were returned, representing a response rate of approximately 35%.

Results
School and General Characteristics of Respondents
Fifty-four percent of respondents were located in city/urban schools, forty-six percent in rural/remote schools. Respondents were located in schools across the Band range, although those from Band 8 and 11 schools were smaller in number, reflecting their lower number in the population of such schools across the state. The vast majority of respondents worked in what might be termed typical secondary schools, i.e. those that accommodated students from years 8 to 12. Sixty-four percent of participants were male and 36% of participants were female.
A significant majority of respondents have four or more years experience with a little under a third three or less years experience. Almost half had nine or more years experience as principal. The respondents represent a relatively experienced group if one considers both number of schools and years in the role – almost a third have been a principal in three or more schools.

**Satisfaction with Role and Views about the Role**

Over 80 percent of the respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their role of principal, with only 10 percent indicating they were dissatisfied — only three percent very dissatisfied. All three principals interviewed (who had between 4-9 years experience) stated that while their responsibilities had expanded considerably, the principalship continued to be rewarding professionally and personally. As one principal said during interview, “I’m glad to be able to say, I’m a principal”. Other similar positive comments provided by principals included, “I like my job — it is challenging and interesting” and “I love this job and don’t want to do anything else”.

Principals were also asked to consider the extent to which (a) role ambiguity, (b) role conflict; and (c) role overload were evident in their work. To the question of role ambiguity, 43% noted that it occurs to some extent, while 14% noted it exists to a great extent. In regard to role conflict, just over 80% of principals indicated that it occurred to some or a great extent, while 17% noted that it exists to a minor extent. Role overload was reported to exist to a great extent by 75% and 20% noted that it exists to some extent. Taken together, 95% reported at least some role overload as a principal. The interview data supported the findings from the survey as role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload were identified as inherent in the principalship. One principal summed it up when she said “sometimes I wonder how I manage it all”. Role conflict surfaced in terms of the competing demands placed upon principals. The interviewed principals identified these demands as those coming from the system, parents and community members, as well as other stakeholders. All of the interviewed principals identified the need to “make sense” of educational agendas and the need to communicate these agendas to the school community. The workload was described as “huge” by principals with implications for their health and family life. It was seen as something that needs to be “managed”.

**General Aspects of Roles and Responsibilities of Principals**

Almost two-thirds of the respondents indicated the number of hours worked in their role as principal had increased compared with previous years, with the remainder reporting them about the same. Ninety-three percent of principals reported working 50 or more hours per week, with almost a half of these reporting sixty hours or more.

Eighty-five percent of respondents indicated the pressure they felt in the role was high with 72 percent indicating this pressure had increased in recent years. About a quarter saw the pressure as about the same as earlier. Over 80% reported the variety and diversity of what they did in their role had increased compared with earlier. One principal noted that “our role has become all encompassing. We are expected to be financial wizards, counselling wizards, curriculum wizards, crisis management wizards etc”.

All of the interviewees conceded that principals are working longer hours and are facing greater pressures now than they did in previous years.

**Specific aspects of role**

The percentages reported in Table 1 reflect the total scores which include “great deal of time” plus “some time”. As can be seen, the role of the principal in a typical week (or real week) was reported as dominated
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of Principal in a Week. Total Scores Which Include “great deal of time” Plus “some time”.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMPARISON – TYPICAL AND IDEAL WEEK (14-16)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GREAT + SOME</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategic leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educational/curriculum leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>management/administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parent/community issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staffing matters</td>
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</tbody>
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* positive difference > 20% i.e they want MORE of this activity. # negative difference > 20% i.e they want LESS of this activity.

by management/administration, staffing issues; and parent/community issues, while strategic leadership (72%) and educational/curriculum leadership (75%) both had less prominence. Yet, the role of the principal in an ideal week (or preferred week) from a principal’s perspective would see the situation reversed so that there would be a significant focus on strategic and educational/curriculum leadership and parent/community issues. There would be less focus on student, staff and administrative matters.

The role of principal in an ideal week from a system perspective (as seen by principals) would see a significant focus on strategic and educational/curriculum leadership; and parent/community issues as well as management and administration. In other words, the system, as seen by principals, expects them to have a focus on both leadership and management. Reflective of the survey findings, the interviewed principals indicated that the system perspective of principal’s role was being strategic and accountable to the system. Both the district director and two system officers agreed with the principals that ‘strategic leadership’ was one of the key responsibilities of the principal. However, they also indicated many other expectations and these related to curriculum leadership as well as building strategic alliances internally and externally to the school, being entrepreneurs, and keeping in tune with communities.

Discussion

A number of themes emerging from the questionnaire and interview data are identified for further discussion. These are issues that relate to principals’ satisfaction with their job and the contrasts between the real or actual role compared with the ideal or preferred role and the system-expected role.

An important finding of this study was the high percentage of principals who reported being satisfied in the role. Over 80% were either satisfied or very satisfied. Of interest, is that this level of satisfaction existed despite the fact that just under one half reported some role ambiguity as a principal (43% and 14% noted it occurs to a great extent); 75% reported that role overload occurs to a great extent and 20% that it exists to some extent. Almost half (48%) noted that role conflict occurs to some extent (with 32% noting it occurs to a ‘great extent’). Furthermore, 85% noted ‘high’ pressure in the role at the moment, with 63% noting an increased number of hours worked compared with earlier. The findings expressed by principals pertaining to role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload mirror other research conducted on the principalship under school based management (Boyle, 2000; Holdaway, 1999; Knight, 2000; Wildy & Louden,
2000; Wildy & Wallace, 1997). Similarly the increasing workload (e.g., over 50 hours per week) reported by principals in this study is not dissimilar to principals elsewhere in Australia (Boyle, 2000; Knight, 2000).

It seems that principal satisfaction may be understood in a variety of ways. Firstly, principals identified an ideal (or preferred) week as one that would mainly consist of three key activities, viz. strategic leadership, educational leadership and parent/community issues. When contrasted with their typical (or actual) week, principals spent some time on these activities, but not as much as what they would wish. It would seem, then, that principals do derive satisfaction from participating in these activities. Data from this study identified satisfaction being related to specific role activities, such as time dedicated to strategic leadership. This finding complements, in part, Boyle's (2000, p. 5) findings that principals in her study saw that 'educational leadership in curriculum and pedagogy' were the most important and satisfying aspects of principals' work. Regarding parent/community issues, the difference in percentages between the total time devoted to these issues in a typical week and time devoted to an ideal week was minimal, indicating that principals were relatively satisfied.

Most noteworthy when one considers satisfaction of principals and what they do during a week, is that those principals reporting higher levels of satisfaction are those where what they do (typical, actual week) and what they would like to do (idea, preferred) are similar and where this is also similar to what they believe the system expects them to do. This might be seen as role alignment and offers a particularly powerful concept for consideration in future research into the principalship as discussed further below.

Another issue for consideration here is the possible contribution to principal satisfaction by the increasing diversity and variety of activities inherent in the role. While no statistical relationship was evident in this data, it is to be noted that 84% of principals reported an increase in the diversity and variety of the job. Holdaway (1999, p. 8) makes a link between variety in the job and satisfaction when he suggests that "the challenge of dealing effectively with stressors has the potential for generating more satisfaction than was experienced by principals several years ago".

