Building capability and quality in VET teaching: opportunities and challenges

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Publisher's note

Additional information relating to this research is available in *Building Capability and quality in VET teaching: Frameworks, standards and Insights*-- support document. It can be accessed from NCVER's Portal <https://www.ncver.edu.au>.

To find other material of interest, search VOCEDplus (the UNESCO/NCVER international database <https://www.voced.edu.au>) using the following keywords: Accreditation; Barrier; Competence; Competency standard; Job skill; Mentoring; Performance; Pilot project; Practitioners; Professional recognition; Providers of education and training; Qualifications; Quality; Recruitment; Skills and knowledge; Teacher training; Teaching and learning; Trainers; Vocational education and training; Vocational teachers; Workforce development.

About the research

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This research examines the form and content of existing teacher capability frameworks and professional standards, with the aim of identifying approaches that could enhance teaching quality in the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

Consultations were held with industry leaders, peak bodies, registered training organisations (RTOs), representatives from the Australian Education Union, and regulators to obtain their views on the desirability of implementing such frameworks. Also explored were issues relating to the registration and accreditation of VET trainers, trainer entry-level requirements, ways of attracting practitioners to the industry and the development of a capable VET workforce.

Key messages

There are key barriers to attracting and maintaining a capable VET workforce, such as limited career pathways, and lack of professional status. Respondents also report difficulties in recruiting trainers with industry expertise, particularly in areas of skills shortage, among equity groups such as Indigenous Australians, and in regional and remote areas. Addressing these issues and ensuring adequate funding and coordinated systems for ongoing professional development are critical for developing and improving the quality of VET teaching.

- There are mixed views on mandatory registration, with the majority of stakeholders questioning its value and the additional regulatory burden, while others argue that it would professionalise the sector and raise its status.

- Stakeholders are generally united on the need to implement systematic approaches to teacher preparation, mentorship support and opportunities for continuing professional development.

- Some respondents consider there is a need for a review of this qualification in the future to incorporate an increased focus on pedagogy, educational theory and practice, and the use of applied training methods. Some would also like to see the qualification taught by more highly qualified teachers. Despite this, some stakeholders have a limited appetite for making any immediate additional changes to the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment as the basic entry-level qualification for trainers due to their experiences with the recent qualification upgrade.

- There is strong support for using teacher capability frameworks and/or professional standards as diagnostic tools and guidelines for teacher self-evaluation and reflection, including for the planning of objectives for personal and professional development. Nonetheless, limited appetite exists for a nationally prescribed VET teacher capability framework due to the diversity of the VET sector, although a small group of interested teachers have established a network investigating this issue.

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Acknowledgments

Contents

Tables

Executive summary

This study canvassed the views of VET stakeholders in order to identify the key features of quality teaching in vocational education and training (VET) and how it might be improved. The terms 'VET teacher', 'practitioner', 'trainer', 'educator' and 'lecturer' are used interchangeably to refer to those who deliver and/or assess training in VET.

Improving the quality of VET teaching

The majority of stakeholders agree that teaching quality in the sector is variable: some trainers are experts in training delivery; others have well-regarded industry expertise, while the teaching skills of others need improvement. It was reported that, while trainers are doing their best, they are uniquely challenged to meet dual prerequisites of industry currency and teaching skills, and face constraints such as heavy workloads, which can include administration, compliance and other tasks.

That the responsibility for improving quality is a shared one is also generally agreed. Registered training organisations (RTOs), governments, regulators, industry and VET practitioners all have a role to play, with RTOs taking a leadership role for their own institutions, and governments helping to fund it in some areas such as professional development (PD). Limited career pathways, however, are seen as affecting the ability of the sector to recruit and maintain good trainers.

Ensuring the adequate resourcing of continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities to enable teachers to maintain their industry currency, update existing skills, learn new skills, and keep up with modernised and technology-enhanced training approaches is considered critical. Sizeable numbers of stakeholders regret the loss to the system of previous national programs for professional development and made suggestions for similar programs to be established. Some existing initiatives are highly regarded, for example, the VET Development Centre in Victoria and the Chisholm Institute's Educator Passport pilot, in which individual professional development is aligned with business and individual needs.

Registration and accreditation

Limited support exists for introducing mandatory registration and/or accreditation, with non-supporters questioning its value, noting that compliance is already required with the RTO Standards for Registration 2015, and with industry regulator standards in place for some vocational occupations. Supporters of mandatory registration believe its introduction would enhance the professionalism and status of VET trainers and help to attract staff. The peak body for the private sector, the Independent Tertiary Education Council of Australia (ITECA), has already implemented a Professional College of VET Practitioners, with voluntary accreditation for membership. Other peak bodies are divided on this issue. Both supporters and non-supporters of mandatory registration raised the issue of which body would oversee such a registration system, its role, and the costs of registration and renewal frequency.

In Tasmania, VET practitioners in the public system must be registered[1] to work at TasTAFE, but staff respondents did not support this, considering it an additional regulatory burden to the existing RTO

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1 TasTAFE teachers must be registered with the Teachers' Registration Board Tasmania. There is no requirement for private sector trainers to be registered.

standards. Respondents consider that teacher registration does not drive quality, but that other factors do, for which incentives are needed.

Introducing capability frameworks or standards

There is high support for capability frameworks that outline the behaviours, values, skills and knowledge of VET trainers and leaders at various stages of their careers, with such frameworks providing benchmarks against which individuals can self-evaluate. These self-evaluations can be (and are already) used in performance reviews to align the professional development needs of individuals to the organisation's strategic requirements.

Although professional standards (as distinct from capability frameworks) are considered to be worthwhile for monitoring teacher performance and for developmental purposes (especially in the schooling sector), the majority of respondents consider them less useful in a complex and diverse context such as the VET sector. Nonetheless, in some locally developed frameworks, there continues to be some reliance on using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers as guidelines rather than prescriptions. The VET Practitioner Capability Framework, developed by Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA), is more widely used by RTOs across the VET sector.

The measures of performance generally used to evaluate teacher capability identify the extent to which the objectives set in trainer professional development plans are met. The measures of performance also include student assessment results and feedback in course evaluations, although these are often used for self-reflection and continuous improvement by trainers.

Opinion is divided on the merits of having a nationally prescribed framework or set of professional standards, with supporters believing it could help to achieve national consistency, while non-supporters (the majority) consider that RTOs should develop their own by drawing on existing frameworks. A small group of educators have established a network for those who favour a national capability framework.

Raising the level of qualifications for entry to VET teaching

There is low support for changing or adding to the entry requirements to VET teaching due to the deleterious effects of the recent TAE upgrade on the VET teaching workforce, with some respondents reporting that it may have contributed to teachers exiting the system. The cost of regular qualification upgrades is considered an impost on a highly casualised workforce, one in which about half (46.5%) of all trainers and assessors are in non-permanent roles (Knight 2020). Stakeholders were adamant that this additional cost had a substantial impact on small providers and those who relied on a volunteer trainer and assessor workforce. Despite this, many stakeholders agreed that the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) would in time need to suit the diverse roles in the sector and include knowledge of key pedagogical theories, principles of learning and assessment and teaching practice. The unique dual requirements of industry currency and quality teaching skills presents challenges not faced by other professions, which need to be addressed appropriately for the VET sector to thrive and meet rapidly changing workforce needs.

