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## **Literature review: The quality of teaching in VET**

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## ***Introduction***

The development of the vocational education and training (VET) workforce is at the centre of policy considerations at present because Australia needs to raise the skills of its workforce, promote social inclusion, and increase the percentage of the population with qualifications, particularly post-school qualifications. VET teachers will be instrumental in achieving these objectives. Tertiary education will need to expand, and this includes a significant expansion in VET in the coming years (Skills Australia 2010). Australia needs to support existing VET teachers to maintain and build on their expert industry knowledge and to deepen their knowledge and skills in teaching, and it needs to support the many new teachers, who will have to be recruited very soon to replace an age-skewed workforce, to develop their professional expertise as teachers. The purpose of this project is to research and make recommendations on the quality of VET teaching; VET teacher qualifications and continuing professional development (CPD); the impact teaching has on the quality of the VET student experience and student outcomes; and how this can be evaluated.

The project is funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR); managed by the Australian College of Educators (ACE) and is being conducted by the L.H. Martin Institute at the University of Melbourne. It is one of three concurrent projects exploring VET teaching. The second, a National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) project, is mapping the range, type and focus of existing VET teacher preparation programs, the characteristics of students in these programs, and the extent to which programs differ by sector or state. The third, funded by NCVER and managed by Victoria University, is exploring the perceptions of recent graduates of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA) of the extent to which they feel the Certificate IV prepares them for teaching.

This project will produce four reports. The first will be on the nature of VET teaching, the factors that support high quality teaching in VET, and the kinds of VET teacher qualifications and CPD that are needed. The second will explore conceptual frameworks for measuring the quality of VET teaching, teacher preparation and development programs, VET student outcomes and the VET experience. The third will review existing frameworks for measuring the quality of VET teaching and teacher preparation and development programs, and it will make recommendations on these. The final report will propose models for VET teacher education and CPD programs, and for appropriate evaluation frameworks and quality indicators. There will be extensive consultations throughout all stages of the research, and the findings will be reported back to participants and stakeholders as part of the process of developing the final report and recommendations. Each report constitutes different stages of the project, and should be considered holistically as different chapters of a final report. The purpose of this literature review is to contextualise the project, identify issues that need further investigation and shape the questions we will explore with participants. It focuses on the first report, while the literature relevant to later reports will be reviewed in those reports. The literature review is organised around the following questions:

- What is the conceptual model being used in the project?
- What is the background to the project and why is it needed?

- What are the demands on VET and VET teachers now and in the future?
- Who are VET teachers?
- What do VET teachers need to know and be able to do and is it different from schools or higher education?
- Is teaching a generic skill requiring generic pedagogic knowledge or does what is being taught matter?
- What are the implications for teaching qualifications and continuing professional development?
- How can we support the development of the profession?
- What can we learn from other countries?

### *Conceptual model*

The McKinsey report (McKinsey & Company 2007: 5) into the world's top school systems argued that three things matter most: “1) getting the right people to become teachers, 2) developing them into effective instructors, and 3) ensuring that the system is able to deliver the best possible instruction for every child.” The report argued that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. It is hard to argue with this. However, there are many factors that affect the quality of teaching because the outcomes of education are co-produced (Moodie 2010), so while producing high quality outcomes without high quality teaching is difficult, high quality teaching may be supported or undermined by a range of factors. Biggs’ (1999: 18) model of ‘constructive alignment’ says that student factors, the teaching context, the nature of the learning activities and the learning outcomes interact to produce the final outcomes, and that the best outcomes are possible when these factors are in alignment. He refers to this as the 3P model of teaching and learning and it consists of presage (student factors and teaching context), process (learning-focussed activities) and product (learning outcomes).

Devlin and Samarawickrema (2010: 118), in discussing criteria for evaluating the quality of teaching in higher education, argue that the changing context in which teaching takes place helps to shape the outcomes that are possible. The context includes characteristics associated with the subject, teachers, students, assessment practices, class sizes, and the nature of the faculty or department, and it includes the disciplinary, institutional, “societal, political, economic, technological, and demographic”, all of which are subject to change.

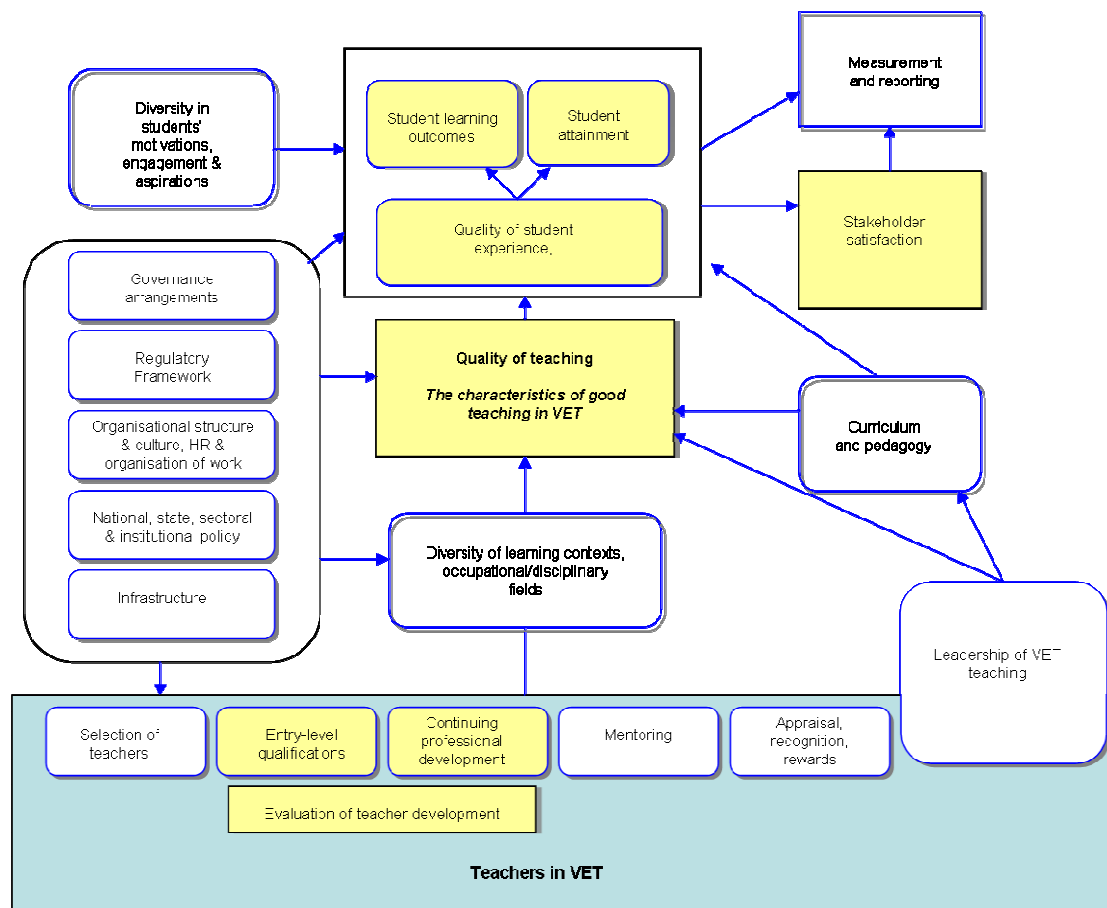
Guthrie and Clayton (2010) argue that building capability in VET requires a focus on the individual and the institution, and that work design and workforce development are two under-appreciated aspects that are related to the quality of teaching. In their view, funding, governance, regulations, organisational structures, and the quality of leadership and management all have an impact on the outcomes, as do the demographic characteristics of the VET workforce (it is getting older), career structures and human resource management practices. Black (2009) illustrates how these factors come together in the work of head-teachers in TAFE in NSW who find that their administrative and supervisory responsibilities make it difficult for them to pay enough attention to their teaching, and that they find this very frustrating.

And, just as there are many factors that contribute to the outcomes of teaching, developing high quality teachers and teaching can be achieved through a variety of mechanisms. This includes formal teaching qualifications and formally organised CPD, but it also includes selection processes, appraisal, recognition and reward schemes, the nature of the leadership of teaching, and workplace practices designed to support learning, such as peer review of teaching, mentoring and coaching (Harris, Farrell, Bell, Devlin and James 2008; Billett 2002).

Consequently, the conceptual framework in Figure 1<sup>1</sup> was developed to show the complexity of evaluating the quality of VET teaching and to contextualise the project, but also to put boundaries around the project so that it was focused. This project is focusing on issues highlighted in the shaded boxes. In particular, we are differentiating between the quality of the student experience, student learning outcomes, student attainment and stakeholder satisfaction. These are often conflated, and while they are related, they can and should be differentiated. For example, while stakeholder satisfaction is related to the quality of the student experience, it cannot be the sole measure since students' experiences are always the result of complex factors, as discussed above. Student attainment and student learning outcomes are also related, however, students' learning outcomes cannot be measured just in terms of attainment if this is defined as achievement of units of competency or qualifications. It also includes broader learning outcomes that equip students with skills such as problem solving, the capacity to work in teams and good communication skills in the context of the student's occupation. Hopefully, broader learning outcomes also include those that help students to continue their studies in the same field, or to branch out into different areas. These differences will be discussed more fully in future reports.