American poet, T.S. Eliot once wrote, "Between the idea and the reality ... falls the shadow". These poignant words have relevance for the way principals in this study judged their ideal and real activities. There was a shadow or gap particularly in relation to issues of strategic leadership and curriculum leadership which were viewed as ideal yet the reality was that they devoted more time to management/administration, parent issues and staffing issues. The finding that principals rated management/administration as the activity in which they dedicated most of their time (in a typical week) is not surprising given that much of the research (Boyle, 2000; Cranston, 1999, 2000; Leithwood & Menzies, 1998) has come to similar conclusions. The tension which exists between the educative role and the administrative role played by leaders seems to be a perennial dilemma. It is possible that the current agenda of school-based management may in fact be exacerbating this tension.

Conclusion
The research reported here is part of the continuing journey of endeavouring to understand the principalship in these times of rapid and unpredictable change and challenge for schools and school leaders. For these Queensland secondary principals, there are tensions and dilemmas around the broad focus of their roles in terms of the leadership versus management aspects. While it is true that principals are working long hours, feel pressure (and this is increasing), identify increased variety and
diversity in the demands of their role as well as reporting some role overload and role conflict, our research has shown that the majority of them are satisfied in their role as principal. For most principals involved in this study, one senses a group of committed and able individuals, who like those in many other professions struggle to make sense of, and respond to, the changing demands on them. For the system employing these principals, there are clear messages here as to what contemporary research says about the role and workload of secondary educational leaders. How the system might capitalise on the positives identified in this research, such as high levels of satisfaction among principals, as well as how it might respond to the continuing role tensions faced by principals and their on-going identified professional development needs are questions for consideration in the future.

References


Factors Impacting Upon Australian University Student Participation in Educational Exchange Programs

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With globalisation and technological innovation changing the global marketplace, research (e.g., Australian International Education Foundation, 1998; Kling, Alexander, McCorkle, & Martinez, 1999; Webb, Mayer, Pioche, & Allen, 1999) has shown that employers are seeking graduates with international competencies. Moreover, it is argued that it is the role of universities to prepare students to work in the new international context, thus meeting the needs of business and society (Fantini, Arias-Galicia, & Guay, 2001; Higher Education Council, 1990). International education opportunities such as student exchange programs have been identified as effective means through which university students may develop such skills and knowledge (Clyne & Rizvi, 1998; Fantini et al., 2001; Wallace, 1993). Currently, less than one percent of Australian undergraduate students complete part of their qualification in an overseas institution (IDP Education Australia, 1995). Much research to date has focused on issues such as psychological and social adjustment of international students. Thus, there is a paucity of literature relating to the effects of international education experiences for Australian domestic students. Hence, this paper will examine the issues affecting Australian students' participation in academic mobility programs, with a particular focus on the factors influencing the decision to participate in a student exchange program.

The Role of International Education
International education is a growing phenomenon. In 1990, (Paige, 1990) identified that each year over one million students are studying overseas and, it would be anticipated that in the last decade this number has increased. Indeed, from 1950–1990 the total number of international students around the world grew at an average annual rate of 6.3% (Kim, 1998). Thus, there is a growing interest in international education. For example, in a study examining public opinion of international education issues, the American Council on Education (ACE, 2000) revealed that 90% of respondents believe that knowledge about international issues is important for students today. Moreover, almost three quarters of the American public expect that higher education students should have an overseas experience while studying at college or university.

Similarly in Australia, the business community is expecting university graduates to have international competencies (Beazley, 1992; Slee, 1989). Numerous researchers (Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills, 1995; Fitzgerald, 1997; Twitchin, 1996) argue that Australian managers need to develop cross-cultural communication skills and greater cultural awareness. If Australian graduates are to succeed in the global marketplace, and in particular the Asia-Pacific region, the [Australian Vice Chancellors’ Committee, 2001 #188] proposes that students acquire international study experiences. Since 1995, most Australian universities have incorporated
internationalisation in their strategic plans (Rizvi & Walsh, 1998; Gatfield, 1997). Program initiatives include international curricula, attracting international students to on-campus courses, student exchange opportunities and, developing international research teams (Todd & Nesdale, 1997).

In Australia, education is the eight largest export earner (Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee, 2001 #188), with international students comprising over eight percent of all higher education enrolments (IDP Education Australia, 1995). In contrast, less than one percent of Australian undergraduates are completing some part of their course overseas, with Hamilton (1998 cited in Clyne & Rizvi, 1998) finding that the participation rate was 0.2% of all Australian university students. Similarly in their nationwide survey of Australian universities, Daly and Barker (in progress) found that 0.4% of students took part in exchange programs in 2001. Recently, the Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee (2001) recommended that the Federal Government establish a target of ten percent of all undergraduate students study overseas as part of their degree. This goal is quite high considering the participation rates for European and United States tertiary students are five percent and one percent respectively (Hamilton, 1998 cited in Clyne & Rizvi, 1998).

In a poll examining college and university freshmen's intentions for international study, half of the respondents planned to study another country's culture and history, and 57% indicated a preference to enrol in foreign language courses (ACE, 2000). Moreover, almost half of all new students identified that they were anticipating studying abroad as part of their course (ACE, 2000). Similarly, in their review of student participation and long-term effects of international education experiences, Akande and Slawson (2000) confirmed that students acknowledge that study abroad experiences are beneficial for the individual. Yet, very few students take the opportunity. Unfortunately to date, most studies of international education and exchange programs have been conducted in the United States of America. There is limited published literature detailing investigations of Australian students' plans for enrolling in international courses and participating in exchange programs.

**International Students and the Decision to Engage in International Education**

Traditionally, almost three-quarters of international students originate from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, with the primary reason for their sojourn being to obtain a qualification from higher education institutions in the United States of America and Europe (Paige, 1990). In Australia, Asian students constitute the greatest proportion of international students. The typical sojourner is male and enrolls in business/commerce degrees (Baker, Robertson, Taylor & Doube, 1996). In addition to tertiary education, many international exchanges occur through programs managed by Rotary, Lions, American Field Service (AFS) and Youth For Understanding (YFU), (Australia-Japan Economic Institute, 1990). There is growing literature on the motivating factors that drive students to partake in international education (Cannon, 1999; Clyne & Rizvi, 1998; Gatfield, 1997; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Historically, students chose to study overseas because they believed that the experience would improve their 'economic and social status' (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p. 82). Holdaway (Holdaway, Bryan, & Allan, 1988) found that students who choose to study in Canada, are motivated by factors such as a desire to emigrate, an inability to study in the home country because of poor or limited facilities, and a desire to improve their future employment opportunities. Numerous authors (e.g., Clyne & Rizvi, 1998; Martin & Harrell, 1996; Osler, 1998; Torbiorn, 1982) describe the desires to experience living in another environment, travel and achieve
cultural enrichment as often overlooked issues influencing a student’s decision to participate in an exchange program.

In addition to the decision to engage in an educational sojourn, students must also decide upon their host country and institution. Geographic proximity, cost of living and social costs appear to be strong driving forces when a student is considering in which country they should study. Leong (1972) and Kwok (1972) revealed that Asian students travel to Australia because of its proximity to Asia, the relatively low cost of living and the prestige of the institutions. Indeed, students must consider the quality of the institution in comparison to the educational systems at home (Mazzara! & Soutar, 2002). Social costs such as discrimination and safety, linguistic factors and climate are also identified as influencing factors in the decision-making process (Clyne & Rizvi, 1998; Gatfield, 1997).