A representative from the adult literacy sector raised issues about the sector's lack of access to highly trained specialists to assist students with language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) difficulties. Although it was felt that all VET teachers should have an understanding of LLN issues, it was considered far more beneficial for students to learn such skills from trainers who understand how to 'unpack the learning around the complex process of reading, writing, communication and numeracy'.

The key barrier to amending entry requirements for trainers generally relates to the challenge of attracting sufficient industry experts to the role of trainer, a challenge magnified in regional and rural areas, Indigenous communities and among volunteers. In addition, the cost of regular qualification upgrades presents an additional issue for trainers from equity groups, including Indigenous communities.

Some of the respondents from the stakeholder groups want to raise the entry-level qualification to at least diploma level. It was also suggested that VET trainers who teach the Certificate IV TAE should themselves be qualified at one level above that, and that some leadership roles require even higher levels of qualification, such as for the teaching of high-level and specialist courses. Findings from the research reviewed in the literature reported that students learn better from more highly qualified teachers.

Mentoring and supporting teachers throughout their careers

Stakeholders are generally united on the need to implement systematic approaches to teacher preparation, mentorship support and opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD). Their suggestions include a graduated approach to induction and career progression, which could involve internships, cadetships or traineeships. In such programs, new teachers would transition through various stages to acquire the Certificate IV TAE, and progressively add more skills, knowledge and experience or qualifications. Having access to knowledgeable, experienced and accomplished peers or higher-qualified colleagues to give both beginning and continuing teachers advice and feedback, or to engage with them in reflective practice, was considered extremely valuable. The Northern Territory Government's Certificate IV TAE40116 Traineeship Pilot is an example of using a staged approach to initial teacher training, to be followed by continuing professional development and support.

There is strong support for having peers observe the practice of colleagues, provided it is done in a spirit of collegiality and trust. This practice is already occurring in the Teaching under Supervision[2] arrangements, in teaching practicums of VET teaching courses, and routinely in some institutions. Using the results of peer observation for formal reviews of performance or for disciplinary purposes by line managers attracts little support.

Attracting and developing a capable workforce

Approaches to attracting and developing a capable VET teaching workforce included recruitment campaigns that promote the good conditions offered by the job. Such campaigns could focus on the reasonable pay (for some), good working conditions, the ability to give back to industry, work—life balance, and opportunities for continuing professional development. The use of government-funded scholarships, traineeships or internships, as well as collaborations with employers to identify staff with the potential interest and persistence to flourish as VET trainers, was also proposed. There is a view that the VET sector might consider attracting tradespersons who had lost their jobs in the COVID-19 environment, although there are concerns that such industry experts (especially from higher-paying trades) might exit their training role and return to industry post-COVID-19. One VET teacher educator commented that more industry experts might want to become trainers if some of the administrative tasks were removed.

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2 The Australian Skills Quality Authority's (ASQA) Standards for Registration of RTOs 2015 require trainers and assessors without the required credentials to work under the supervision of an appropriately qualified and experienced trainer, provided they hold one of the required skill sets, have current relevant industry skills and vocational competencies to the level being delivered and/or assessed.

Scope of the study

To identify the key features of quality teaching in VET, this research sought the views of VET sector stakeholders on the desirability of implementing capability frameworks or standards for VET teachers. We canvassed opinions from stakeholder groups[3], including industry peak bodies, regulators, representatives of the Australian Education Union, VET leaders and practitioners, members of the Education Industry Reference Committee, and the Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group on issues also associated with the quality of VET teaching. These issues included registration and accreditation, raising entry-level requirements, and attracting and developing a capable workforce. To complement the project, the effectiveness of approaches used in recently implemented quality improvement trials are considered.

Background

Satisfaction with teaching quality is a key precursor to satisfaction with training overall, and is a common element in continuous improvement across the Australian VET sector. In addition, there is some evidence (mostly from general school education) that links various components of student achievement with the quality of their teachers (Goe & Stickler 2008). Smith (2018) and Corbel et al. (2014) found that the level of qualification held by VET teachers also had an influence on student achievement.

All Australian states and territories experience local variations in the quality of VET teaching and make ongoing efforts to identify effective strategies for improvement, including participation in VET quality reviews and comparisons with various approaches adopted across the nation.

To develop strategies to improve VET teaching we need to understand better the:

- current quality of VET teaching

- effectiveness of approaches by RTOs and Australian governments to improve the quality of VET teaching

- barriers that prevent the effective implementation of improvements.

Any efforts to improve VET teaching also need to consider critical enablers, such as:

- the widespread acceptance and application of models for consistently assessing teaching quality in VET

- the collection of evaluative evidence on effective strategies for improving VET teaching

- workforce planning for the sector, based on a practical understanding of what makes VET teaching an attractive (or unattractive) career option for trainers holding the required qualifications and industry currency.

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3 The opinions that have been canvassed from the different stakeholder groups represent the views of members who have participated in the study. The insights provided by the Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group represent the formal position of the group.

Domestic and international approaches to improving VET teaching quality

Context

What is meant by the term 'quality' and what does it mean when applied to VET teaching?

There are various definitions of quality, depending on the sector to which it is applied, but generally it refers to the degree to which successful outcomes are achieved against a set of desired benchmarks. Quality in VET teaching is essential for ensuring that students, employers, government, industry, stakeholders, and the broader community can be confident that the system can deliver workers to industry — and citizens to society — with the skills, knowledge and understanding to the levels of competence required. Employers need to be able to trust the integrity of the qualifications of their staff: qualifications are the guarantee that their staff hold the competencies required for the job.

In recent times, teaching capabilities have been added to concepts of teaching competence to help evaluate and raise the quality of teaching and learning across educational sectors. According to Lester (2014, p. 2), the concept of capability went 'beyond [the concept of] competence and towards [the concept] of excellence'. While capability was directed more towards ongoing development, the concept of competence was based on a point-in-time assessment (Lester 2014). In his opinion, capability frameworks are best placed to focus on the generic aspects of training and used after teachers had completed their initial training — once they had met the professional qualification standards.

Calls for professional teacher standards, and their accreditation and registration, were accompanied by the belief that their implementation was likely to improve the professional status of teachers, including VET teachers (Lester 2014). The challenge for the VET sector, however, is that the application of other sets of formal professional standards for VET teachers (including registration and/or accreditation) need to take account of the legislated compliance Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (Australian Skills Quality Authority 2015). While these determine the compliance standards for RTOs and the qualifications required by trainers delivering nationally recognised training in VET, they do not specify teaching capabilities or the need for the registration of trainers. Other factors to consider are the complexity of the VET sector, the diversity of roles within it, and the different patterns of employment. All of these factors make the development and application of professional standards problematic (Ithaca Group 2013) and the implementation of continuing professional development for upgrading teacher skills more complex (Tyler & Dymock 2017).