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<sup>1</sup> Graphic by Richard James and Kerri-Lee Harris



The areas shaded in yellow represent the focus of the *Study on the Quality of Teaching in VET*

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the Study on the Quality of Teaching in VET

### ***What is the background to the project and why is it needed?***

Tertiary education policy has changed dramatically in the last 30 years: a unified system of universities was created through the merger of universities and colleges of advanced education in the late 1980s and 1990s; and, a national, industry-led VET system based on competency-based training models of curriculum was created from disparate pre-existing state systems (Goozee 2001). This established two sectors of education – a higher education and a VET system. However, the sectoral divide is blurring as a consequence of changes in society, the economy and the labour market and by government policies and funding mechanisms. The pace of change is increasing as the government seeks to create a more coherent tertiary education sector and to increase institutional diversification in a more competitive and marketised system (Commonwealth of Australia [CoA] 2009). The regulatory and quality assurance settings are also changing as government seeks to strengthen systemic and institutional quality assurance as tertiary education becomes more marketised (CoA 2009).

Australia, along with other countries, is seeking to increase the percentage of its population with higher-level qualifications to ensure that it remains competitive

within the global economy. The Australian government has set ambitious targets to increase participation in education; the attainment of educational qualifications to increase the skills and productivity of the workforce; and to promote social inclusion by ensuring that the most disadvantaged have better access to, and outcomes from, education and training (Bradley 2008; Commonwealth of Australia 2009). This will also increase the pace of change. All sectors of education are, as a consequence, focusing on the quality of teaching, teaching qualifications and continuing professional development as they try to respond to these changes.

The challenges facing VET are particularly complex. The blurring of the sectoral divide means that VET teachers are now required to teach VET in schools at the one end, and higher education programs at the other (Wheelahan, Moodie, Billett and Kelly 2009). There are different perceptions about the extent to which the sectors' purposes and missions overlap and the extent to which they should overlap, and these debates will continue. However, notwithstanding these debates, it is clear that these trends are accelerating and VET teachers must be prepared to teach programs that vary widely in level and type, in a variety of institutional, workplace and community contexts to students with extremely diverse learning needs. This means that the boundaries shaping VET are becoming more permeable.

The demands confronting VET teachers are considerably different since the first competencies for workplace trainers and assessors were developed in the 1990s (Simons, Harris and Smith 2006; Smith and Keating 2003). Previously, TAFE teachers were supported in many states to undertake teacher qualifications at university (and before that, at colleges of advanced education), which were "generally in-service training programs with participants undertaking training concurrently with their teaching". This, according to Garrick and Chappell (1996: 3), meant that "full-time TAFE teachers were recognised as having equivalent status to school teachers." With the exception of apprenticeships, they explain, informal, on-the-job training was relatively invisible. The workplace trainer competencies were in part developed to increase the quality of workplace training by ensuring that trainers were more skilled without relying so much on trial and error (Garrick and Chappell 1996: 3).

The workplace trainer competencies were introduced at a time of extensive reform in VET and higher education. Commencing in the late 1980s, government reforms to higher education sought to create a unified university system from the pre-existing system of universities and colleges of advanced education. Reforms to VET sought to develop a training market, an 'industry-led' system and competency-based training (CBT) as the mandated model of curriculum (Goozee 2001). This was presented as a need to move from a supply-driven to a demand-driven VET system by ensuring that VET delivered 'what industry wanted'. These reforms were in part a response to perceptions that TAFE was unresponsive to the needs of industry (Guthrie 2009: 6).

The Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training (AWT) was endorsed in 1998 and it became the required qualification for TAFE teachers, teachers in other registered training organisations (RTOs), and workplace trainers and assessors delivering assessment and/or training for accredited qualifications in the workplace. Its purposes included establishing parity between workplace training and on-campus training, reorienting VET's focus towards workplace learning, and ensuring that teachers understood CBT. Its introduction was an important plank of VET's quality

assurance processes as the means through which VET could assure that all teachers and workplace trainers at least held a minimum qualification (Clayton 2009: 7). Clayton (2009: 16) explains, “It was also seen as a means of shifting mindsets and changing cultures within registered training organisations.” As well, there were perceptions at the time that university programs for VET teachers were unresponsive to the changing demands on VET and that the VET sector needed its own qualification as a consequence.<sup>2</sup>

Smith and Keating (2003: 238-239) argue that the Certificate IV was also introduced because it was cheaper for state governments to fund their staff to undertake this rather than a longer and more expensive higher education qualification, and that the increasing autonomy of TAFE institutes in some states meant that decisions about teacher training were devolved to the institute level. The pre-eminence of the Certificate IV AWT was established by becoming a requirement of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). This meant that “The qualification has therefore become not only the minimum qualification required to teach in VET, but in some cases also the maximum required...” (Smith and Keating 2003: 239).

The Certificate IV AWT was replaced in 2004 by the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA). It was replaced in part because of concerns about the quality and integrity of AWT delivery, but also because of concerns about its intrinsic quality and focus and the extent to which it provided teachers with the knowledge and skills they needed. Clayton (2009: 7) explains that there were significant gaps in the Certificate IV AWT in pedagogy, theories of teaching and learning, and theoretically informed understandings of student diversity (see also Simons, Harris et al. 2006). Down et al. (2009: 3) explain that the Certificate IV TAA (and the training package of which it was part) was seen as an opportunity “to lift the standard of the qualification”. The new Certificate IV was redesigned with a greater emphasis on learning and the knowledge bases that were seen to be lacking in the Certificate IV AWT. The role of the Certificate IV TAA was extended beyond providing an initial entry qualification to meeting the needs of “existing practitioners seeking high levels of knowledge and skills” (Carnegie, cited in Clayton 2009: 18).

But the Certificate IV TAA has raised concerns similar to its predecessor. These include concerns about its delivery and integrity, and the extent to which it provides participants with the knowledge bases for “trainers in workplaces [or] teachers in institutional settings” (Clayton 2009: 17).<sup>3</sup> The Certificate IV TAA has just been reviewed by the Innovation & Business Skills Council (IBSA), the skills council with responsibility for the TAA. Clayton reports that IBSA is reaffirming the view that the Certificate IV is appropriate as an *entry level* qualification, and that it cannot be expected to:

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the descriptor for the NSW Vocational Graduate Diploma of Adult and Vocational Education says that: “Designed especially for the vocational sector, this Graduate Diploma of Adult and Vocational Education differs from many higher education programs by integrating theory and practice and focusing on issues of direct relevance to VET practitioners.” Arguably, this is the purpose behind most higher education programs for VET teachers.

<http://www.nci.tafensw.edu.au/courses/general%20education/4889-graduate-diploma-adult-vocational-education-91139NSW.htm> viewed 22 February 2010.

<sup>3</sup> See also Robertson (2008; 2009); Down (2009); and, the University of Ballarat (2009).

“provide a VET trainer and assessor with everything they need to know and be able to do. What it should do is provide both the essential elements of what is needed and a firm foundation on which to build further knowledge and skills, whether that comes from on-the-job-experience, or further learning or both.” (IBSA, cited in Clayton 2009: 17)

There are other VET teacher education qualifications, and as explained earlier, which are being surveyed in a current NCVET project. These include other qualifications in the TAA Training Package, such as the Diploma of TAA and specialist VET graduate qualifications. They also include state-based VET qualifications, such as the Victorian Diploma of Vocational Education and Training Practice, the Queensland Vocational Graduate Certificate in Leading Vocational Education, and the New South Wales Vocational Graduate Diploma of Adult and Vocational Education. The number of universities which offer undergraduate and postgraduate VET teacher programs and the number of available qualifications seems to have declined over the last few years. This may be a consequence of reduced demand resulting from the designation of the Certificate IV AWT and later the Certificate IV TAA as the required VET teaching qualification under the AQTF. However, many of those that do exist embed the Certificate IV TAA or Diploma TAA as part of their degrees or provide substantial credit towards their degrees for these qualifications (Down, De Luca et al. 2009; Smith and Bush 2006). It may also be that there has been an over supply of alternative VET related higher education providers and qualifications in a relatively thin market in which there has also been a decrease in the mandated requirements to pursue higher level qualifications for career advancement (and particularly ones at university level). It is therefore possible that many of the universities could not sustain viable student numbers for a number of their programs. NCVET is seeking enrolment data for 2008 and earlier from DEEWR to examine student numbers and characteristics for higher education qualifications and will report on this in due course.<sup>4</sup>

While these other VET teaching qualifications exist, the focus is on the Certificate IV TAA because it is the qualification that all VET teachers must have if they are to undertake teaching and assessment. The introduction of a compulsory competency-based teaching qualification at a certificate IV level was controversial, as was the broader introduction of CBT more generally. Many teachers were particularly aggrieved because they were required to undertake the Certificate IV regardless of their other teaching qualifications (Smith and Keating 2003: 241). They saw the introduction of the Certificate IV and CBT more broadly as attempts to ‘teacher-proof’ teaching by de-professionalising teachers by downgrading their qualifications and by reducing their capacity to determine the outcomes of learning through qualifications based on industry-specified units of competency (Kell 2006: 32).<sup>5</sup> In a report for Service Skills Australia on workforce development for VET practitioners in service industries, the University of Ballarat (2009: 23) says that there was little political advocacy for VET teachers throughout the 1990s, and that until recently

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<sup>4</sup> We would like to thank Hugh Guthrie from NCVET for this information. He also makes the following point “One could speculate that there is a market correction in progress back to a more sustainable range of higher education providers and qualifications” (personal communication).