As detailed, most research has investigated the decision-making process of international education from the position of students who choose to study in other country to gain a qualification. Hence it must be questioned as to whether these findings are applicable to those students who sojourn for less than one year and indeed, to what extent these factors moderate the decision-making process. Therefore, this paper will examine the issues affecting Australian students’ participation in academic mobility programs, with a particular focus on the factors influencing the decision to participate in a student exchange program.

Method
This paper is reporting on work-in-progress, which is part of a larger study investigating the long-term effects of participating in international exchange programs for Australian and New Zealand university students. This survey was distributed in late July and therefore a limited number have been returned so far. Thus, due to time constraints data from only one Australian state will be discussed in this paper.

Participants
The sample consisted of 325 undergraduate students who are enrolled at five Victorian universities. A purposive sampling technique (Moore, 2000) was used to ensure that students who were engaged in exchange programs in 2002 participated in the study. All participants were approached by their respective institutions with surveys being administered by two different means: personally by staff at the International Centre at each university during the pre-departure training sessions, or mailed directly to the student’s postal address. To date 47 valid surveys have been returned which correlates to a response rate of 14.5%.

Females make up a significant proportion of the sample (83%, N = 39) with only eight male subjects identified. Since participants must have completed one year of study at their tertiary institution before going on an exchange, the mean age is 20.74 years, with ages ranging from 19–25 years. Over two-thirds of participants (N = 31) are engaged in part-time employment, with a similar proportion still living at home with their parents (N = 36). The median reported household income is $40,000–$60,000. However it is interesting to note that the distribution is bimodal with 15 respondents indicating that their gross household income is less than $20,000 and the household income of another 15 participants is more than $80,000. As expected, residence is significantly correlated with income (p < 0.01) with those students who do not live at home being more likely to have an income of less than $20,000.

Over three-quarters of respondents were born in Australia (N = 37). Other countries from which participants have migrated include Indonesia, South Africa, India, Sri Lanka, USA, Iraq, Canada and Malaysia. Two students are from Hong Kong. The mean length of time in which these students have lived in Australia is 14.55 years, with a range from four to 23 years. In addition, one respondent is
currently studying in Australia as an international student from Mexico. She has temporarily moved to Australia to gain a qualification, and while there she has chosen to engage in the exchange program. Almost half of the respondents (N = 23) speak one language, with over 30% of participants (N = 15) speaking two languages. Interestingly, five of the remaining respondents reported that they spoke more than three languages, and four students speak four languages.

There was equal distribution amongst the different key curriculum areas as participants reported that they were enrolled in the areas of Business/Commerce, Arts, Engineering and Science. In addition, 18 students indicated that they are enrolled in dual degrees. Table 1 details student enrolments. The average grade reported by participants is 75–85% (N = 13), with four students achieving an average grade greater than 85% and nine respondents indicating that their average grade is 65–75%.

Survey
The survey comprised six key sections. The first section utilises the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (van Oudenhoven & van der Zee, 2001) to determine cross-cultural competencies. Sections two and three examine co-ethnic and cross-ethnic interactions, and friendships. In section four, students were asked to rate the extent to which various factors influenced their decision to participate in the exchange program and the choice of their host country and institution. Section five of the survey incorporated Ward and Kennedy's (1999) Sociocultural Adaptation Scale to determine the extent of difficulty, which students expect to experience in their host country. In the final section, Schein's (1996) career anchor scale was used to determine participants' career preferences.

The results from section four will be presented in this paper.

Results and Discussion
Previous research has identified consistent themes in relation to the factors influencing a student's decision to study overseas (see for example Clyne & Rizvi, 1998; Holdaway et al., 1988; Kwok, 1972; Long, 1972; Mazzarol et al., 1997 cited in Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). As discussed earlier, international students are motivated to undertake education abroad by the likelihood of improving future employment opportunities and a desire to travel. Additionally, geographic proximity is a key factor in the decision of destination. In this study, these ideas were utilised to reveal the degree of influence of these factors.

An intention to live overseas greatly influences a student's decision to engage in exchange programs (M = 4, SD = 1.22). Similarly, students indicated that

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<td><strong>Student Enrolment by Discipline</strong></td>
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participating in the exchange program is incorporated in their travel plans ($M = 3, SD = 1.22$). These findings reflect the opinions and desires of Victorian students in Clyne & Rizvi’s (1998) study in which it was discovered that students participated in the exchange program because they had plans to travel and a desire to live overseas and experience another culture. Moreover, these influencing factors extend beyond the educational experience to the vocational level. In her study of international career plans, Adler (1991) reported that MBA students would accept an international assignment because of a desire to travel.

And, this educational experience is perceived as moderately important in relation to their intention to work overseas ($M = 3, SD = 1.36$). Traditionally, students studied overseas to improve their economic standing (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002) with numerous authors identifying that international students chose to gain qualifications in other countries to improve their employment prospects in their home country (see for example Holdaway et al., 1988). Interestingly, participants reported that the belief that participating in the exchange program will assist with their education success great influences their decision to engage in this opportunity ($M = 4, SD = 1.22$). At this stage it may be speculated that underlying their belief that participating in the exchange program will result in academic gains, is the perception of the relationship between academic success and employment opportunities. Subsequently, students also are greatly influenced to participate in the exchange program because they feel it will assist with gaining employment overseas ($M = 4, SD = 1.32$). Similarly, the chance of improving employment prospects in Australia has a moderate influence in the decision-making process ($M = 3, SD = 1.38$). Again, these factors reflect those found in previous research (Adler, 1991; Gatfield, 1997) in which authors have found that both students and expatriate managers choose to engage in an international sojourn to increase their marketability in Australian and global workforce.

Indeed as previously argued, the Australian business community is expecting university graduates to have international competencies (Beazley, 1992; Slee, 1989). It has been identified by several authors (Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills, 1995; Fitzgerald, 1997; Twitchin, 1996) that if Australia is to success in the global marketplace, managers need to develop cross-cultural communication skills and greater cultural awareness. Development of such knowledge and skill is particularly vital in the Asian business environment, in which Australia is strengthening economic relations. With this in mind, the Australian government wants all Australian students to participate in study experience with Asia (IDP Education Australia, 1995).

However, respondents in this study report that several cultural and linguistic factors will affect their decision regarding their destination. Knowledge of the language in the host country will greatly influence whether a student decides to travel to that country. Yet, very few Australian university students speak a foreign language, with less choosing to study an Asian language (Fitzgerald, 1997). Knowledge of the host culture influences the decision regarding choose of host country to a moderate-great extent and is the similarity of the host culture is moderately important. Kim (1998) purports that cultural distance affects the decision to study overseas. Specifically, the more different the host country is from the home culture, the less likely it will be chosen. Perhaps this provides justification as to why the USA, Canada and UK rank so highly as preferred destinations for Australian students (Daly & Barker, in progress). Yet, Fitzgerald (1997) argues that Australian managers should develop Asian language and cultural awareness rather than relying on their Asian counterparts. The university
educational exchange programs can assist with remediying this situation.