Improving teacher quality and associated strategies

The 2011 Australian Productivity Commission's report on the VET workforce investigated the issues affecting workforce planning and the development and structure of the workforce in the short, medium and longer term. The commission noted that the VET workforce was comprised of dual professionals (vocational experts and teachers), which necessitated their maintaining industry experience, qualifications and accreditations, as well as the relevant teaching qualification. Hence, VET trainers require both teaching and occupational expertise.

Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) responded to the Productivity Commission's report by commissioning a discussion paper. This paper, prepared by Precision Consultancy (2011), proposed the development of a national workforce capability framework for VET practitioners; in 2013 the VET Practitioner Capability Framework was published by IBSA and accompanied by an implementation guide describing the broad capabilities required for a range of job roles in the VET sector.

Prior to the Productivity Commission report, Wheelahan and Moodie (2010) had suggested approaches for improving the quality of VET teaching, producing a set of practical recommendations, to be implemented in a staged process. More recently, Rasmussen (2016) developed a set of strategies covering areas similar to those identified by Wheelahan and Moodie (2010), which included VET teacher qualifications, professional teaching standards and/or registration, and continuing professional development for maintaining teacher currency and competency. Rasmussen's research led her to recommend that RTOs implement their own systems for ensuring their trainers maintain industry currency and experience, and vocational competencies. In any case, the 2015 RTO compliance standards require them to do so.

Harris's 2015 report focused on the development of pedagogical skills, which are not covered by the RTO Standards, emphasising the need for VET teachers to develop knowledge and understanding of the content they have to teach, and the teaching skills required for this. Harris was especially aware that the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is a baseline qualification and made the case for continuing formal and informal professional development following the initial teaching qualification.

The National VET Regulator (Australian Skills Quality Authority) monitors compliance against the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, which state that trainers and assessors must hold 'current industry skills relevant to the training and assessment provided'. The challenge for RTOs in implementing these standards is to ensure that trainers and assessors remain current and up to date with ongoing changes in industry, while maintaining vocational competence in their occupation. With regulatory requirements, technological modernisation and changing workplace practice (Tyler & Dymock 2017), trainers and assessors must engage in continuing professional development to ensure that RTOs maintain compliance.

International studies on teacher evaluation processes and performance measures

While many of the studies relating to teacher performance measurement are concerned with the evaluation of teachers in schools rather than in VET, they also provide some fundamental insights into systems of professional standards and capability frameworks.

Findings from an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2009) study on teacher evaluation approaches indicated that it is important to identify the dual purposes of evaluation — referred to as the 'improvement and accountability functions' — and to ensure that these are not compromised by combining both purposes in one evaluation process.

A 2017 study of the frameworks and standards for measuring the performance of teachers in Australia and in 14 other international systems[4] highlighted the practical issues for consideration when setting up such frameworks and standards and developing measures of performance (Clinton et al. 2017). This study reported that systems with the most effective arrangements for the evaluation of teacher performance

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4 New Zealand, England, Scotland, Germany, Austria, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, USA (including, California, Virginia, Washington, Washington, DC), Canada (Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta).

used a range of methods to collect evidence, including observation of classroom practice, assessment of teaching performance portfolios, interviews with teachers (including performance and development interviews), and teacher ratings by peers and students.

Clinton et al. (2017) emphasised the importance of considering the impact of other factors on performance, including the instructional context, curriculum and assessment systems, class sizes, facilities and materials. A need to gather evidence from multiple sources to ensure accuracy and fairness was also confirmed in the OECD study (2009).

The research indicates that the use of student results for teacher evaluation is not a commonly adopted practice internationally (OECD 2005; UNESCO 2007, cited in OECD 2009), mainly due to uncertainties associated with attributing student progress to teacher impact.

Exploring the need for higher qualifications for VET teachers

Determining whether VET teachers need higher qualifications and other capabilities requires an understanding of what it is that makes a good VET teacher (Smith & Yasukawa 2017). This is one of the key questions asked of students, teachers, and managers by Smith and Yasukawa in their study investigating whether a more highly qualified VET teacher workforce had the potential to address issues of quality teaching. In their responses to the question, students and teachers agreed that a good teacher: was able to give clear explanations; could identify and address student needs; had expertise in the topic area; was organised in their teaching; and could motivate students to learn.

For managers, a good VET teacher was someone who could: 'be trusted with project work'; progress to senior positions; complete paperwork properly; understand the 'broader implications of his or her work'; and understand compliance systems and comply with them.

These findings (especially in relation to teacher ability to provide clear explanations to students) can also be applied to questions about whether VET teachers should have higher qualifications, a topic of enduring interest in the sector (Smith 2018; Corbel et al. 2014). In examining whether teachers with higher qualifications are more effective teachers, Smith (2018) reported that teachers with degrees in their discipline or in VET pedagogy were substantially more confident in their teaching and in their explanations of the various elements of courses, while teachers with degrees in VET pedagogy were better able to express 'nuances' in their teaching and showed more empathy for students. They were also reported by managers as having received better student evaluations.

Although these findings could be used to make a case for raising the qualifications required for VET teachers, there seems to be little interest in doing this, even though issues with using one qualification to cover a diversity of roles have been identified (Ithaca Group 2013; IBSA 2013). This is explored in greater detail later in the report.

Commonalities in the architecture and content of frameworks and standards

The literature indicates that frameworks and standards are organised around a range of domains and various associated elements and measures, with the latter often expressed in statements of capability (in capability frameworks) or standards of competence (in professional standards).

In their assessment of frameworks and standards, Clinton et al. (2017) identified the following dimensions, along with their associated measurable outcomes (in italics):

- teaching: *subject matter knowledge; instructional practice and skill; pedagogical knowledge; preparation and planning; evaluation; assessment and feedback; and learning strategies*

- teacher as a person: *communication, mind frames, psycho-social resources and attitude, cultural competency, and being numeracy and literacy ready*

- behaviour as a teacher: *adherence to a set of standards, professionalism, leadership, accreditation and credentialing*

- continuous improvement: *skill and specialisation, career progression, subject specialisation.*

The OECD (2009) noted that Danielson's Framework for Teaching[5] (2007, 2014) has influenced the systems used in the United Kingdom, Chile and the Kentucky (USA) Education Department and covers the broad range of capabilities, attitudes and behaviours identified by Clinton, although it includes explicit reference to creating a respectful classroom environment, understanding student needs, and being flexible and responsive.

Irrespective of the organising framework used in teacher capability frameworks and teacher professional standards, the coverage of the key features of the teaching process is similar.

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5 The Danielson Framework is also included in the environmental scan of frameworks and standards used in this report.

Analysing the content of current frameworks and standards

Selecting the frameworks

Based on recommendations from jurisdictional government departments responsible for VET, we selected a sample of Australian frameworks for a more detailed analysis. Some jurisdictions did not suggest frameworks for further investigation and in these instances we identified public RTOs within those jurisdictions that had developed and were using capability frameworks for their staff.

In the accompanying support document, *Building capability and quality in VET teaching: frameworks, standards and insights,* we present a high-level summary of a range of other Australian and international frameworks captured through an environmental scan. The summary includes details of the key attributes of each of the frameworks, along with the levels and categories of teachers, and brief comments on their practical uses. The support document also includes stakeholders' views on the suitability of these international frameworks for the Australian VET sector or for their own institutions.