<sup>5</sup> See Billett (2004: 22) for a discussion of ‘teacher-proofing’ in Australia, and Priestley (2002: 125) and Lauder, Brown et al. (2009: 56) for a discussion of similar reforms in the UK. See Harris (2002) for a discussion about the changes to teachers’ work and their responses to this.

“there has been little political will to improve VET teaching; during the 1990s VET practitioners were largely invisible in VET documents.”

Regardless of the perspective one has on these issues, it must be recognised that the introduction of CBT has been controversial and this is the context in which many teachers understand the notion of a competency-based certificate IV VET teaching qualification. In their high level review of training packages, Schofield and McDonald (2004: 33) argued that a ‘new settlement’ was needed in VET based on a shared sense of purpose. This needed to be underpinned by trust, and include less emphasis on regulation and compliance and more on empowering teachers as professionals.<sup>6</sup> The consequence is that a new consensus needs to be built about VET teaching qualifications if VET is to meet emerging needs. This cannot be done unless teachers are part of the process.

### ***What has changed? The demands on VET and VET teachers***

The importance of VET teaching and hence VET teaching qualifications and CPD programs has become visible once again because the scope and nature of VET is expanding as work changes, society becomes more complex, and VET is called upon to deliver government objectives. VET is now required to incorporate ‘green skills’ in all its qualifications, to embed literacy and numeracy and employability skills, to address the skill needs of emerging industries, to ensure that the Australian workforce has high skill levels in technology, and that students have the knowledge and skills they need to embark on educational pathways. All of this when employers reported high skill shortages prior to the Global Financial Crisis, a problem which is re-emerging as the economy recovers.

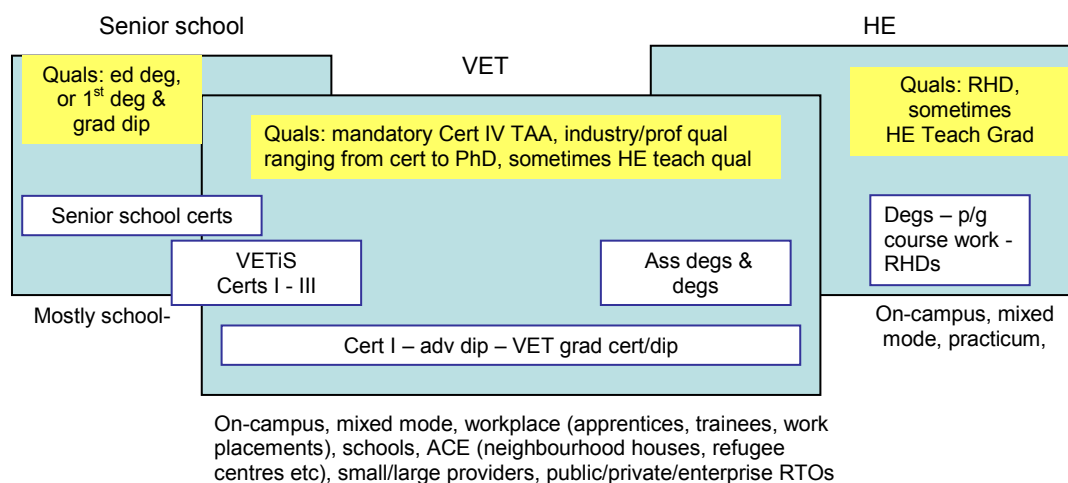
In particular, the magnitude of the government’s equity and expansion objectives has opened space to think about the nature of VET teaching. The government has set targets to halve the percentage of adults without a certificate III or above from 57% to 27% by 2020, and to double the number of diploma and advanced diploma completions in that time. Its higher education targets are to increase the percentage of students from low socio-economic (SES) backgrounds in higher education from around 16% in 2008 to 20% by 2020, and to increase the percentage of the population aged between 25-34 years with a bachelor degree or above from 32% in 2008 to 40% by 2025. Its school targets are to increase the school retention rate from 74% in 2007 to 90% by 2015, and to halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 or equivalent attainment by 2020 (Commonwealth of Australia 2009: 12). Commentators have argued that higher education will need VET’s support (particularly TAFE’s) to achieve its targets (Wheelahan, Moodie et al. 2009), and arguably, the school sector is unlikely to achieve its goals without VET’s support, particularly in supporting those young people who have not experienced success in schools (Pritchard and Anderson 2009).

The contexts VET teachers work in, the students they teach, and the qualifications they deliver are more diverse than those in higher education or schools. VET teaches

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<sup>6</sup> See also Guthrie et al. (2006); Guthrie (2009); and the 2008 OECD review of VET (Hoeckel, Field, Justesen and Kim 2008) for discussions about the need to move away from compliance cultures.

qualifications ranging from Certificates I to VET graduate certificates and diplomas,<sup>7</sup> and it also has new roles to teach senior school certificates at one end of the scale, and higher education associate degrees and degrees at the other. In contrast, while schools may teach VET as part of their VET in schools programs, they do so within the context of senior school certificates. Universities may teach VET diplomas either in their own right or through a company they have established for this purpose, but this is for a tiny amount of provision and they mostly teach degrees, coursework postgraduate programs and research higher degrees (Moodie, Wheelahan, Billett and Kelly 2009). The contexts of school, VET and higher education teachers are illustrated in figure 2.



**Figure 2: Diversity of teaching contexts & teacher qualifications**

Figure 2 also shows that the contexts in which VET teachers are required to teach are more diverse than either schools or universities. School teachers mostly teach in schools, while university teachers mostly teach in universities, although they may support their students in the workplace (such as practicums, work-placements or internships). University teachers also teach in distance, online and mixed modes (as do VET teachers), but the range of type of providers is much narrower than is the case in VET. VET teachers teach in public, private and enterprise providers<sup>8</sup> that may be large or small. They may teach on or off campus or both, in many different types of workplaces, in prisons, and in a range of community settings, such as neighbourhood houses and refugee support centres. Moreover, while schools and universities deal with diverse student populations with diverse learning needs, this is on a different level to that which confronts VET. VET engages early school leavers and young people who are alienated and disengaged from education, school completers with aspirations to go to university, students from Indigenous backgrounds (more so than higher education), refugees and migrants with little English, students with poor literacy and numeracy skills, adults from disadvantaged backgrounds, employed and

<sup>7</sup> VET graduate certificates and diplomas are relatively new qualifications; they were added to the Australian Qualifications Framework in 2005 and they are not yet a widespread qualification. Associate degrees were added as a higher education qualification in 2004 (AQFAB 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Enterprise providers are those companies that have become registered as RTOs to offer accredited training to their own employees.

unemployed workers, workers on the job and apprentices and trainees (on and off the job), welfare recipients, highly skilled workers seeking particular skills or higher level qualifications, those seeking qualifications for their current jobs and those who are seeking qualifications for different jobs. Sometimes these categories of students overlap – and sometimes they do so in the one program and the one classroom or learning site.

The demands on VET teachers are more complex than either schools or higher education, and the qualifications they are required to have vary depending on the level at which they are teaching. This means there is no uniformity in their base level qualification – at least as is the case with schools (as is shown in Figure 2). School teachers must have four years' pre-service training, either in a 4-year education degree, or a 3-year discipline degree and a 1-year education graduate diploma. Higher education teachers are at least degree qualified but a research higher degree is regarded as the key qualification. While the numbers are still small, increasing numbers also have a graduate certificate of six months or a 1-year diploma in higher education teaching, and the Australian government is considering using this as an indicator for universities to demonstrate that they are implementing professional development that enhances the quality of teaching (DEEWR 2009: 20). VET teachers are required to have a relevant occupational qualification at the same level or above the level at which they are teaching, plus a Certificate IV TAA as their teaching qualification, which might take from three to six months.<sup>9</sup> In practice, this means that VET teachers' occupational/ professional/ disciplinary qualifications range from certificates to PhDs, and while they are required to have a Certificate IV TAA, a growing number have teaching or education qualifications ranging from bachelors to masters (Mlotkowski and Guthrie 2010). VET teachers' qualifications are covered in more detail in the next section.