Several authors (e.g., Gatfield, 1997; Kwok, 1972; Leong, 1972; Kim, 1998; Mazzarol et al., 1997; cited in Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002) have reported that factors such as living cost, climate, safety and geographic proximity to home country all influence international students in the decision-making process. Respondents in this study indicated that the living cost ($M = 2, SD = 1.4$), social cost (including personal safety) ($M = 2, SD = 1.23$) and climate ($M = 2, SD = 1.23$) only slight influenced their decision of host country. Somewhat surprisingly, the geographic proximity of the host country to Australia does not influence student decisions ($M = 1, SD = 0.79$). Kim (1998) argues that geographic proximity is normally an influencing factor because of the relationship to travel costs. Both Kwok (1972) and Leong (1972) identified that Asian students travel to Australia for their education because of its proximity to Asia. However, as discussed earlier participants in this study are moderately influenced by the culture of the host country. For Australia, the closest countries geographically, are those in the Asia-Pacific region. Yet the cultures in many of these countries are significantly different to Australia. Thus when choosing their destination for the education exchange, students appear to place greater value of culturally similarity rather than geographic proximity.

**Conclusion**

This paper has outlined the extent to which various factors, which have been previously identified in international education literature, influence a student’s decision to participate in an exchange program and their choice of host country. It is acknowledged that the small sample size is a limitation, however due to time constraints and initially slow response from students, not all data from the larger study of exchange programs was accessible. Future research will certainly involve gaining a deeper understanding of the role these issues play in the decision-making process, through analysing the perceptions and expectations of Australian and New Zealand university exchange students. Moreover, it is worthwhile considering the outcomes of participating in exchange programs and indeed, the long-term effects for both the individual and society.

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Determinants of Successful Training and Learning Practices in Large Australian Firms

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This paper reports on a study by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd. (NCVER), 'Determinants of successful training practices in large Australian firms' by Susan Dawe (in press), that compares current and past training practices in large Australian firms and investigates the operation of major drivers of workplace training. It identifies the major elements which contribute to training and learning practices demonstrating positive benefits over a period of time. Also investigated are factors that influence the importance of a holistic approach to workplace training.

The study primarily focussed on the integration of teaching and learning within the firm, factors that influence firms to recruit existing skills as opposed to developing skills sets within the firm, the use of accredited training and training packages, the development of career structures within firms, the impact of globalisation on training and learning practices, and evaluating the training.

Methodology

This study was conducted in three phases. Phase 1 comprised a review of the existing literature on training and learning in the workplace, factors which influence enterprise training, the development of a training or learning culture, and how the success of training is measured.

Phase 2 comprised a meta-analysis of case studies that had already been conducted. Forty-nine previous case studies of large Australian firms (those employing 100 or more employees) from recent publications by Smith et al. (1995), Noble et al. (1996), Johnston and Hawke (2002), Figgis et al. (2001) and Dawe (2002) were included. This analysis focussed on the impact of globalisation, use of accredited training, demographic changes, new technology and changes in industrial relations, which may influence the integration and development of training and learning practices, career structures, the recruitment of skill sets required within these firms and evaluation of training practices.

Phase 3 comprised an update of these findings through follow-up case studies. Companies selected for this phase included two large firms from the wine industry, a new tourism operator and a family-owned manufacturing company. Also included for comparison was one large government organisation.

Major Drivers of Training

Australian studies of enterprise training during the mid-1990s found that whilst training practices varied considerably between industry sectors and individual firms, formalised training and learning practices were more likely to be found in larger organisations. Although the nature of training differs between different size firms, the most commonly reported form of training from all respondents to the Australia Bureau of Statistics Surveys of Education and Training Experience was unstructured, on-the-job training (Ridoutt et al., 2002).

Smith et al. (1995) found that the major drivers of training from their study of forty-two firms were workplace change and innovation. Providing quality assurance and adapting to new technology were
also very important. They also concluded that
the development of a training culture within
an organisation was dependent on a number
of factors including management attitude to
training, investment in training as part of the
business strategy, and management-employee
relationships (Smith 1997). More recent
studies of training practices in organisations
(Johnston & Hawke, 2002; Figgis et al.,
2001, Dawe, 2002) have confirmed the
importance of change and innovation as
major factors driving workplace training.

The research points to a number of
broad trends in the changing nature of train­ing
as a result of organisational changes and
recent developments affecting the workforce.
These trends include an emphasis on generic
skills required by enterprises and decentral­
isation of the responsibility of training of
employees to line managers. Especially with
the increase in casualisation and outsourcing
or sub-contracting in the workforce, individ­
uals are tending to take responsibility for
their own training, career planning and
lifelong learning.

Determinants of Successful
Training Practices

Further analysis of the initial 49 case studies
found ten major elements which contributed
to successful training practices in large
Australian firms. The five follow-up case
studies also supported these findings. The
three most important elements included:

- having in place an organisational culture
  that supports learning.
- linking training to the major features of
  a business strategy.
- responding to change within the organi­
sation or external to it.

The other seven elements included:

- increasing the diversity of training and
  learning approaches.
- sourcing formal training from within the
  organisation itself.
- adopting accredited training, often linked
to the National Training Framework.
- increasing the use of informal training.
- decentralising the training within the
  organisation.
- responding to the needs of the individual.
- evaluating the training.

Supporting Learning

An organisational culture in which there
was respect for all individuals, a willingness
to share knowledge and expertise, and a
positive attitude or ‘can do’ mentality
among workers, was essential to successful
training and learning. ‘Open communica­
tion’ and, in particular, cross-functional
team consultations, also stimulated learning
which led to developing innovative
solutions. This supports other research
findings that generic skills and attributes,
for example, communication, working as
part of a team and a willingness to learn,
and appropriate values and attitudes, were
often more important for employability
than job-specific technical skills which
could be taught on the job (Dawe, 2002).

A supportive learning culture also
encouraged individual development
through its human resource practices, such
as providing training and learning opportu­
nities for all workers, a career structure with
promotion opportunities within the organi­
sation, and individual performance
feedback with a performance management
system. Within such a culture, employee
achievements were also recognised through
employee or team awards for excellence,
quality and consistency or goal-orientated
bonus reward schemes. In addition, having
a graded competency system ensured that
excellence in performance was recognised.

The leadership in a supportive learning
culture not only promoted management by
objectives and performance appraisal systems
but also paid attention to improving the
capacity of individuals, groups and the
organisation as a whole. Thus to survive and
thrive in a global competitive environment,
as noted also by Tobin (1993), organisations
need to be flexible, responsive and creative.
Large firms which described themselves as learning organisations demonstrated in their culture that everyone is a learner, people learn from each other, learning enables change, learning is continuous and learning is an investment, not an expense. Their human resources management promoted leadership, learning teams and flexible and adaptable individuals who think independently and cope with ambiguity. They encourage self-discovery rather than being restricted to just structured training activities with well-defined outcomes. In these firms they also create regular opportunities to reflect on what has been learnt from particular projects and document the planning and evaluation processes.