A hierarchy of skills and knowledge

Some frameworks and standards have a graduated set of capabilities based on a 'hierarchy of skills and knowledge' (IBSA 2013, p.9), including at different career stages and levels of expertise and experience, while others simply identify the capabilities. The frameworks examined for the various education sectors include:

- VET sector frameworks:
    - IBSA VET Practitioner Capability Framework
    - Charles Darwin University's VET Educator Capability Framework
    - Chisholm Educator Excellence Framework
    - TAFE New South Wales Professional Standards for Teachers
    - TAFESA VET Educator Capability Framework
    - TasTAFE Educator Capability Framework
    - North Metropolitan TAFE VET Practitioner Capability Framework and Academic Capability Framework (ACF)(Perth)
    - TAFE Queensland Educator Capability Framework
    - Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training — England
- Schooling sector standards:
    - The AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
    - USA Career and Technical Education [VET] Standards (teachers of 11 to 18-year-olds)
    - The Danielson Framework for Teaching
- Higher education sector framework
    - Griffith Learning and Teaching Capabilities Framework, Griffith University.

The frameworks and standards encompass capabilities or competencies that support quality teaching and, ultimately, enhance the learning experiences of students. They cover professional values and commitment, as well as the vocational and pedagogical knowledge and skills required by teachers, irrespective of the sector in which they teach. Although a range of terminology is used to describe each of the capabilities or standards, and various levels of detail are provided, the broad dimensions of teaching covered are largely similar. In most cases, the frameworks also deal with the formal qualifications required for entry.

In table 1 we provide a high-level summary of the key capabilities required of teachers in the 13 frameworks and standards examined and note that in many cases they allude to a similar set of capabilities. All of the frameworks deal in some way with the professional knowledge and practice of teaching and assessment (including planning, designing, preparing and delivering the activities required for student learning activities, resources and assessments), and all but one of the frameworks deal with professional engagement and collaborations (including with industry, communities and other teachers). The capabilities such as digital literacy skills, entrepreneurship and innovation, found in some of the more recently developed frameworks, reflect the increasing need for teachers to apply current technologies and innovative approaches to their training delivery and assessment, and to be proactive in seeking new student markets.

Consultations with stakeholders found limited support for a national capability framework, although a voluntary network of VET practitioners supporting the development of such a framework has been established. The perceived benefits of such a framework include improving consistency in the capabilities expected of all teachers and avoiding the need for RTOs to develop their own frameworks (an onerous burden on small RTOs). The IBSA Framework and the AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, however, have in many cases informed the development of RTO frameworks. As exemplified in the words of one educational manager, 'We have a capability framework [and] don't need a national one' (RTO, WA).

Table 1   Key features of frameworks and standards: common elements

	Professional knowledge and practice	Engagement and collaboration	Quality processes and compliance	Creating inclusive and safe learning environment	Digital literacy	Continuous professional development	Entrepreneurship and innovation	General skills	Professional values
Australian Professional Standards for Teaching	Professional knowledge and professional practice	Professional engagement				Professional learning, vocational competency			
TAFENSW Professional Standards for Teachers	Professional knowledge and professional practice knowledge	Professional engagement							
Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA)	Teaching and assessment	Industry and community collaboration	Systems and compliance					General skills and behaviours	Ethics
Griffith University Learning and Teaching Capabilities Framework	Understand knowledge and design learning and assessment resources	Contribute to teaching teams	Policies and procedures	Creating and facilitating a culture for learning and a respectful and safe environment for student learning	Optimising digital technologies	Reflection, evaluation and scholarly inquiry			Values and respectful relationships
Danielson's Framework for Teaching	Planning, knowledge and instruction		Compliance and responsibilities	Context classroom environment		Professional learning and engaging with others, reflective practice			
TAFESA VET Educator Capability Framework	Teaching and assessment validation	Industry and community engagement	Quality and compliance		Digital technologies			General skills and behaviours	
TasTAFE Educator Capability Framework	Teaching, design and facilitate valid and reliable assessments	Industry and community engagement		Inclusive student experience conducive to learning	Digital literacy	Leadership and learning pathways			
North Metropolitan TAFE VET Practitioner Capability Framework	Teaching and assessment	Industry and community engagement, industry competence	Systems and compliance					General skills and behaviours	Values
Charles Darwin University VET Educator Capability Framework	Learn, teach, assess	Industry and community engagement	Quality assurance and continuous improvement				Entrepreneurship and innovation		
Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training in England	Knowledge and evidence-based practice	Knowledge	Evidence-based practice	Promote inclusive, safe, positive relationships		Professional learning, motivate learners			Professional values and attributes
USA Career and Technical Education (VET) Standards for Teachers (ages 11–18)	Knowledge and design, assessment	Learning communities		Diversity, and learning environments		Leadership and reflective practice			
TAFE Qld Educator Capability Framework	Learning, teaching and assessment	Engagement	Quality and compliance	Inclusive practice	Technology for learning	Leadership	Innovation		Core values
Chisholm Educator Excellence Framework	Design professional practices and assessment	Engagement and feedback	Continuous improvement	Supportive environment for different delivery modes		Continuing professional development and lifelong learning			

Frameworks as useful diagnostic tools and guides

The capability frameworks and professional standards examined are valued by stakeholders as diagnostic tools and guidelines for individuals to use to self-evaluate their knowledge, skills and practice, in preparation for professional conversations with their managers to establish professional development plans.

The capabilities in the frameworks examined are not exhaustive, and in table 2 we provide an overview of stakeholder suggestions on the aspects that such frameworks should include, some of which are already covered in the frameworks (for example, digital skills).

Table 2   Items of capability identified by stakeholder groups

Knowledge of pedagogy and subject content	Knowledge of pedagogy, subject content and discipline area, including teaching practice that is research- and industry-informed
	Ability to plan, design and evaluate programs (including self-evaluation)
	Ability to design assessment tools and materials, conduct assessments (and engage students in assessment)
	Knowing how to teach, including classroom management
	Ability to communicate effectively with students, and deliver engaging presentations
	Professionalism and ethical behaviour
	Keeping up with changes in qualification requirements
	Applying principles of reasonable adjustment in assessment
Professional and ethical values	Professionalism and ethical behaviour
Understanding individual student needs	Understanding and customising training to suit student needs, learning preferences and styles
Knowledge of cultural diversity and social inclusion	Knowledge and understanding of different cultures
	Understanding and catering for the learning needs of diverse equity groups, including Indigenous cultures
	Knowledge of support services available, and identifying and managing services to meet student needs
Dual professional issues	Understanding both the strengths and challenges of having a dual professional sector
Knowledge and application of basic and/or advanced digital skills and technologies	Ability to use basic digital skills and platforms for training
	Understanding of and or skill in using advanced digital technologies, and higher-level technologies used in industry
Involvement in higher-level corporate responsibilities	Opportunities to be involved in higher-level decision-making about policy and processes, including training and assessment strategies

Developmental approaches to building capability

The majority of the frameworks and professional standards reviewed identify progressively more complex areas of capability, knowledge and behaviours expected of teachers at various stages of careers. Some specifically identify a stage for early career teachers, in terms of beginning or transitioning teachers, graduates or new teachers, while for others there is no differentiation. Standards like the Professional Standards for teachers and trainers in England, have a set of developmental stages as well as a set of transitioning stages to recognise the fact that teachers will progress through career stages at different speeds. In table 3 we set out for each of the frameworks the various categories applying to the different career stages of teachers.