### ***Who are VET teachers?***

We know less about VET teachers than teachers in the other two sectors of education.<sup>10</sup> In a recent NCVET report on the VET workforce, Mlotkowski and Guthrie (2010) explain that the data on the VET workforce are (very) problematic, and while an overall picture may be possible, this must be viewed cautiously.

Mlotkowski and Guthrie (2010: 15) distinguish between VET professionals and VET practitioners. Practitioners are those directly associated with teaching, learning and assessment (which includes developing courses/modules), while professionals encompass practitioners, but also include staff involved in management, support for

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<sup>9</sup> However, delivery can range anywhere from a few days (with much 'self-directed learning') to a year part-time.

<sup>10</sup> For example, DEEWR publishes annual statistics on staff in universities, and this includes information about the system overall as well as individual universities. See: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Publications/HEStatistics/Publications/Pages/Staff.aspx>, viewed 27 February 2010. The states publish at least some information about teachers – see the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/publ/research/publ/Brochure2009July-brc-v1.0-20090714.pdf> viewed 27 February 2010. The ABS also publishes some information about school teachers, see ABS (2008).

teaching, training and assessment and other associated activities. They explain that in addition, there are staff who work in general roles such as accounting, marketing and maintenance. In this report we refer to practitioners as teachers, as they are directly engaged in teaching and learning.

Most VET professionals are teachers (almost 60%), and TAFE has a higher proportion of staff who are teachers than other VET providers (Mlotkowski and Guthrie 2010: 18). The data on the age of the VET workforce (which includes TAFE and staff in other providers) are at a very broad level, and this shows that in 2005 some 37.6% of VET professionals were aged between 45 to 64 years (Mlotkowski and Guthrie 2010: 19). VET teachers are likely to be older on average than the workforce as a whole because they usually come to VET teaching following a career in industry. TAFE teachers are, however, much older: in 2006 some 66.9% of TAFE teachers were aged 45 years or over, and 28.4% were aged 55 years or over (Mlotkowski and Guthrie 2010: 20). Smith and Hawke (2008: 18) report that the aging of the teaching workforce is a preoccupation of TAFE institutes, and that attracting, recruiting and retaining staff, particularly teachers, is an all-consuming priority. They explain that many TAFE institutes in their project reported that the average age of their teachers was well over 50 years.<sup>11</sup>

Mlotkowski and Guthrie (2010: 22) report that in 2006 there were roughly equal numbers of male and female TAFE teachers, although more male than female teachers were employed full-time. Almost 47% of TAFE teachers were full-time and almost 49% part-time. This understates the percentage of part-time teachers because the data only report respondents' *main* job. Using a different source of data, Nechvoglod et al. (2010: 31) report that in 2008 almost 57% of TAFE teachers were employed on a casual/sessional or temporary/contract basis, and around 62% of women teachers were employed on this basis.

The data on the qualifications held by VET professionals and VET teachers are contradictory, so it is difficult to make any definitive statements. Mlotkowski and Guthrie (2010: 23) report that according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Education and Training (SET), VET professionals in TAFE were more likely to hold post-school qualifications than professionals in other RTOs. Using the SET data they explain that:

“Between 2001 and 2005, the percentage of VET professionals in TAFE holding a postgraduate degree more than doubled,<sup>12</sup> while the percentage holding a bachelor degree increased from 13.1% to 21.1%. The percentage of VET professionals in TAFE with a VET qualification decreased from 53.1% to 38.8%, while the percentage without a post-school qualification decreased from 17.9% to 6.4%. At the same time, there has been a relative decrease in the proportion of those VET professionals holding no post-school qualification in the other organisations that provide VET training and small increases in

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<sup>11</sup> Using a different data source, Nechvoglod (2010: 31) report that almost 75% of the TAFE workforce was aged 40 years or over in 2008, with almost 45% aged 50 years or over. In contrast, they explain that just over 48% of the Australian workforce was aged 40 years and over, and just over 25% were aged 50 years and over.

<sup>12</sup> According to Figure 7 (p. 25) it appears that around 34% hold a postgraduate qualification.

those holding both postgraduate and bachelor degree qualifications, as well as VET qualifications.” (Mlotkowski and Guthrie 2010: 23)<sup>13</sup>

Mlotkowski and Guthrie explain that the SET does not allow a more fine-grained analysis of the VET workforce. They compared the SET data with data from the 2006 Census and show that around 2.5% of TAFE teachers held no post-school qualification, around 39% held a VET qualification as their highest qualification, 35% had a degree, and around 24% held a postgraduate qualification (Mlotkowski and Guthrie 2010: Figure 8).<sup>14</sup>

The data on *educational* qualifications held by VET teachers are even more difficult to interpret. The data are not consolidated comprehensively at jurisdictional level for TAFE in a number of jurisdictions, and the data about teachers in private providers is even more incomplete (see Mlotkowski and Guthrie 2010). Using that data which is available, Mlotkowski and Guthrie (2010: 26) show that according to SET, in 2005 around 59% of TAFE teachers held *no* educational qualification, 10% held a VET qualification in education and training, and just over 31% had an education and training qualification that was at degree level or higher. In contrast, in the same year, just over 90% of VET teachers in other RTOs held no education and training qualification, around 2% held a VET qualification, and around 5% held a degree or higher. Mlotkowski and Guthrie (2010: Figure 9) did not report numbers, but represented these percentages in a figure so the percentages reported here are approximations.

These outcomes are particularly perplexing given that it is a requirement of the AQTF that all teachers have a Certificate IV TAA, or that they are supervised by someone with this qualification. It would seem that the SET is reporting the highest educational qualification held by teachers and so it is possible that those with degrees also have a Certificate IV TAA – but this is not made clear by the data. It may also be the case that some teachers are undertaking the Certificate IV while teaching, but this would not explain why the percentage with no education qualification is so high. The percentage with *no* educational qualification is alarming, particularly that reported for RTOs other than TAFE.

Simons et al. (2009) explain that careers in VET are highly mobile as staff seek job satisfaction and job security. Many VET teachers start as part-time or casual teachers and move from there to a contract, and finally to a permanent position (Harris, Simons and Clayton 2005: 28; Simons, Harris *et al.* 2009: 29). Simons et al. (2009: 29) found

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<sup>13</sup> They don't directly report percentages of qualifications held by professionals in other RTOs, but it appears from Figure 7 (p. 25) that around in 2005 some 25% held no post-school qualification, around 32.5% held a VET qualification as their highest qualification, 25% held a degree, and around 18% held a postgraduate qualification as their highest qualification.

<sup>14</sup> They do not report this in numbers, but represent it in a graph, so the percentages reported here are based on approximations. Using different data, Nechvoglod et al. (2010: Table 10) differentiate between TAFE teachers, TAFE professionals and non-teachers. They explain that in 2008, just over 31% of TAFE teachers had a certificate IV or below as their highest qualification, around 42% had a degree or diploma, while almost 26% had a postgraduate qualification. In contrast, just over 12% of professionals had a certificate IV or below, almost 42% had a diploma or degree, while almost 46% had a postgraduate qualification. Almost 19% of non-teachers had completed secondary school qualifications as their highest qualification, while around 38% had a certificate IV or below, around 32% had a diploma or degree, and almost 12% had a postgraduate qualification.

that this trajectory has become more widespread in recent years. Of the teachers included in their project, only a minority of teachers (23%) who commenced teaching from 1997 – 2006 started in permanent positions, indicative of the steady decrease in continuing positions over the last 40 years. Teachers in this group are also less likely to have moved into permanent positions (48%) compared to teachers who started in earlier periods. Around 31% of these teachers were full-time. About 41% of all teachers in their project continued in some form of employment outside VET when they first started teaching, compared to almost half (48%) of teachers in the 1997 – 2006 group (Simons, Harris et al. 2009: 23). The percentage of all teachers in the project still holding another job at the time of the survey (2006) had dropped to 21% (Simons, Harris et al. 2009: .28).

Some 59% of teachers reported that they saw themselves in VET in five years time, while 38% were unsure. Simons et al. (2009: 33) also included other categories of staff in their study (educational managers, general staff, and those in combined educational manager/teacher roles and combined general staff/teacher roles) and overall 41% were either planning to leave VET or were unsure whether they would still be in VET in five years time. They explain that this relatively high proportion may be because people working in VET are often older (particularly teachers) when they commence employment because VET is often a post-initial career, however 43% of their participants aged between 21 – 34 years were planning to leave within five years or were unsure whether they would stay, while 34% of those aged between 35 – 49 years were in this category. While it is difficult to say whether the Simons et al. sample was indicative of the VET workforce overall (and VET teachers in particular) because the data about the VET workforce are so poor, their sample was quite large (1095 respondents from 43 RTOs and 589 of these were teachers), and may well indicate broader trends in VET.

We need much better data if we are to understand the nature of the VET workforce and their professional development requirements. Data on teachers' qualifications are collected because all RTOs must report on the qualifications held by their staff as part of their AQTF audits. However, these data are held by the states and they are not aggregated nationally, and sometimes not aggregated at the state level. There has not been the impetus to get these data collections consolidated or comprehensively collected at the state level, and thus also at the federal level. This position needs to be reconsidered and the deficiencies in the data must be addressed so that strategies to renew the VET workforce are based on evidence.