**Linking Training to Business Strategies**

Conducting training needs analysis for the skills required to implement business strategies, linked training to these strategies and also led to ensuring its relevance to individuals and corporate objectives. Because improving quality and consistency, and complying with occupational health and safety and environment standards, were generally accepted as part of sound business practice, enterprise training now focussed on maintaining a competitive advantage through increasing efficiency in production, developing innovative solutions, products or services, and exceeding customer expectations. In the follow-up case studies, all firms indicated that they were market-driven and so listening to their customers was paramount. For example, engineers and technicians were encouraged to talk with customers, such as the regular visits to the plant arranged for contractors, as the manufacturing company believed that creativity and innovation came from listening to customers.

**Responding to Workplace Change**

Another major element for ensuring the success of workplace training was to ensure a mechanism whereby training was responding to workplace change. Whether the stimulus for workplace change was new technology, new management, new government legislation or new competition, it remained the major driver of enterprise training. Increasingly automated and computerised equipment required higher level skills of operators, especially generic skills (for example, product and industry knowledge, computing skills, problem solving and risk analysis). In addition, supervisors required training in generic skills including leadership, negotiation, presentation, team-building, and conflict resolution.

At the strategic level, successful training was often part of the change management process in preparing staff to accept or implement change. When training was related to current work practices, it became more relevant to individual workers and this increased their motivation to learn. At the manufacturing plant, workplace trainers believed that most operatives now enjoy change since the company was committed to open communication, listened to employees and had supported their learning to prepare them for change.

**Increasing Diversity in Training**

Other elements which contribute to successful training practices emphasise the increasing diversity of training and learning approaches used in large firms. They have more choices in how they resource their training functions. Large firms may source formal training from within the organisation itself or import customised training from a range of external training providers. Large firms have found it cost effective to work closely with external training providers to develop customised courses and learning materials to meet the needs of the company and their employees. These firms have been able to attract training providers to deliver the courses in the workplace or provide training facilitators on-site to support employees’ learning. Other large firms preferred to have their own staff qualified as workplace trainers and assessors.
Increasingly, large firms have found that for quality assurance they need to train suppliers (for example, growers of wine grapes) and distributors. In addition, they 'trained' customers (for example, contractors for electrical accessories), listened to customers and, through sophisticated marketing, developed new markets or met the needs of customers with new products or services.

**Sourcing Formal Training from Within the Organisation**

In large firms where staff were qualified as workplace trainers and assessors to deliver the national industry training, they may choose to be registered as a training organisation (RTO) in their own right. For example, Coles Supermarkets Australia had established the Coles Institute as its RTO, and the Accor Australia and New Zealand hotel group had established its RTO, Académie Accor. These RTOs employed their company's staff as qualified workplace trainers and assessors, and developed customised learning and assessment materials to meet the national industry competency standards (Dawe, 2002).

**Adopting Accredited Training**

Large firms were increasingly providing training which led to externally-recognised qualifications in order to attract and retain high quality staff for a competitive advantage in a global market. Although obtaining accredited training and qualifications enhanced labor market mobility for employees, the recognition of their skills was also found to increase employee loyalty to the firm. Firms have been assisted in implementing training for national industry qualifications by following the industry-specific competency standards in training packages. A few have developed their own enterprise training package (e.g., Woolworths).

In industry sectors where work is project-based or seasonal (such as, construction or fruit processing industries), the provision of nationally accredited training has also enhanced industry skills and enabled contract workers to gain qualifications which are portable across the industry and state boundaries. For example, at a regional winery, the skill level of all workers needed to be raised and so the company provided nationally accredited training for Certificates in Food Processing to both permanent and contract seasonal workers. This has encouraged seasonal workers to return each year to the same winery.

In providing employees with accredited industry training and opportunities for career development within the organisation, large firms have also formed partnerships with universities. For example, the Coles Institute works in partnership with Deakin University to deliver externally-recognised training for managers, for example, the Masters of Business Management (MBA). In addition, such partnerships may encourage further research in the specific field. For example, a partnership between Newcastle University and Baptist Community Services — New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory has established the Aged Care Research and Education Services (ACRES) unit.

**Increasing the Use of Informal Training**

Large firms have also adopted more informal training and learning including interpersonal guidance to facilitate learning and collaborative learning in work teams and cross-functional team sessions. The informal learning processes were particularly important in amplifying what is learnt in formal training. Participation in team meetings, the contribution of ideas to discussions and asking questions of experienced colleagues were all encouraged in these firms. Gibb (1998) noted that similar informal training and learning processes were commonly used in small firms. For example, there was more use of self-managed work and project teams, mentoring activities, self-study, short courses and strategic partnerships.
Decentralising Training
Although these large firms had in place ‘training coordinators’ who were responsible for developing the Group Training Plan, in general, training delivery was decentralised within the organisation. Supervisors were increasingly taking on the role of workplace trainers and coaches for their teams. This was a response to the higher level skills required of operatives and the expectation that they will be able to solve problems and make decisions as the need arises.

Self-managing teams have become common practice in large firms and this has increased the importance of learning within the team and the use of mentors in the workplace and through professional or business networks. At Aspect Computing in South Australia, information technology professionals have been able to improve their communication skills, including negotiation, presentation, and business communication, by working on a technical project for a client, and being guided through this by a trained mentor (Dawe, 2002). This learning strategy has enabled them to learn about communication skills and easily transfer them into practice in their work activities.

At one firm, it was recognised that working in teams required a greater understanding of one’s own style of working and that of other workers. The Training Plan for a particular department in this firm focused on enhancing teams by identifying personality types (for example, using Myers-Briggs analysis) and preferred learning styles of individual workers. The Learning Style questionnaire to be completed by all employees explored the four Honey and Mumford (http://www.peterhoney.co.uk accessed 15 July, 2002) learning styles (that is, activist, reflectors, theorists and pragmatist). Knowing their learning style preference equipped workers to choose learning opportunities, and to expand their repertoire and become all round learners. In addition, knowing the personality type and preferred learning styles of team members assisted the team leader in the further development and motivation of individuals within the team.

Responding to Individuals
Increasingly, individuals have been able to help identify their own particular training needs through the completion of individual training and development plans. Most employees in these firms identified training needs with their line-managers as part of their performance appraisal at least once a year. While team-building, computer skills, workplace safety and quality training were generally required to implement the firm’s business strategies, other training for multi-skilling and personal development undertaken by employees was influenced by the individual’s career goals and interests. These firms had recognised that identifying career structures within the organisation and encouraging individuals to plan their career enhanced their motivation to learn and increased the benefits of training investment.

Evaluating the Training
Another indication of successful training practices in large firms was the formal evaluation of training. In reviewing training and assessing the feedback from trainees, customers and line managers, firms were able to modify training and increase learning to ensure that they met the needs of the employees and the company. As with other learning forums established by management in these firms, analysis and reflection on new knowledge and insights resulted in modification of behaviour and work practices. This enabled these firms to improve training and work practices which highlights, as previously noted by Garvin (1993), that successful learning organisations are skilled in five main activities: These activities include:

- systematic problem solving,
- experimentation with new approaches,
- learning from their own experiences and past history.
• learning from experiences and past practices of others.
• transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently throughout the organisation.

The human resource manager, or training coordinator, in these firms conducted the evaluations and was responsible for recommendations for future training investment to senior managers. The arguments for investment in training were based on evidence of long-term benefits derived from improved employee relations, increased confidence and self-esteem of the workforce, and the retention of highly qualified and experienced staff to maintain a competitive advantage in the market place. Other benefits of investment in training included increased efficiency through improvement in the analysis of risk by operators which led to minimised wastage of products or workplace accidents.