Table 3   Categories of teacher roles for various frameworks and standards

	Initial stages	Proficient stages	Advanced stages	Leadership and management stages	
Australian Professional Standards for Teaching	Graduate	Proficient teachers	Highly accomplished teachers	Lead teachers	
TAFENSW Professional Standards for Teachers	Transitioning	Proficient teachers	Highly accomplished teachers	Lead teachers	
Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) VET Practitioner Capability Framework	First-level practitioner	Second-level practitioner	Third-level practitioner		
Griffith University Learning and Teaching Capabilities Framework	Educator	Course convenor	Program director		
Danielson's Framework for Teaching	Non-tenured teachers	Tenured teachers			
TAFESA VET Educator Capability Framework	New lecturer	Lecturer	Accomplished lecturer	Senior lecturer	Principal lecturer
TasTAFE Educator Capability Framework	Beginner	Proficient	Advanced		
North Metropolitan TAFE VET Practitioner Capability Framework	Lecturer	Advanced skill lecturer – 1	Advanced skills lecturer – 2	Principal lecturer	
Charles Darwin University VET Educator Capability Framework	Industry expert/educator	Advanced educator	Educational manager	Educational leader	
Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training in England	The developing teacher/trainer	The professional teacher/trainer	The advanced teacher/trainer		
USA Career and Technical Education (VET) Standards for Teachers (ages 11–18)	New teachers	Accomplished teachers			
TAFE Qld Educator Capability Framework	Transitioning	Proficient	Highly accomplished teachers	Leading	

Applying a staged approach to teacher training

The need for a staged approach to teacher development is strongly supported by stakeholders because it enables novice teachers to learn the teaching craft and then move through the career steps or pathways that enable them to become capable and accomplished teachers and/or follow other pathways of their choosing, including specialisations, higher qualifications or progression into leadership or supervisory positions. The ability for VET teachers (especially industry experts) to receive the induction and continued mentorship and coaching support required to form their professional identities as teachers is especially valued.

The results of the Northern Territory Government's pilot program 'Traineeship in the Certificate IV TAE' (to be discussed later) has shown that a stepped approach can be successful.[6] To be eligible for this pilot, beginning teachers must have completed the Enterprise Trainer — skill set, which enables them to commence working under supervision.[7]

Other examples of staged approaches[8] include the following four options:

- *Option 1: Up-front training for beginning teachers* — this would teach the fundamentals of teaching in the six months prior to commencing the full qualification. The program would include a short and intensive full-time course, covering the basic techniques for conducting a class. It would have the skill set for teaching under supervision[9] embedded within it, enabling beginning teachers to acquire the required knowledge and skill. They would be involved in task-based learning activities (including observations of other teachers) and be paired with a mentor, ensuring they are supported by an accomplished teacher to learn the teaching skills. At the end of six months, the beginning teachers would receive release time to undertake the Diploma of Adult Education, earning their qualification and enabling them to work independently.

- *Option 2: Teaching under supervision programs* — this option adopts similar concepts to Option 1 but uses internal and external mentors to support the cadet teachers, who work under supervision until they are capable of working independently. They would be given smaller teaching loads until they become fully fledged teaching professionals.

- *Option 3: A 'master' teaching model* — in this model teachers with a natural aptitude for teaching would help to inspire and provide support to beginning teachers (both fully qualified and yet to be fully qualified).

- *Option 4: Hawthorne Method approach* — in this approach beginning teachers would gain their qualification over an extended period by combining up-front learning with combinations of part-time teaching and learning until they are able to teach independently. Although applied to the acquisition of a university qualification, it can equally be applied to obtaining a VET teaching credential.

These approaches are adaptable to the VET sector and in some cases, are already being applied.

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6 Early challenges with timing of the training were experienced, but the majority of trainees have been able to complete their Certificate IV TAE programs.

7 The ASQA standards for registration of RTOs 2015 require trainers and assessors without the required credentials to work under the supervision of an appropriately qualified and experienced trainer, provided they hold one of the required skill sets, current relevant industry skills and vocational competencies to the level being delivered and/or assessed.

8 This example was provided by one of the Australian Education Union respondents.

9 The skill set used to teach the art of teaching is generally the Enterprise Trainer — Presenting skill set.

The Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Agreement 2018

An example of how capabilities can be integrated into enterprise agreements is evident in the Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Agreement (2018), which sets out the classification descriptors, classification context level and the typical functions expected of each category level. In addition to listing conditions of employment, it sets out the capabilities expected of staff at each category level. It also spells out what is expected of beginning teachers, those who are primarily involved in direct teaching, and those in supervisory and leadership roles at progressively higher levels of seniority and accountability.

The agreement specifies not only the level but also the type of qualifications required at each level and for promotional positions, upon which subsequent pay rises and progression depend. The lowest level of teacher classification in the agreement is aligned with the Certificate IV TAE qualification, which attracts the lowest pay rate. Teachers who want to progress up the levels will require a substantial qualification upgrade, comprising a diploma-level qualification for level 2.2, and an advanced diploma-level qualification for classification level 3. These higher-level qualifications must have a focus on adult education and include a research unit based on the Boyer Framework of Scholarship (Boyer 1979).[10]

According to one of the TAFE leaders consulted, these additional qualifications for promotion are also considered to be too difficult to acquire and the reward too low for the effort and expense involved, since many VET teachers are casual or part-time, or unable or unwilling to commit to extensive further studies. There is also no certainty that individuals will remain at a certain standard or be willing to take on the additional responsibilities that could be reasonably expected of someone with the upgraded set of skills and qualifications. As a result, the agreement has inadvertently reduced the morale of those teachers who hold other postgraduate qualifications (including master's degrees), which the agreement does not recognise for promotion or pay increment purposes, even though these teachers may have skills and knowledge that are equivalent.

Measuring performance

Stakeholders agreed that capability or standards statements can be used to inform the development of measures at the local level, including in enterprise agreements. The RTOs consulted do not seem to have strict objective measures of performance attached to the frameworks, which must be met by all teachers; rather, the practice is to establish a performance review cycle to be followed according to different roles, responsibilities and discipline areas. Such processes require educators and their business unit managers to develop jointly the objectives that form the basis of the performance review. These objectives are based both on the current needs of the business unit (linked to organisational strategic priorities) and the developmental needs of the teacher.

The capability or standard statements can be used as triggers for self-reflection in order to identify teacher strengths and any gaps in knowledge and practice prior to performance development meetings.

Measures of performance such as student assessment results and course evaluation feedback may also be part of the quality process, and many of the frameworks reviewed refer explicitly to using these as a basis for teacher self-reflection. Such outcome measures form part of the quality assurance system in general and are of major importance to RTOs when preparing for compliance audits by external regulators.