The combination of the aging of the permanent TAFE workforce, together with the high percentage of full-time temporary, part-time, contract, and casual teachers poses particular problems for TAFE and, given the predominance of TAFE within VET, for VET as a whole. While there is a need for organisational agility, it is also important to build a core teaching workforce. In discussing the future of the VET workforce in Western Australia, Guthrie et al. (2006: 17) make a point that arguably applies to the whole of Australia when they explain that much of the knowledge and skills unique to VET are vested in the permanent teacher workforce. They explain that:

“If current trends continue, a significant proportion of the permanent practitioner workforce will retire in the next 5 to 10 years. Given the core role played by these permanent staff, the potential scale of the exodus could place

undue strains on the system. The degree of impact will depend on the quality of succession planning, including recruitment strategies to bring in new blood, and mentoring programs to facilitate the sharing of tacit knowledge and specific skills. The difficulty of involving casual practitioners in activities that do not occur during teaching time, such as professional development, team meetings and business unit administrative work, could mitigate against members of this large group stepping in to take the place of those departing.” (Guthrie, Perkins et al. 2006: 17).

These issues are brought into starker relief in light of the government’s expansion targets for VET which will require growth in the VET system.

### ***What do VET teachers need to know and be able to do and is it different from schools or higher education?***

Arguments that teaching in VET is fundamentally different from teaching in either schools or higher education was a key driver for the development of teaching qualifications offered by the VET sector. It is instructive to compare ‘idealised’ notions of teaching in each sector to identify differences and commonalities, while recognising that the nature of teaching in all sectors is contested and that it always will be so. This is because defining the ideal attributes of teachers and teaching is part of the process of identifying ‘what matters’ and of constructing idealised notions about the type of citizens that should be produced, and this too will always be contested (Bernstein 2000).

Such idealised notions are represented in standards for accreditation for teachers, where they exist, or in criteria for awards in the absence of standards. All Australian states and territories have registration and standards for school teachers, with the exception of the ACT, which seems to be in the process of developing these.<sup>15</sup> The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership<sup>16</sup> was established by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEEDYA) in January 2010 and it is developing national standards for teaching and school leadership and a system of national teacher registration.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, the existing states’ teacher standards are similar and this shows a high level of shared understandings about the nature of teaching and teachers – at least among the states’ registration bodies.

The higher education sector does not have standards for teaching in universities – yet. The Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) is in the process of developing standards for discipline specific learning outcomes,<sup>18</sup> but this has not extended to developing standards for the profession of teaching in universities. The government is, however, seeking to develop indicators of quality teaching in universities (see DEEWR 2009). The ALTC administers awards for teaching

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<sup>15</sup> For the ACT see: [http://www.det.act.gov.au/employment/teacher\\_registration\\_project](http://www.det.act.gov.au/employment/teacher_registration_project) viewed 9 March 2010. See Appendix A for web links to the states’ teacher registration boards and standards.

<sup>16</sup> See <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/aitsl/go>

<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/aitsl/webdav/site/aitslsite/shared/Homepage/AITSL%20-%20Letter%20of%20Expectation%20-%202014%20December%202010.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> See ALTC <http://www.altc.edu.au/standards>

excellence on behalf on the Commonwealth, and it has developed criteria for those awards. Given the similarities between the states' school teacher standards any could be chosen as the basis of comparison with the ALTC criteria, however, for convenience the Victorian Institute of Teaching standards have been selected. The Victorian standards are divided into three domains: professional knowledge; professional practice; and professional engagement. Each standard is elaborated with a range of elements.<sup>19</sup> They are as follows:

Professional knowledge:

1. Teachers know how students learn and how to teach them effectively.
2. Teachers know the content they teach.
3. Teachers know their students.

Professional practice

4. Teachers plan and assess for effective learning.
5. Teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments.
6. Teachers use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.

Professional engagement

7. Teachers reflect on, evaluate and improve their professional knowledge and practice.
8. Teachers are active members of their profession.

The ALTC has five criteria, and these are similarly elaborated, although in a more discursive form (See Appendix A). In summary, the ALTC criteria are:

1. Approaches to teaching that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn
2. Development of curricula and resources that reflect a command of the field
3. Approaches to assessment and feedback that foster independent learning,
4. Respect and support for the development of students as individuals
5. Scholarly activities that have influenced and enhanced learning and teaching

Both the Victorian teacher standards and the ALTC criteria value knowledge of students, inclusive approaches to teaching, knowledge of content, pedagogic knowledge, assessing for learning, and contributing to the profession. The Victorian teacher standards emphasise theoretical insights into learning and teaching to a greater extent, but overall they emphasise similar things. Of course, both can be (and are) critiqued, but to engage in such an analysis here is beyond the scope of this paper; the point is to identify that which is 'officially' valued in teaching.

There are no similar officially 'sanctioned' definitions of teaching or what teachers are required to know or do in VET. Perhaps the closest we can come to is the list of units of competency in the Certificate IV TAA, as these define workplace tasks and roles that teachers are required to undertake. The Certificate IV TAA consists of 12

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<sup>19</sup> See the following for the elements associated with each standard:  
[http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1752\\_Standards-for-Graduating-Teachers-jan-09.pdf](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1752_Standards-for-Graduating-Teachers-jan-09.pdf) viewed 9 March 2010

units of competency clustered into 4 fields and 2 electives. These are presented in Table 1. The Certificate IV is under review and the revised certificate will contain 7 core units and 3 electives.<sup>20</sup>

**Table 1: Certificate IV units of competency<sup>21</sup>**

Field	Unit of competency
Learning environment	Work effectively in vocational education and training
	Foster and promote an inclusive learning culture
	Ensure a healthy and safe learning environment
Learning design	Use Training Packages to meet client needs
	Design and develop learning programs
Delivery and facilitation	Plan and organise group-based delivery
	Facilitate work-based learning
	Facilitate individual learning
Assessment	Plan and organise assessment
	Assess competence
	Develop assessment tools
	Participate in assessment validation
2 electives	

One key difference between the Certificate IV and the Victorian standards or the ALTC criteria is that the latter two define attributes of teachers and teaching, whereas the units of competency define tasks and roles. While there are limits to this comparison, it provides some insights that are helpful. The Victorian teacher standards, ALTC criteria and units of competency in the Certificate IV are all different things with different bases, but they reflect the orientation of the sectors. In schools and higher education this is more focused on teachers and teaching and on students (although one unit in the Certificate IV is about creating inclusive learning cultures), whereas the Certificate IV is based on training that focuses on the different elements of teaching (as is consistent with competency-based training), but less on the nature of the professional who engages in it. The Victorian standards and the ALTC criteria emphasise being part of, and making a contribution to, the profession. They both also emphasise the importance of content – this is covered in the next section.

A criticism that can be made of all three is that they miss the wood for the trees and underplay the complexity of teaching and the knowledge bases required for teaching (Lucas 2007).<sup>22</sup> Turner-Bisset (1999: 52) argues that:

“...teaching is a deeply complex, intellectual and practical activity. It is a creative act, in which the expert teacher selects from the store of experience and repertoire of teaching strategies and representations, the most appropriate ones for her or his purposes. The danger in focusing only on teaching skills and competences or standards, as they are now termed, is that it ignores the complex reasoning, thinking and synthesis which underpins the best teaching.

<sup>20</sup> See the IBSA website: <http://www.ibsa.org.au/news-and-projects/news/tabid/112/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/19/Review-of-TAA40104-Certificate-IV-Training-and-Assessment.aspx> viewed 2 March 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Source: <http://www.ntis.gov.au/Default.aspx?trainingpackage/TAA04/qualification/TAA40104/rules> viewed 2 March 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Less so perhaps with the Victorian standards, although Turner-Bisset’s criticisms concern attempts to precisely specify school teacher standards.

Equipped with a complete map of knowledge bases, the student teacher could have a better grasp of what she or he needs to know and understand, in addition to what she or he needs to do.”

While each sector may have a different idealised notion of teachers, this does not tell us if there are *substantive* differences in teaching in the sectors. It is argued that they are different because VET students are different (as discussed above), that VET teachers need to teach in a broader range of modes, that they need to be technologically literate and that rather than being subject specialists, VET teachers are required to have knowledge of the interconnectedness of the workplace as well as their own specific vocational expertise (see Lucas 2007 for a discussion of these issues in the UK). While this may be true of VET teachers, it may be that these are attributes that teachers in other sectors are required to have, particularly those teaching VET in schools, and those teaching the professions in universities.

Another argument that is made to differentiate VET teaching from teaching in schools and higher education is that the role of VET teachers has expanded with the introduction of CBT. Smith and Keating (2003: 232) say that:

“In general they are now much more responsible for student outcomes, since students’ achievements are measured not by what they know but by what they can do. In a self-paced system, teachers may be involved in developing learning guides, since Training Package support materials may not be viewed as good enough to serve as student workbooks on their own. Teachers are also more likely to be involved in working in a team with other teachers to plan and manage the learning for a large group of students, rather than simply turning up to teach a particular class at a particular time.”