In the main, the training coordinators sought verbal feedback from employees and line managers or collected information from formal feedback sheets to evaluate the effectiveness of training. Formal structures such as staff/management Joint Consultative Committees or Training Advisory Committees consisting of workplace trainers and managers, were also used in some firms to evaluate training and make recommendations on future training programs. In other firms, surveys of customers and/or staff members were regularly conducted to measure satisfaction with staff training. The determination of the Group Training Plan by senior management, therefore, was based not only on the corporate objectives derived from the business strategies but also on evaluative feedback from customers, employees, line managers and workplace trainers.

Increasingly, large firms had in place a performance management system where, at half-yearly or yearly intervals, formal appraisals of individuals’ performance were conducted by line managers. Individual training plans were also developed during appraisal sessions. In some firms, feedback on the success of on- and off-the-job training was gathered by the human resource manager from appraisal forms after the staff performance appraisals had been conducted by line managers. Training coordinators also obtained information following formal three-monthly appraisals conducted for apprentices or trainees and/or formal appraisal of new employees after an induction period.

Until recently, few Australian firms carried out systematic evaluation of their training and fewer attempted to calculate the returns on their investment in training (NCVER, 2001). However, like other investments undertaken by firms, a cost was incurred for employee training in anticipation of a future return to the firm. In this study it was indicated that the lack of this type of evaluation of training in most firms was likely to be related to accounting systems where training costs were treated as an inseparable part of labour costs and not as an investment from which a return was expected.

The key objective of the returns on investment in training evaluation model developed by a particular department of one of the firms in this study was to allow the company to identify how training contributed to profitability. Data was collected for the key components of the department’s Training Plan including training to meet industry, quality and environmental standards. For example, detailed records of production, including the causes of down-time, were used to identify opportunities for improvement in productivity. Causes related to operator errors, adjustments and change-over times were identified and analysed for training implications. The collection of this data allowed improvements in down-time to be attributed to operator training. The costs attributable to training could be linked directly to improvements in productivity and returns on training investment determined.

Conclusions
This study of large Australian firms found that the shift to self-managing work teams,
and the need for firms to maintain competitive advantage have required training which is focused on working closely with customers, suppliers and distributors. Also highlighted has been widespread use of generic skills training focused on communication, negotiation, problem solving, mentoring, coaching, and skills required for innovation and self-management of learning and career development.

This study found that ten elements were the foundations for best practice in enterprise training and learning practices. The first three elements are the most important factors in contributing to successful training practices. These include having in place:

- an organisation culture that supports learning,
- mechanisms to link training to the business strategy,
- mechanisms to link training to workplace change.

The other elements contributing to successful training practices relate to the customisation of training for enterprises and individual workers and include:

- increasing the diversity of training and learning approaches,
- sourcing formal training from within the organisation itself,
- adopting accredited training, often linked to the National Training Framework,
- increasing the use of informal training,
- decentralising the training within the organisation,
- responding to the needs of the individual,
- evaluating the training.

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The Management of Knowledge —
A Systems Theory Approach for Vocational Education and Training

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This paper contends that VET providers are in the industry of knowledge management. A model to manage the knowledge assets in an organisation is proposed based on systems theory. The model examines the role of the two basic systems in an organisation — the legitimate system and the shadow system — and how each system has unique responsibilities for managing knowledge in an organisation. The paper suggests that VET providers need to know their point of entry into a client’s management knowledge systems and, further, need to be very aware of how they manage their own knowledge capital.

Institutions of higher education, such as universities and TAFE colleges, and other registered training organisations provide similar service — they gather knowledge in an accessible location or format and sell that knowledge to clients. Universities and TAFE colleges, and other registered training organisations, are the major providers of vocational education and training (VET). As such, these organisations are assisting client organisations and individuals to manage their knowledge assets — sometimes referred to as knowledge capital. Providers need to recognise what part of the clients’ management of knowledge systems they are interacting with and assisting.

Further, it is imperative that these VET providers manage their own knowledge capital effectively and efficiently. This is a twin imperative. Firstly, they need to ensure that the knowledge they are selling is relevant and up-to-date. Secondly, they need to ensure that their processes that enable them to sell this knowledge (that is, their internal competence and networks) are also relevant, contemporary, efficient and effective.

This paper first examines knowledge as an asset and then offers a model, based on systems theory (Stacey, 2001), which provides an analytical tool for making decisions on managing knowledge.

Knowledge As An Asset
It was once maintained that the most basic resources of an organisation were money and materials. Management was simply a matter of overseeing and administering these two basic assets. Further, one of these basic assets can be exchanges for the other (Delahaye, 2000). Since the 1990s, and particularly in the wake of some of the more disastrous applications of rational economics, a number of writers now believe that there is a third critical organisational asset — knowledge.

Knowledge is, however, a different and unique asset. Several writers such as Delahaye (2000), Fuller (2002) and Sveiby (1997) suggests that knowledge is unique and different because:

• There is no law of diminishing returns.
• There is a difference between information and knowledge.
• Knowledge cannot be hoarded but grows from sharing.
• Knowledge can be created by anyone
• Knowledge is not subject to copyright or to patents

To further complicate matters for managers there is no simple exchange between money and time, on the one hand, and knowledge, on the other. Knowledge takes a lot of investment in both time and money to accumulate. Even worse, a lack of knowledge can escalate the risks of costly mistakes. This conundrum — the unique nature of knowledge as an asset and the complex relationship between knowledge and cost — raises a significant question. How can organisations manage their valuable knowledge capital?

A Systems Approach
Stacey (1996), using complexity theory (a combination of cybernetics, systems dynamics and chaos theory) as an analytical base, suggests that any organism, including organisations, can be viewed as having two basic systems, — the legitimate system and the shadow system.

The legitimate system uses negative feedback loops and single-loop learning to maintain the status quo. Negative feedback loops dampen any behaviour that is seen as aberrant by the legitimate system (Stacey, 1996). Single-loop learning passes on current knowledge without challenging the veracity or usefulness of the knowledge (Argyris, 1992).

The role of the legitimate system is to ensure that the organisation survives the immediate future by the efficient use of the organisation’s resources. The shadow system, on the other hand, provides the organisation with the energy, usually in the form of knowledge, that will ensure the organisation’s long-term future. The shadow system is predicated on positive feedback loops and double-loop learning. Positive feedback loops enhance behaviour and increase energy (Stacey, 1996, 2001). Double-loop learning occurs where an individual or a group challenges the underlying values of an idea, assumption or concept (Argyris, 1992).

The role of the legitimate system is to pull the organisation towards a state of equilibrium. It is in that state of equilibrium that the organisation is at its most efficient. Unfortunately, if the organisation remains at the stage of total equilibrium for a period of time, the organisation will stagnate, become toxic and slowly poison itself. The shadow system, however, pulls the organisation towards chaos. It is in the state of chaos that organisms are at their most creative, although at this time the organism is more likely to destroy itself. In the twenty-first century, then, managers have to manage the legitimate system and manage the shadow system so the organisation maintains a state of bounded instability. A state of bounded instability means that the organisation hovers between equilibrium and chaos, thus enhancing the strengths of both the legitimate system and the shadow system. The significant issue, of course, is how the manager can maintain this state of bounded instability. One of the most fundamental solutions to this conundrum is to concentrate on managing that most unique of organisational assets — its knowledge capital.