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10 The Boyer Framework for Scholarship can be used to identify the type of research to be conducted, the purposes for which it is being done and the measures of performance that will be used.

The OECD's (2009) research on approaches to teacher evaluation[11] cautions educators to separate the performance measures used for development and practice improvement from those for accountability purposes. Teachers may be reluctant to speak about their weaknesses in a process focused on accountability because of the perceived repercussions on career and wages. Our consultations with key stakeholder groups also allude to similar issues when approaches to improving teacher practice were discussed. The use of multiple sources of evidence, however, is promoted as the key to the effective evaluation of teacher practice (Clinton et al. 2017), and may include:

- observation of classroom practice (discussed later)

- assessment of teaching performance portfolios

- interviews with teachers (including performance and development interviews)

- teacher ratings by peers and students.

Other relevant sources of evidence (mostly observed in international systems) include:

- records of teaching performance (on standardised forms)

- results of teacher testing used for other purposes (for example, tests that, in some countries, assess teacher knowledge and skill for entry into the profession, or access to permanent employment).

How RTOs use objective measures (such as student assessment or employment post-training) to help review the quality of teacher performance and develop the quality of VET teaching requires more intense investigation, since student factors unrelated to the quality of teaching are necessarily implicated.

The use of peer observations for reflections on performance

The use of peer observation of teacher practice to help teachers recognise their strengths and identify areas for development is strongly supported by participants, even though there is a view that some teachers may feel threatened by the concept. Such practices are not new and are already common practice in some institutions — through teaching course practicums and programs for teachers working under supervision, informally in team-teaching environments and where teachers share common spaces. Applicants seeking promotion positions in some places also need to be observed by peers. There are, however, no references to the need for peer observation in the Standards for RTOs (2015).

A culture of collegiality and trust is essential for peer observation to be successful: teachers being observed need to feel comfortable about reflecting on their practice and addressing areas for development while maximising their strengths. The use of peer observation for the purposes of performance review is not supported. An effective approach to successful peer observation is one in which participants observe a different set of skills during each observation session (for example, questioning and listening techniques, presentation skills, giving instructions, relaying feedback on assignments, providing positive reinforcement). In this way, the process becomes more meaningful and manageable and may reduce feelings of anxiety in the observed teacher. Teachers can also learn from their observations of others, in particular from accomplished teachers who are effective presenters and communicators.

11 These are used in England, Canada (Ontario), Singapore, Chile and Portugal.

✓ Improving the quality of VET teaching

Most stakeholders agreed that responsibility for improving the quality of VET teaching must be shared by governments, RTOs and the individuals themselves, and that the chief executive officers of RTOs should take the lead in driving the process for their institutions. One view given was that governments (including regulators) should have most responsibility for improving quality because if left to individuals and the RTOs themselves, comprehensive strategies may not be established.

Some consider that VET teachers should focus on their teaching role rather than deal with policy, compliance and operational processes; however, it is understood that this may not be possible for small RTOs, where staff hold multiple roles. It is acknowledged that, while teachers do their best, they are at times constrained by factors beyond their control, such as undertaking tasks unrelated to their role but which may be important to the institution and to the sector.

More detail on the stakeholder group perspectives is reported in the accompanying document, *Building capability and quality in VET teaching: frameworks, standards and insights.*

Recruitment and selection

Our consultations reveal that, to improve the quality of VET teaching, the appropriate people must be employed: those with an interest in VET teaching and the capacity to acquire the required entry-level qualification, and the willingness to engage in continual professional learning, maintain vocational currency and continually develop their teaching capabilities. These attributes include the ability to engage with and communicate effectively with student cohorts of diverse cultural backgrounds and with different learning mode preferences.

Respondents acknowledged that one of the key strengths of the VET system is that training is conducted by dual professionals, those with both teaching and industry expertise; however, some would like industry experts to self-identify primarily as teachers. Others argue that having industry experience is essential for an individual to be a quality trainer. The challenge is getting the balance right, by building on that expertise while developing both the teaching skills and essential non-teaching capabilities and maintaining industry currency.

One strategy for attracting industry experts to join the VET teaching workforce is to engage closely with industry to identify potential VET teachers, and subsequently to provide these candidates with support enabling them to acquire the required units and skills for entry into the profession and eventually complete the full Certificate IV TAE qualification. The initial cost of undertaking the Certificate IV TAE also acts a distinct barrier for some potential teachers.

Despite the industry-driven nature of VET, there is no desire among stakeholders for industry involvement in the selection of teachers, which is considered to be the RTO's role. There is, however, some support for industry to act in an advisory capacity or be involved in selection panels where relevant expertise and knowledge is held.

VET teacher registration

Although mandatory requirements for the registration of VET teachers are rare in Australia[12], the requirements for RTOs to ensure their trainers are suitably qualified are legislated and set out in the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015. School teachers are subject to mandatory registration requirements, and this includes those teachers in schools where VET subjects are also taught. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2011), the standards for teacher registration, are a key reference point for the standards currently being implemented in some jurisdictions (for both schools and the VET sector).

There is a limited appetite for implementing mandatory registration of VET teachers, except among a small group of stakeholders. The majority of stakeholders consider the benefits questionable, and the cost for teachers in a heavily casualised workforce is high, potentially resulting in teachers exiting the profession and industry experts being dissuaded from joining.

Which agency would oversee such a registration process is the key concern for many stakeholders, along with what the regulator's expectations might entail. A view was expressed that, if the system were to concentrate on implementing yet another set of bureaucratic requirements, resources would be withdrawn from those areas concerned with improving the quality of VET teaching.

Those who support mandatory registration see that it has benefits in terms of raising the status of VET teaching, given that other professions require registration. Registration could also be an effective way of maintaining records of the professional development activities undertaken.

Practitioners and executives in Tasmania cautioned against adopting a system of mandatory registration. VET teacher registration is already in place for TasTAFE teachers, who are required to be registered with the Tasmanian Teachers Registration Board (TTRB). According to the chief executive officer of TasTAFE, the argument that registration is likely to improve the image of VET teachers appears to be without merit. The bureaucracy associated with an additional registration process, on top of teachers meeting ASQA requirements, has created barriers and inhibited the agile recruitment of qualified industry teachers. Although the TTRB process for character checks is considered worthwhile, it is felt that there are other simpler and equally effective means that are used by other TAFE institutes. Another reason for the perceived lack of success of mandatory registration is that it applies only to the public sector, since Tasmanian private providers are exempt. As the CEO of TasTAFE noted:

> The solution to quality in the VET sector is not registration. What we need is to define what quality looks like and set out a path to incentivise provider behaviour to achieve quality outcomes. Increasing red tape in a sector already highly regulated does not raise quality.

A number of the TasTAFE RTO respondents valued teacher registration for the schooling sector but in view of the standards already existing for VET, they felt that it would add an extra burden.

A voluntary system of accreditation[13] is already in place for the private training sector — the ITECA College of Vocational Education and Training Professionals. Trainers, assessors and managers can apply for membership of the college, and, depending on their roles, be given status as Certified Educational Professional or Certified Educational Manager (CEP and CEM respectively).