Mitchell *et al.* (2006: 6) argue that teachers need to be reskilled because the demands upon them have changed: the contexts in which learning take place are more diverse and now include workplace learning as well as flexible modes of delivery. Teachers have to adapt to new assessment practices and to a more diverse range of clients, which includes industry, employers, and individual students, and they have to be able to ‘customise’ learning appropriately (see also Harris, Simons *et al.* 2005). They need to be innovative, flexible and creative, be able to understand and apply adult learning theory and principles and empower learners through this process (Clayton and Blom 2004; Mitchell, Chappell *et al.* 2006; Harris, Simons *et al.* 2005; Smith and Blake 2005). The extent to which these attributes differ from those in schools and higher education needs to be explored considering that both sectors emphasise ‘student-centred learning’, and higher education increasingly emphasises the need to work more closely with industry.

The University of Ballarat (2009: 16), in research on teaching in the service skills industries, identifies ‘ideal’ attributes of VET practitioners. These include attributes specific to teaching/training and generic skills. Attributes specific to teaching include:

- “An appropriate balance between industry knowledge and skills and educational knowledge and skills...
- Information technology skills...
- Monitoring students’ progress and regular report of student progress...

- Respect and empathy for students...
- Passion for the industry and commitment to quality...
- Training delivery and assessment skills..."

Generic attributes included: "high level literacy skills....; flexibility...effective communication skills...exchanging ideas on practice...a personal disposition towards constant learning and continual improvements in teaching and learning...."

Guthrie et al. (2006: 37) identified the roles, skills and requirements of VET professionals for the future, and they organised these under nine categories which are:<sup>23</sup>

1. Teaching, learning and assessment expertise
2. Program and resource development skills
3. Strategic enquiry
4. Technology
5. Business and client focus...
6. Vocational expertise and industry currency
7. VET system knowledge
8. Management and leadership
9. Personal qualities and attributes.

Misko and Priest (2009: 11) reported on students' suggestions for improving their VET experience and this included improvements to:

- Learning support;
- The quality of performance, self-organisation and subject interest;
- Communication with students, teaching staff and employers;
- Knowledge and practical industry experience, fairness and consistency; and,
- Behaviour management strategies for dealing with disruption.

Students also provided suggestions to the way in which teaching and learning activities could be improved and in a range of other categories. This demonstrates that the quality of students' experience depends on multiple factors.

As discussed in an earlier section, government objectives have increased the role of VET teachers beyond training for specific workplace tasks and roles to include literacy and numeracy skills, green skills, skill in technology, employability skills and so forth. This raises the question of whether being an industry expert is a necessary but not sufficient basis for being a VET teacher. Another question which is raised by Guthrie et al. (2006: 44) is the extent to which teachers are being asked to be 'superheroes' in the expectations that are made of new teachers, but also in the multiple roles they are expected to play as more experienced teachers.

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<sup>23</sup> See also Corben and Thomson (2001) who discuss attributes of great teachers. They say that there are five major clusters of attributes: 1. learner focus; 2. knowledge and currency; 3. teaching and learning methodologies; 4. personal attributes, beliefs and values; and, 5. major influences on teacher development, which is not so much an attribute of teachers, as the factors that help shape their practices.

Related to this, Mitchell and Ward (2010) differentiate between foundation, specialist and advanced VET practitioners and they argue that these different roles need to be better understood, and that different types of CPD are required for each category, and for further specialisations within categories. They have used this to develop a commercial CPD framework for RTOs. The theoretical model they have developed needs to be further explored as part of research on teacher development, along with other frameworks that are emerging. While their approach has much to offer, the theoretical frameworks that are used to develop CPD models depend on conceptions about teachers' roles and the knowledge, skills and attributes they need. It is not clear that there is a shared understanding of these questions within VET. For example, while there may be agreement about the need to distinguish between foundation and advanced VET teachers, the specialist categories are not recognised at the moment in policy or in the literature, and the content that is invested in each type of category needs to be debated and discussed – and this may well change the categories themselves.

These are all questions that will be explored in the research, along with questions about the differences and similarities in teaching in schools, VET and higher education.

### *Is teaching generic?*

The similarities between the Victorian teacher standards and the ALTC criteria seem to promote a notion that teaching and learning to teach are generic. However, *what* is to be taught matters. This is emphasised in both the Victorian standards and the ALTC criteria by specifying the importance of content knowledge. This emphasis is lacking from the Certificate IV TAA. However, content knowledge is different from pedagogic knowledge of how to teach that content. At issue is the extent to which the same pedagogic approaches can be applied in all contexts.

Lee S. Shulman (2004: 92-93), a learning theorist, argues that teachers need content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts and “knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds.” He later reworked his approach to emphasise the contexts of teaching and learning communities that accentuate “deliberation, collaboration, reciprocal scaffolding, and distributing expertise” as necessary sites for the development of accomplished teachers (Shulman and Shulman 2004: 265). Contexts of learning are critical because “the ever-important content differences can be swamped by other critical features of the context” (Shulman and Shulman 2004: 269). However, “An accomplished teacher must understand what must be taught, as well as how to teach it” (Shulman and Shulman 2004: 262), and this requires a deep knowledge of the discipline, its relationship to other areas of knowledge, and how to engage students in learning that knowledge.

Gardner (2004: 234) explains that teachers must develop modes of representing crucial ideas and concepts in each discipline or occupational area if students are to have access to these ideas. But teachers have to do more than this. They must have high level content knowledge if they are to *select* appropriate concepts from within

the discipline/occupational area, relate this to students' knowledge, and the processes of learning that are needed if students are to internalise these representations as their own. These theorists are talking about teaching those who will teach in schools. Similar arguments are also made in higher education. Neumann et al. (2002) argue that the disciplines differ in their teaching and learning processes. They say that 'pure' and 'applied' and 'hard' and 'soft' disciplines are distinguished (broadly speaking) by the social purpose of the discipline, the structure of knowledge, the cognitive demands made on students, the kinds of outcomes that are expected and associated teaching, learning and assessment practices. They argue that ignoring these differences between the disciplines by trying to fit them all into one mould by, for example, stipulating the same approaches to assessment or course design may undermine learning rather than enhance it (Neumann, Parry et al. 2002: 414).<sup>24</sup>

Debates in VET about teaching and learning have emphasised *processes* of workplace learning and de-emphasised *what* is to be learnt. Sfard (1998) explains that these theoretical debates arise because learning theories fall into two main categories; one emphasises learning as a process of participation, whereas the other emphasises learning as an acquisition – acquiring knowledge and skills as products (outcomes). She argues that learning must be both a process of participation and a process of acquisition. Such arguments reflect debates about the extent to which knowledge modes are now based on interdisciplinarity and the superseding of the academic canon (Fisher and Webb 2006: 339). This gives rise to debates about whether teachers are now facilitators rather than subject experts (Boud 2006) based on notions that meaning is constructed by students and not transmitted by teachers (Steward 2009). These are debates that will be left to another time, however it is clear that *what* is to be taught matters, even if the boundaries between subjects, disciplines and occupations have changed and are more permeable than in the past.

Reforms to the initial training of further education (FE) teachers in the UK have emphasised the importance of teachers' subject specialisms, and FE teacher education programs must now include pedagogy in teaching in the specialist area (Ofsted 2009). This is similar to school teacher education in Australia; graduate diplomas of education for school teachers include subjects in teaching in the specialist area, even though student teachers with degrees are assumed to be experts in the content of that area. The UK approach has been critiqued for imposing school teacher education on further education (Fisher and Webb 2006; Lucas 2007; Maxwell 2009), but the problem of how students access subject specific knowledge still arises. Maxwell (2009: 475) argues that implementing subject-focused initial teacher education:

“... in a sector where teachers have much broader roles and learners, rather than subject discipline, are the focus for organising teaching, is inevitably problematic not least in terms of how subject pedagogic knowledge can be accessed and who can adequately support trainees in accessing this knowledge.”

Arguably, this dilemma also arises for those teaching the professions in universities. The issue of subject specialism is a difficult question that has not been addressed in VET in Australia. The emphasis is on ensuring teachers maintain their industry

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<sup>24</sup> See also Muller (2009).

currency but not on the *pedagogy* of teaching for that industry. This requires complex knowledge of the workplace, but also of the knowledge base that underpins practice and the pedagogy of teaching in that area. As Steward points out in discussing the learning and skills (or the FE) sector in the UK, teachers have dual professional roles as specialists in their areas and as teachers. While advancing constructivist theories of knowledge and teaching and learning, she explains, in advising teachers in the learning and skills sector, that they must:

“...tell learners the ‘rules’ in your subject, the basic theories, why some aspects are important and others considered out of date or of no consequence in the workplace and how new information in your specialist area is developed, e.g. through controlled experiments, testing new ideas or trialling different work practices. You do this by embedding ... ideas, theories and principles, into your sessions and devising learning activities that draw on learners' prior knowledge and which support their approach to learning.”