This paper will examine the management of knowledge by discussing the roles of the legitimate system and the shadow system and also the interaction between the two systems (see Figure 1). The proposition being promulgated by this paper is that if the two systems undertake their roles appropriately and if the interactions between the two systems are managed appropriately, the organisation can maintain a state of bounded instability.

The Legitimate System
Recognising the assumptions of negative feedback loops and single loop learning highlights the contributions of the legitimate system to the management of the organisation’s knowledge capital. Several commonly discussed management processes can be readily identified.
The Four Stages of HRD

The management process usually referred to as the four stages of Human Resource Development (HRD) (Delahaye, 2000) plays a key and central role in the legitimate system's role in managing an organisation's knowledge capital. The four stages of HRD are usually described as needs analysis, design, implementation and evaluation.

The theories underpinning these four stages are well documented in traditional texts (see, for example, Delahaye & Smith, 1998; DeSimone & Harris, 1998). These four stages represent a classic legitimate system activity as they are firmly based on the assumptions of negative feedback loops and single loop learning. The four stages of HRD are used by the legitimate system to ensure that the accepted current core competencies — and only those competencies — are disseminated throughout the organisation.

Strategic Planning

In strategic planning, the legitimate system examines the direct and indirect factors in the external environment, compares these with its own strengths and weaknesses (commonly called the SWOT analysis) and formulates strategies for future viability. This future viability may be seen as doing more of the same or as opening a new opportunity which would mean importing new knowledge into the organisation. The traditional strategic planning process identifies knowledge that is currently known to the legitimate system — current core competencies — and also imports new knowledge, both of which need to be disseminated throughout the organisation via the four stages of HRD. It is important to recognise that such strategic planning can only examine the short term future.

Selection

Selection is another important HRM function that helps the legitimate system to manage the organisation’s knowledge capital. At the minimum, the selection process ensures that people who have skills, knowledge and abilities that match the core competencies of the organisation are accepted — thus perpetuating single-loop learning. However, most new employees have had unique experiences outside of the parent organisation and these experiences
represent new knowledge for the parent organisation. If an intended part of the selection process, the legitimate system usually supports the new member in disseminating the new knowledge. If the new knowledge is not an intended part of the selection process, then the new knowledge is seen as aberrant behaviour and negative feedback loops are instigated. Ideally, such new challenging knowledge should enter the organisation via the shadow system.

Control and Performance Appraisal Systems

Control systems represent a less obvious management process that can be used by the legitimate system to manage its knowledge capital. Most introductory management texts (e.g., Davidson & Griffin, 2002) suggest that control systems have four basic steps — a pre-determined standard, a measuring sensor, a comparative procedure and a remedial action. These four steps represent a classic negative feedback loop where, once deviant behaviour is identified, action is taken to dampen the aberrant behaviour and bring it back to the pre-determined standard. Another human resource management process that acts in a similar manner — indeed some texts include it as a control system — is the performance appraisal system. Staff performance is appraised and further action is taken. These two management processes — controls and performance appraisal — uphold the veracity and value of the organisation’s current core competencies. As the underlying values of these core competencies are not challenged, the two management processes become a major element of the single loop learning assumption of the legitimate system.

In summary, then, the legitimate system uses at least five management processes to help the organisation to manage its knowledge capital — the four stages of HRD, strategic planning, selection, control systems and performance appraisal systems. When these five management processes are used appropriately, the legitimate system is fulfilling its role in managing the organisation’s knowledge capital and also helping the organisation stay at the state of bounded instability.

Potential Problems

Problems occur when the basic assumptions of the legitimate system — negative feedback loops and single loop learning — are given unfettered power. Typically, with such unfettered power, these basic assumptions beguile the legitimate system into emphasising efficiencies. Combined with single loop learning, this thirst for efficiency invariably means that some key activities in the five management processes are ignored. The five processes are then used improperly, mistakes occur and are repeated unthinkingly (because of single loop learning) — and the organisation is dragged by the legitimate system towards total equilibrium. Unfortunately, in today’s fast changing environment, an organisation languishing in the vicinity of total equilibrium becomes toxic — a state readily recognised by the physical and psychological staff illnesses as well as industrial problems.

To avoid this toxic state, the organisation needs to be continually drawn towards inequilibrium by an equally powerful shadow system.

The Shadow System

The shadow system is based on the assumptions of positive feedback loops and double loop learning. As such, the shadow system needs to be governed by a different set of management process than those used in the legitimate system. The catch-cry in the shadow system is CREATIVITY. The role of the shadow system is to challenge the operating procedures and the culture of the organisation by importing and creating new knowledge. In this way, the organisation is drawn towards inequilibrium. Now the shadow system is not part of the management hierarchy nor a separate entity. Usually, staff
spend most of their time in the legitimate system carrying out their duties. But every now and then they enter the shadow system, perhaps for only a few minutes a week, and create/test/validate new ideas.

Before proceeding, one point needs to be made abundantly clear. The legitimate system and the shadow system are not two isolated and separate identities. They are mutually dependent systems. The organisation will not survive without both systems. Indeed, the organisation will not survive for long if one system is too strong — that is, if the organisation does not operate in a state of bounded instability. Therefore, the two systems — legitimate and shadow — need to have sufficient power and energy to keep the organisation in bounded instability — no more, no less.

Self Organising Groups
The energy of the shadow system comes from self-organising groups (SOGs). A SOG occurs when two or more people come together over some mutual interest. In organisations, the most readily recognised SOGs are the ‘whinge and bitch’ groups. Of course not all SOGs in organisations are ‘whinge and bitch’ groups. Many, perhaps even the majority, are initiated by two or more members coming together over an exciting idea. Often this idea, because the members only have the organisation in common, is aimed at improving some aspect of the organisation. The problem is that SOGs are ‘dissipative structures’ (Stacey, 2001) — structures that are a new life form and are very vulnerable. The challenge for management, therefore, is to encourage SOGs to survive by providing energy — that is, by providing positive feedback loops. This energy can be in the form of money or time. Other forms of energy can be just as powerful — for example, the attention of upper management.

Cavaliere’s five step model is a salutary paradigm for enhancing the learning potential of SOGs. SOGs should be encouraged to be:

- Inquiring to encourage the identification of potential problems/opportunities
- Modelling to continually search and observe phenomena and possible solutions
- Experimenting and practising
- Theorising and perfecting
- Actualising, where the SOG is allowed to celebrate accomplishments and receive recognition.

Four Systems
Earl (1997) provides an insight into some extraordinary management process that can be used to govern the shadow system. Four systems in particular should be created and maintained by the organisation:

- Knowledge workers — all staff should be treated as knowledge workers who have the potential create new knowledge.
- Knowledge systems — These systems include capture systems to ensnare information, data bases to store the information and decision tools to analyse the information.
- Networks — The organisation needs outside networks to increase the potential of identifying new knowledge or to provide the catalyst to create new knowledge. Inside networks are also needed. The more other staff members are known, the quicker knowledge is passed and the greater the opportunities for the formulation of SOGs.
- Learning Culture — Nothing destroys creativity as effectively as negative feedback loops. Creativity will only thrive in a culture that is based on the enhancing powers of positive feedback loops and which reveres learning. Failure must be seen as merely a step in the learning process.