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12 TasTAFE VET teachers need to be registered with the Tasmanian Teachers' Registration Board. This is in part due to TasTAFE having been a polytechnic in the past, and having students in Years 10, 11 and 12.

13 It is important to note that this ITECA accreditation system is not endorsed by ASQA.

Entry-level and other qualifications for employment

Support for raising the bar on entry-level qualifications is not widespread. However, there is common agreement that the Certificate IV in TAE needs to be reviewed (but not immediately) so that it more successfully accommodates the diversity of roles in the sector, including for trainers in enterprise RTOs, workplaces and community organisations. It was also widely agreed that the current Certificate IV in TAE does not prepare teachers to deliver effectively to their students. Some highlighted the importance of increasing the rigour of the qualification, or introducing other requirements that raise the professional knowledge and standing of the VET teacher. Unfortunately, the upfront cost of completing or upgrading to the latest qualification is considered a barrier, especially for part-time or casual teachers and those from equity groups. Despite the limitations of the Certificate IV TAE qualification, there is widespread (but not universal) agreement that it remains the basic qualification for entry into VET teaching. It is acknowledged that some VET teachers, however, require higher-level credentials because of the level and complexity of the qualifications they deliver.

As previously mentioned, a staged approach to entering the teaching profession would provide beginning teachers with the support to progress from novice to higher levels of expertise, and to related career pathways or specialisations. A certificate III qualification for trainers in industry has also been mooted in some circles, an approach that would enable industry experts to eventually upgrade to full trainer status with an RTO at a later stage. Such arrangements could help to allay the concerns of those who see risks in unnecessarily raising entry requirements, risks that include reducing the pool of industry experts willing to join the profession, further exacerbating current VET teacher shortages, particularly in regional and remote regions and among equity groups, including health workers and artists in Indigenous communities.

That said, it was proposed that requirements be raised such that VET teachers hold a qualification that is one level above the qualification being taught, including those teaching the Certificate IV in TAE, who would be required to have a diploma.

There were other suggestions for diversifying the Certificate IV in TAE full qualification to cater for specialisations and the needs of VET practitioners in different roles, including the following options:

- direct teaching and assessing
- teaching only
- assessing only
- compliance and quality assurance
- management and leadership.

Funding and resourcing adequate professional development

Stakeholders unanimously agree that VET teachers ought to be supported throughout their teaching careers. They also agree on the need for systematic approaches to teacher preparation, mentoring and continuing professional development, including strengthening the formal requirements for teachers to engage in professional development, and setting PD objectives in individual performance review development plans. There is also strong support for implementing or further expanding programs to enable VET teachers to maintain their industry currency and update both their vocational and pedagogical skills.

Also universally supported is the need to have adequate and specifically allocated time and funding for these activities. Suggestions were made for such funding to apply to opportunities for teachers to:

- attend conferences where they can hear and share learnings about policy and practice and to share information with colleagues on their return

- collaborate with colleagues in professional learning groups or communities of practice to share information and expertise on new methodologies, teaching and assessment tools and resources, and various student issues.

Facilitating factors

Centralised systems that provide professional development and industry forums for VET teachers, such as the Victorian Government's VET Development Centre, are highly regarded. Our consultations reveal a strong desire for the return of national professional development programs (similar to Reframing the Future and the National VET E-Learning Strategy), which bring together teachers to share learnings about VET policy, teaching and assessment, and online learning, the latter particularly relevant in the COVID-19 context.

Despite the benefits of centralised PD programs, RTOs in regional areas may find them difficult to access unless they are offered online, or funding is allocated to RTOs to run their own programs.

The results of the pilot program conducted by the Chisholm Educator College, in collaboration with five other Victorian TAFE institutes, demonstrate how a focused effort in providing opportunities for professional development at the local RTO level can be sustainable and successful when adequate government funding is available to support such initiatives.

Inhibiting factors

Systematic and well-coordinated, funded programs for teacher engagement in professional development and industry currency programs do not always consider the issues that may inhibit teachers from applying for, and participating in, professional development, including industry release programs. These include limited or lack of resources for: hiring relief teachers and taking account of the time required for arranging backfilling; informing students of the intended 'absence'; and preparing the necessary learning materials for students. These issues can lead teachers to opt for using their holidays for industry release purposes, meaning they don't benefit from needed downtime.

Attracting and building a capable workforce

Stakeholders offered the following suggestions on how to attract and build a capable VET workforce:

- Removing the burden of heavy workloads, including the requirement to address multiple administrative duties, time-consuming compliance documentation, and the cost and effort of upgrading the TAE qualification.

- Recognising that a strength of the VET system is that VET trainers are dual professionals (that is, both an industry expert and a teacher). This can involve establishing support strategies to help industry experts become accomplished teachers and assist experienced teachers to maintain industry currency. Developing and maintaining close relationships with employers to identify industry experts with the potential and willingness to become VET teachers is a starting point. However, a particular challenge would be to attract industry experts from high paying occupations.

- Promoting the positive aspects of VET teaching, including the relatively good employment conditions, work-life balance, and higher level of pay for those coming from industries and occupations where

wages were much lower. Offering salary-sacrificing incentives for teachers to upgrade their qualifications (such as to the Diploma of VET) and providing them with study leave to do so may also be attractive incentives.

- Establishing a range of career path options, including specialisations, to support teachers who wish to continue teaching, or move into supervisory, mentoring or leadership positions.

💡 Lessons from pilot projects

We reviewed three pilot projects in this study — from Victoria, the Northern Territory and Tasmania. The first two had completed their first trials, and the third had undertaken initial recruitment and program design and had begun in late April 2020.

The Professional Educator College Pilot (Victoria)

This pilot was led by Chisholm Institute, funded by the Victorian Government and implemented in conjunction with five other TAFE Institutes: Bendigo-Kangan Institute, Federation Training, GOTAFE, South West TAFE and Sunraysia TAFE. A project manager from Chisholm led the pilot, which was implemented in the other TAFE institutes by local project officers.

The aim of the pilot was to implement the Chisholm Educator Excellence Framework, along with an Educator Passport. The Educator Passport is an online application, provided by Chisholm TAFE, which enabled its teachers to assess their professional development needs, register for professional development programs and track their progress. Teachers could benchmark themselves against the capabilities in the Chisholm Educator Excellence Framework. Supervisors also undertook a similar exercise in rating the teachers, but their focus was on departmental needs. A joint discussion between teachers and their supervisors was then held to identify relevant professional development areas for teachers to undertake. The online app (accessible on mobile phones) also allowed the capture of real-time data to inform ongoing planning and action.

Chisholm teachers were allocated points when they participated in professional development, and these points counted towards the achievement of the Educator Passport. When they completed the required number of points, teachers were issued with a business card confirming they had achieved their 12-month passport.

Although the app was the property of Chisholm, it was made available to the other TAFE institutes in the pilot, with Chisholm providing technical assistance. The other institutes were responsible for their communication strategies, using the profiling tool, conversations between teachers and their supervisors and registering for professional development activities. Chisholm ran professional development sessions, using webinars for regional TAFEs.