In discussing teacher education programs for VET teachers in Sweden, Lemar (2008) explains that teacher training programs consist of a general and a specialist component. VET teachers are exempted from undertaking the specialist component because they are assumed to be vocational experts in that area based on their professional experience, expertise and qualifications. This is the same in many higher education programs in Australia. Lemar argues that the irony is that this may contribute to devaluing teachers' knowledge because it is not visible in teacher education programs (as is, say, mathematics in a secondary education teaching qualification) and therefore not researched and developed in the same way. He explains that such teachers may not come into contact with anyone in their teacher education program (staff or other students) who share the same occupational area except perhaps during work placements, and they may not have much contact with others in the same area throughout their careers. He makes the point that teachers in more academic areas would not experience this in their teacher education. While they may be subject experts in their area, they would not be exempted from undertaking studies in the pedagogy of their specialist area, and it would not be suggested that they should be exempted. This is not an argument that *all* teacher education should be within disciplinary or occupational domains, because student teachers enjoy and benefit from the interaction they get from being part of wider communities with others from a range of backgrounds (Orr and Simmons 2010). This also helps student teachers to make connections beyond their specialism. However, it may be that in Australia this has been at the expense of connecting with others *within* the specialism.

The issue thus goes beyond maintaining industry currency. Maintaining the (changing) knowledge base underpinning practice and the pedagogy associated with different occupational areas is difficult when this is not included in VET teacher education programs. Simons et al. (2006: 7) argue that in Australia, there appears “to be a distinct lack of specific references to the demands of preparing workers for particular industries. The absence of approaches to teaching and learning which take into account specific contexts can leave the way open for simplistic technical approaches (such as the uncritical application of learning styles across all settings) to be applied when there is little existing empirical support to suggest that these interventions will promote quality teaching and learning.” The University of Ballarat

(2009: 21) distinguishes between *industry* engagement and *pedagogical* engagement. These are issues that need to be explored in Australia.

### ***Implications for qualifications and CPD***

The changing demands on VET have implications for the types of qualifications that are needed. One issue that will be explored in the research is the extent to which one teaching qualification is appropriate, and if it is not, the kinds of qualifications that are needed. It is clear that while the levels of complexity for all VET teachers have increased, the demands made on teachers are different depending on the roles that they play and the kinds of programs they teach in. For example, teachers teaching VET in schools, or school students in VET institutions will need support to undertake their roles. Pritchard and Anderson (2009: 34) argue that VET teachers' knowledge and skills "needs to be enriched if the special needs of disadvantaged young learners are to be addressed effectively." They say "...TAFE teachers would benefit from exposure to pedagogical theories and approaches explicitly designed to re-engage young learners who have been disadvantaged by prior educational experiences" (Pritchard and Anderson 2009: 35).<sup>25</sup> Similarly, the demands on those teaching higher education programs in VET may mean that their professional development needs are more similar to those teaching in universities, particularly in developing their subject knowledge and deepening their scholarship in their area (Wheelahan, Moodie et al. 2009). The demands on those teaching refugees English or those teaching in prisons may be quite different to those teaching in high level diplomas, or those who are workplace trainers and assessors. One question that is of particular importance to the project is how to support beginning teachers straight from industry so that they have some idea of 'what to do on Monday' and survive their first year of teaching, while undertaking studies towards qualifications that will equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to become accomplished teachers.

The project will also be informed by the extensive research on continuing professional development in VET, particularly that undertaken by the 'consortium' of seven research programs conducted over two and a half years and funded by the NCVET. Broadly speaking, this covered professional development, provider capability, building learning workplaces in VET, human resource development and leadership and workforce development.<sup>26</sup>

The research undertaken by this consortium provides insights into the limitations of existing continuing professional development programs in VET, and the types of programs that are needed. Simons et al. (2009) argue that much more planning is required to support teachers moving from industry to teaching in VET, particularly given the high rate of casualisation. They argue that professional development should

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<sup>25</sup> See Wright et al. (2006: 64) for a discussion of the challenges for young students in FE colleges in the UK in navigating the cultural differences between school and college, and the issues this raises for teachers. See Orr (2010) on the implications for initial teacher training in FE colleges arising from the UK government's policy of attracting more 14-16 year olds into vocational courses. It would seem that while there are many similarities, different challenges arise for teachers teaching young students in schools (such as VET in schools) and those teaching young people in VET institutions, even if they are still studying towards senior school certificates.

<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/projects/10345.html> viewed 3 March 2010.

help staff develop the knowledge and skills they need to enhance their careers and not just to do their current job. This is critical for the industry to keep staff, and to support staff in new roles, particularly given the high mobility of staff within VET. In a separate institutional research project on the professional development available to casual staff, Francisco (2008) found that casual staff do not get the same access to professional development as permanent staff. This is particularly the case for professional development on VET pedagogy and their teaching role, which is very concerning given that casuals carry a high proportion of the teaching load in VET.

Moreover, while staff value the opportunity to undertake professional development (Simons, Harris et al. 2006; Mitchell and Ward 2010), not all professional development is highly regarded. Hawke (2008) found that 'top-down' workforce development programs in large RTOs can lead to local practices that are different from their intention. In the view of some staff, staff training and staff development have become too closely associated with performance management. Mitchell and Ward (2010) found that there was a significant gap in the skills that teachers needed and the professional development that was available to them.

A key finding from the consortium research is that professional development needs to be integrated with workforce development (Guthrie and Clayton 2010; Chappell and Hawke 2008; Hawke 2008; Clayton, Fisher, Harris, Bateman and Brown 2008; Harris, Clayton and Chappell 2007; Callan, Mitchell, Clayton and Smith 2007; Harris, Cooper, Robertson and Clark 2009). This is also found in the UK (Lucas and Unwin 2009). For example, Bathmaker and Avis (2005: 61) found that workplace learning, particularly placements for trainee teachers, can lead to alienation rather than inclusion in communities of practice. This arises when trainee teachers are required to become reflective practitioners where workloads and institutional processes are not conducive to teaching, and more experienced teachers develop a culture of survival rather than engagement. Responding to this requires a reflexivity that goes beyond an individual focus on diagnosing and curing faults (as a single reflective practitioner) to a broader shared reflexivity that examines the extent to which the workplace supports learning. Lucas (2007: 100) argues that teacher education in FE colleges in the UK is not grounded in a 'pedagogy of the workplace'. He says: "In the UK context this has been addressed rather simply and can be characterized as: the novice teacher has a subject mentor, the mentor gives some tips and the novice is 'left to get on with it'." Rather, in drawing from Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the 'zone of proximal development', he argues that structured learning environments need to be established within colleges that support trainee teachers to extend beyond their existing skill levels (from their zone to a higher level one) under the support and tutorship of a more experienced teacher.

Teachers also need the time and support to develop networks and become part of broader communities both within their institution and within VET more broadly. They need to be encouraged to take risks and experiment with their practice and share their experiences (Figgis 2009; Hillier 2009; Mitchell, Wood and Young 2001; Mitchell, Young and Henry 2001). This means that teachers have to be given some agency in deciding the direction of their professional development (Steward 2009). A report for

Cedefop<sup>27</sup> by Cort et al. (2004: 37) on the professionalism of VET teachers in Europe argues that teachers have felt disenfranchised by the pace and scale of reforms to VET, and that one way of ‘overcoming resistance’ by teachers is to adopt “a bottom-up approach to curricula design involving teachers and trainers in planning and implementing their own training”.

Lucas and Unwin (2009: 424) use an ‘expansive - restrictive’ notion to characterise workplaces that support learning in FE colleges in the UK.<sup>28</sup> As the name implies, restrictive workplaces are characterised by more or less rigid boundaries, low levels of staff autonomy and few opportunities for professional development. On the other hand:

“Expansive features include: a commitment to giving trainees the dual identity of learner and worker; mechanisms and spaces for cross-boundary communication; and planned time-off for professional development. An expansive environment would also be characterised by the fact that supporting workplace learning was a major part of the responsibilities of all managers. Central to the ‘expansive’ workplace is the understanding that it is the way in which jobs are designed and work is organised. Thus, the more that jobs can be designed to give employees greater autonomy, to have the discretion to make decisions, and to be involved in the development of the organisation, the more likely they are to be engaging in meaningful (for them and the organisation) learning and sharing their knowledge and skills with colleagues.” (Lucas and Unwin 2009: 424)

We can also draw insights from the schools literature on effective professional development and how it may be evaluated. This is particularly helpful in thinking about developing teachers’ expertise in the pedagogy of their specialism. Ingvarson et al. (2005: 14) found that professional development “programs with an emphasis on the subject matter that is being taught, how it is learned and how to teach it, tend to facilitate more active school based professional learning processes.” They say that effective professional development has characteristics that include:

- “Content focus
- Follow up
- Active learning
- Feedback” (Ingvarson, Meiers et al. 2005: 8)

Ingvarson et al. (2005: 15-16) summarise their findings in saying that effective PD programs:

“...provided opportunities for teachers to focus on what students were to learn and how to deal with the problems students may have in learning the subject matter. They focused on research-based knowledge about student learning of content. They included opportunities for teachers to examine student work collaboratively – and in relation to standards for what the students in question

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<sup>27</sup> Cedefop is the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, see: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/> viewed 3 March 2010.