In summary, then, the role of the shadow system is to encourage creativity so that new knowledge is imported and created. The aim of this new knowledge is to continually challenge the status quo of the legitimate
system and to pull the organisation towards inequilibrium.

Potential Problems
If the shadow system is too strong, the organisation will be impelled beyond its appropriate niche and have a total disregard for the needs of its customers. This is the state of chaos and will also result in the death of the organisation, often in a spectacular fashion. Once again, we see the need for both systems — the legitimate and the shadow — to be given just enough power and energy to keep the organisation in a state of bounded instability.

The Interaction Between The Two Systems
The most basic task of the legitimate system is to ensure the current viability of the organisation by emphasising efficiency. Change uses resources that could be otherwise utilised for normal production. The legitimate system quite rightly needs to be assured that any change is likely to benefit the organisation.

Defence Mechanisms
A legitimate system that has moved the organisation too far towards equilibrium is likely to have captured too much power at the expense of the shadow system. Further, it will use single loop learning and negative feedback loops to automatically (and therefore efficiently) protect itself against change. Argyris (1992) calls these automatic protective responses defence mechanisms and identifies two in particular. Undiscussables occur when people in power in the legitimate system label certain activities or philosophies as 'undiscussable' — no one can discuss them.

The second protective mechanism uses defensive routines where the legitimate system automatically commences activities that are designed to subvert the new idea. Defensive routines include the 'ignore mode' where any attempt to introduce a new idea is simply ignored in the hope that it will go away. Surprisingly, this is often successful. Other defensive routines are disguised as genuine management activities. A committee can be formed but it never comes to a conclusion. Of course, committees are based on negative feedback loops and this soon crushes any creativity. An inappropriately designed training course is another defensive routine. No one learns anything but the number of courses can be counted as can the number of attendees and the number of hours spent at the courses. Such measurements are used to prove that management is 'proactive'. A third defensive routine is to give the champions of the new idea more work, sometimes related to the new idea and sometimes not. Either way the energy of the champions is used up.

To discourage the use of defence mechanisms, both the shadow system and the legitimate system need to take responsibility for the smooth transition of the new idea between the systems.

The Responsibility of the Shadow System
The problem with creativity is that in itself it is a positive feedback loop. This energy encourages the actors in the shadow system to even greater efforts of creativity — and this leads to the path of chaos.

Rather, when managing the shadow system, the manager needs to intervene at the appropriate moment. The appropriate moment occurs when the SOG has created something of value during a creative episode but is in danger of moving too far into chaos — a good rule of thumb is at the end of Step 4 (theorising and perfecting) in Cavaliere’s model. This means that the fifth step (actualising) can be a signal that the shadow system needs to prepare the new idea for the acceptance of the legitimate system as well as celebrating the creative efforts of the SOG responsible for the new idea.

Preparing the new idea for deployment by the legitimate system is a political process. There are at least three processes
that the shadow system uses to prepare the new idea:

- Preparing the product so that it is packaged in such a way that the legitimate system is likely to accept it.
- Preparing the path by marketing the new idea with key stakeholders in the legitimate system.
- Inserting the new idea in the legitimate system’s approved training courses and workshops – a process called the Lisa Virus.

In summary, then, the shadow system has a responsibility to refine the new idea so that is it acceptable to the legitimate system. This is a political process and, as such, is often alien to the actors in the shadow system. The SOG has to be developed in these political processes or another person may need to take responsibility.

The Responsibility of the Legitimate System

Rather than automatically reverting to defence mechanisms, the legitimate system should develop a logical and objective response to the new ideas suggested by the shadow system.

This logical and objective process, labelled ‘embedding’, has at least four phases:

1. The audit, where the legitimate system examines the proposal and makes decisions based on the appropriate use of available energy.
2. The introduction of the new idea has to be planned. This means that standing plans (policies, procedures and rules) and single-use plans have to be considered. Invariably training courses or workshops will have to be planned as any new idea includes new knowledge (that is, the design stage of HRD).
3. The plans have to be implemented and this means an investment of money and/or time.

4. Once the staff have been trained, they return to their operational area. The management of knowledge does not stop here. The supervisor should encourage extended learning (see Billet, 1999; Tennant, 1999). Extended learning covers four steps:

- The learners should be engages immediately in the new learned tasks.
- They should be developed by progressive approximations
- They should be given feedback that is informational and motivational
- They should be exposed to models of expert performance.

Thus, extended learning encourages the path back towards the shadow system.

The legitimate system, therefore, holds a responsibility to evaluate all new ideas to ensure that valuable resources are not wasted. The challenge to the legitimate system, though, is to accept ideas that may be a threat to its present culture — and this takes a highly mature body of managers.

Vet Providers

VET providers are in the knowledge industry and this situation demands that each VET provider needs to be meticulously and systematically aware of the subtle processes of managing knowledge capital. This means that providers have to manage their knowledge capital on two fronts.

Firstly, they have to ensure that their legitimate and shadow systems have an appropriate balance of power and resources so that each system can fulfil its role. The legitimate system needs to deliver its basic knowledge products efficiently and effectively. At the same time, their shadow system needs to be searching and creating new knowledge products, and new delivery strategies for these new products.

Secondly, VET providers need to be aware of where in their clients’ knowledge management systems they are intervening. Managing the learning processes in the legitimate system is different to managing
the learning processes in the shadow system. Commonly, in the legitimate system, clients are looking for single loop learning to infuse current core knowledge throughout the organisation. In other words, in the legitimate system of clients, their focus is on content. In the shadow system, however, providers will find that they are managing the process of learning rather than being in control of content. Concomitantly, providers will find that they are surrounded by political forces and there is a high need to tread carefully as they assist the client to prepare new ideas for the consideration of the client's legitimate system and to manage the progression through the client's embedding process so that defence mechanisms are avoided.

Overall, then, the management of knowledge capital is a critical responsibility. Knowledge is the most powerful resource of any organisation and it needs to be nurtured and maintained. The two systems — the legitimate and the shadow — each have significant roles to play. Each system should be given appropriate power and energy to fulfil their roles. Further, the interaction between the two systems needs to be carefully managed. In this way, an organisation is kept in a state of bounded instability.

References
## Conference Attendees

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ENVISIONING PRACTICE — IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

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Envisioning Practice — Implementing Change

Calls for innovation and change within the post-compulsory education and training sector are sourced to factors such as the push to marketise educational services, the convergence of digital communications and information technologies, and new forms of accountability governing educational resources. These pressures for change, which have increased over the last decade, have important implications for the way professionals within the education and training community go about their work and how they envision their practice.

_Envisioning Practice — Implementing Change_ explores the growing critical understanding surrounding the implementation of contemporary changes in post-compulsory education practice. Topics include:

- flexible learning
- access and equity
- use of technology to solve educational problems
- critiquing concepts of change
- citizenship and concepts of community
- identity formation
- overcoming critical barriers to advancing research on learning and work

The chapters draw together a wide range of disciplines, content material, and theoretical perspectives from researchers, practitioners and policy makers from Australia and overseas.