Practical learnings

The project manager described the implementation of the pilot and the collaboration between the five institutes as 'amazingly successful'. It had achieved the necessary support and participation required to make it a success, and government funding had enabled the employment of project officers to run the program in the different institutes. The work of these project officers was a key factor in the pilot's success.

Some challenges in demonstrating a sustainable change in uptake and practice were identified, mainly because the pilot had commenced between December and January, when many VET teachers were on leave. It was also difficult to prove in a six-month pilot that teachers' capabilities had increased or that they had embedded learnings into practice. Nevertheless, it was perceived to have been a start: 'We may not do things exactly right, but we are on track'. Uptake had been strong, and all five institutes wanted to continue with the approach.

Financial sustainability

At the time of consultation, Chisholm was negotiating a *reduced service model*, through to December 2019, with the five TAFE institutes who had taken part in the pilot, whereby the institutes would need to invest in their own facilitators. Issues of financial sustainability past this date may compel Chisholm to charge other TAFE institutes a fee to use the app, mainly to support continuous improvement, including app development, expansion of app capability, and maintenance of up-to-date resources.

Findings from the formal evaluation

The evaluation of the pilot in 2019 was conducted by independent evaluators (Deschepper Consulting & DESTE Consulting Services 2019), with information collated from a variety of sources including:

- feedback from project officers, and educators across participating institutes

- databases of participation.

The evaluation highlights the critical role played by project officers in the institutes in helping to build and maintain the visibility of teachers, as well as encourage and raise their participation. The evaluation also points to the success of the project in terms of uptake by educators and the smooth operation of the app technology. The evaluation also noted that the impact on educator practice needs to be assessed over a longer period. The evaluators were, however, encouraged by the gradual embedding of this practice into business-as-usual approaches at Chisholm.

In terms of the practical implementation of the framework, the evaluation reported that some problems that had been encountered, such as:

- Some teachers were hesitant about using their own phones for downloading the app (for personal reasons, but also for reasons of digital capacity and access, and uncertainty of the purposes and usage of the data collected, and whether participation was a voluntary or mandatory requirement). Teachers inexperienced with downloading or using apps on their mobile phones also reported some reluctance.

- In institutes with a regular performance review cycle for their teachers, project officers were challenged by having to record information in two systems.

- The participation of teachers in other professional development activities needed to be recognised and integrated into the Educator Passport.

- Issues arose for teachers when scheduled professional development sessions conflicted with course timetables and they were not backfilled.

Despite these practical issues (which presumably can be fixed at local levels), the evaluators concluded that the flexibility and the versatility of the Educator Passport made it a success. It had the flexibility to add and modify domains, which means that it can be modified to suit local institute requirements, and it was versatile in that the app could also be used for a range of other purposes, for example, the tracking of data to monitor implementation of government policies and initiatives.

The evaluation concluded that it is 'a successful initiative, establishing a benchmark for expected teacher improvement, building morale, and the professionalism of the sector' (Deschepper Consulting & DESTE Consulting Services 2019, p.23). It also had the 'potential to address improvement in the strategic and business outcomes of the Victorian VET sector', and at the same time attend to the professional development of teachers.

What is required is commitment from the state government and local TAFE institutes to make decisions 'that actively engage the educator in sustaining their commitment to the learner and to local enterprises'.

The key focus for Chisholm in 2020 will be to update the domains of the Educator Excellence Framework on digital literacy.

TAE40116 Traineeship Pilot (Northern Territory)

This pilot, a Northern Territory Government initiative, trials a new traineeship program for the Certificate IV TAE40116 and provides training for new VET trainers, who, to be eligible, must have completed the Enterprise Trainer — Presenting skill set[14], which comprises: BSBCMM401 (Make a presentation) and TAEDEL301 (Provide work skill instruction). No RPL is available and the program allows a maximum of two government-funded trainee positions per RTO to participate in the pilot.

The parties to the traineeship involve:

- training RTOs, responsible for ensuring compliance with qualification entry requirements and the development of a training plan for each trainee

- employing RTOs, with obligations to provide training following entry into an employment agreement with the trainee. The employing RTO will be required to provide training and supervision in accordance with the agreement. A maximum of two trainees is allowed per employing RTO. Employer subsidies are conditional on fulfilment of employing RTO responsibilities

- the Department (Department of Trade, Business and Innovation), which is responsible for program oversight, maintaining strong relationships with key stakeholders and providing stakeholders with support

- the trainee, who is expected to show broad industry experience and knowledge in their proposed vocational teaching area; five years of industry experience is required.

The pilot was considered a success, with seven of the eight trainees who began the program in 2019 completing the training. The remaining trainee is due to complete in 2020. The program has continued, with a further 12 trainees enrolled in the program.

The biggest issue concerned the timing of pilot commencement, with all participants expected to start at the same time. RTOs only employ trainers when they have student demand for courses, but, in retrospect, a rolling start, with flexible entry and exit points, would have been more effective; this is being considered for the next iteration.

The program was considered highly sustainable, both conceptually and financially, because it is based on RTO demand for teaching staff, which itself is based on student course enrolments. New employees undertake some training in specified units of competency to obtain some initial teaching skills before they commence the traineeship. When they commence the traineeship, they begin training for the full qualification, which is comprised of a combination of on-the-job and off-the job training, as in any other traineeship program.

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14 Originally the program required the potential trainee to have a minimum of five years of industry experience, but this was eventually dropped. This was to allow the training RTO to determine 'industry experience' according to the RTO Standards.

The certificate IV in TAE was also felt to be a suitable entry-level qualification for employment in the sector as it provides an initial introduction to teaching. The other benefit for participants in undertaking the Certificate IV in TAE using this model was that they were employed on a teacher's wage.

Regional Development of VET Teaching Capability Pilot (Tasmania)

This pilot is part of the Tasmanian Government's Workforce Development Program, which aims to build VET teaching capacity for industries of regional priority on the West Coast of Tasmania.

The West Coast Council partnered with TasTAFE to deliver the Certificate IV TAE40116 to individuals with the experience, vocational qualifications, interest and capacity to complete the qualification, and a willingness to stay in the area. The industry areas serviced in this pilot are: information technology; tourism and hospitality; printmaking; carpentry and joinery; community sector business and leadership management; aged care; kitchen operations; community services and engineering.

TasTAFE will deliver the training via flexible delivery methods, accompanied by mentoring and support for students. The original plan entailed having regular face-to-face workshops, skype webinars, online resources, supported study sessions, group discussion boards and workplace learning. On completion of the project, participants will continue to receive mentoring and support. They will also have opportunities for employment with TasTAFE and other RTOs in the delivery of training in industry on the west coast.

- A key lesson learnt early in this pilot was that plans need to be adapted to changes in the environment.

- Plans for using a blended-learning approach (including face-to-face seminars and workshops) had to be adapted to accommodate the disruption caused by the arrival of COVID-19 and the ensuing state restrictions on face-to-face gatherings. This meant that training was delivered via ZOOM seminars and online training resources.

- There are indications that some students are not entirely happy with online learning.

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