<sup>28</sup> This draws on earlier work by Fuller and Unwin (2004) on ‘expansive-restrictive’ workplaces.

should know and be able to do. They engaged them in identifying what they needed to learn, and in planning the learning experiences that would help them meet these needs. They provided time for teachers to test new teaching methods and to receive follow-up support and coaching in their classrooms as they faced problems of implementing changes. They included activities that led teachers to deprivatise their practice and gain feedback about their teaching from colleagues.”

The above discussion focuses on how teachers can become qualified as teachers and develop their skills as teachers. In addition to the above challenges, teachers in VET also have the challenge of maintaining their industrial currency. TrainingWA (2009: 6) argues that this is a greater problem for full-time VET teachers than it is for sessionals who are already working in the industry. They explain that there are considerable logistical problems with industry release. It may be useful to consider if there are any advantages in linking industry currency with increasing pedagogic skills in particular industry areas, as suggested by the University of Ballarat (2009). This may be one way of strengthening relationships between teachers and their industry, and in providing more structured support to industry practitioners who are entering teaching as well as keeping teachers in closer touch with new developments.

### ***The development of the profession***

A key issue that will be explored in the project is the way in which the profession of VET teaching can be developed so that it enhances the status and position of VET, and so that teachers are supported to develop dual professional identities – as industry experts and VET teachers. The development of the profession, the obligation of teachers to contribute to that profession, and their continuing professional development is emphasised to a much greater extent in schools and higher education. There is no national professional body for VET teachers,<sup>29</sup> nor are VET teachers required to register with a professional body or registration board as is the case with teachers in schools, and other professions such as medicine, nursing, and law, amongst others.

Yet the establishment of a profession can contribute to increasing the skills and knowledge in an occupational area. Bretherton and Oliver (2008: 42-43) explain that “Historically, professions have played a critical role in negotiation, preservation and integration of skill within a sector.” They say that professional bodies are intrinsic to ‘skills escalation’ strategies because they are concerned with the development of professional knowledge and skill and their deployment. This results in the profession taking greater responsibility for the development of relevant knowledge and skills. It also leads to increased status and greater external recognition of the profession. This is one way to increase the attractiveness of VET teaching as a career, but also to increase the professionalism of the sector more broadly, which will be needed if VET is to play the role in raising Australia’s level of skills and contributing to social inclusion that is envisaged by government.

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<sup>29</sup> Beyond various networks, which have been crucial to the development of practitioner knowledge in VET and the circulation of that knowledge.

This has implications for the qualifications that are required for VET teachers, as one feature of a profession is that it requires training credentials for entry and career mobility (Buchanan, Yu, Marginson and Wheelahan 2009: 30). The University of Ballarat (2009: 23) makes the point that it is likely that teachers will need to be more highly qualified as a profession, given that there is a push for higher level qualifications in the workforce as a whole.

Questions arise as to whether there should be a registration requirement for VET teachers and a national professional body established to manage that process and oversee the development of professional standards. As discussed earlier, this exists at the state level in schools and it will soon be replaced by a national registration scheme and professional body. A compulsory registration scheme exists in the UK for further education teachers and other teachers in the learning and skills sector (discussed below). The UK Higher Education Academy developed the UK professional standards framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education to offer public recognition of higher education teachers' expertise and commitment to the student learning experience. The academy recognises teachers with specified training and experience as an associate, fellow or senior fellow. There is no corollary in Australian higher education, with the ALTC playing a much more limited role.

There are different approaches to standards and to registration. In drawing on the literature, Mulcahy (2003) distinguishes broadly between two different approaches to the development standards: the first uses standards as a tool of performance management; while the second uses them as a tool for performance development. The first is developed externally by management and it defines standards as performance outcomes. The second is developed by the profession and:

“...standards are cast in terms of *actions* that teachers take to advance student learning and incorporate the essential knowledge, skills, dispositions, and commitments that allow them to practise at a high level. Elements of the standards are described in continuous prose in an effort to create meaningful images of good teaching practice.” (Mulcahy 2003: 5-6)

Mulcahy (2003: 5) describes the professional certification model as “*par excellence*, a developmental model of teacher learning and development”, which is the professional development model. It could also be argued that the performance management model develops and implements notions of teaching externally, while the second requires the profession to take responsibility for developing its own knowledge and skills and the standards to underpin it.

Registration of practitioners and accreditation of programs can take different forms. It can be compulsory as is the case with schools, nursing, medicine and law, among other professions. In these cases, programs offered by universities must be accredited by the relevant board or professional body, and graduates must seek registration with the board or body as a condition of practice. These professions generally require members to undertake a minimum amount of approved CPD each year. Registration boards that have been established under statute often include a broad range of

stakeholder representatives.<sup>30</sup> In a federated country such as Australia, different approaches may be possible. For example, Queensland mandates compulsory registration for engineers, while other states operate under a self-regulatory system conducted by the relevant professional bodies and boards they have established.<sup>31</sup> Engineers Australia supports national registration. In other professions, such as accountancy and social work, registration with the professional body is not a condition of practice, but it has achieved that status *de facto*, because many employers require membership of the professional body as a condition of employment. It would be disastrous for accountancy and social work programs in universities to lose their accreditation with the relevant professional body. Emerging industries also seek to enhance their professionalism by developing accreditation bodies.<sup>32</sup>

## Influencing the profession

There are many ways that government and other stakeholders can influence the shape of the teaching profession and notions of appropriate pedagogy. One way is by shaping registration and accreditation requirements as discussed above. Another, which is not mutually exclusive, is by funding and reward schemes. The Australian government is in the process of reworking the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund for universities as part of its broader review of quality indicators. While this fund has been in existence only since 2006, it has influenced institutional behaviour even though the amounts involved are a relatively minor part of total university funding. This is because of its *reputational* importance. No university wants to be at the bottom of a league table on its quality of teaching and learning as perceived by students, and any university that ‘scoops the pool’ uses this aggressively in its marketing (Wheelahan 2007).

The Australian government also funds national teaching awards in higher education and schools. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership administers a range of awards for different categories of teachers and for schools (which were presented by the Minister for Education in 2009),<sup>33</sup> as do most of the states. The ALTC administers national awards in higher education (which includes a Prime Minister’s award), and much is made of these in the media and by the universities with the winning academics and programs.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> For example, see the Queensland College of Teachers <http://www.qct.edu.au/college/members.html> or the Nurses Board of Victoria <http://www.nbv.org.au/web/guest/board-members> viewed 9 March 2010.

<sup>31</sup> Source: <http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/nerb/regulatory-schemes/introduction.cfm> viewed 9 March 2010.

<sup>32</sup> For example, see the International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education, which says that they “offer a comprehensive course accreditation and quality assurance process, ongoing benchmarking of the international student experience, and a recognised marque of excellence to member institutions.” <http://www.the-ice.org/> viewed 9 March 2010.

<sup>33</sup> See <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/ta/go/home/cache/offonce/pid/594> for the 2009 awards – which were ‘Teaching Australia’ awards. The new Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership was not established until 2010 and it now manages the Australian Awards for Teaching Excellence. These awards are managed with the support of the Australian College of Educators. See <http://austcolled.com.au/award/australian-awards-teaching-excellence> viewed 9 March 2010.

<sup>34</sup> See <http://www.altc.edu.au/types-of-awards> viewed 9 March 2010.

There are national training awards in VET, and there are awards for students, businesses and RTOs, but there is no award for teachers.<sup>35</sup> The Institute for Trades Skills Excellence had a national award for a trade teacher, but trade teachers are only one component of the VET teaching workforce. Furthermore, the Institute has since been wound up. Some skills councils have annual awards for VET teachers, as do some states, but this does not give the same level of recognition by the Australian government as is provided to school and higher education teachers. This contributes to perceptions of the low status of VET teaching and teachers.

### ***International developments***

The trend internationally is towards the greater professionalisation of VET teaching. The European VET literature distinguishes between institutionally based VET teachers and workplace trainers or instructors (Cort, Härkönen et al. 2004: 23), reflecting the more structured relationships between industry, government and VET institutions, particularly in Northern Europe. Cort et al. (2004: 23) explain that:

“In almost all EU countries, to qualify as a teacher of vocational training, it is necessary to have a higher education degree followed by teacher training regulated at the national level. In some cases the higher education degree can be replaced by a nationally recognised vocational qualification. Besides the sector-specific requirements related to the level of education, VET teachers need to have work experience.”

Cort et al. further explain that the qualifications for workplace trainers or instructors (as opposed to VET teachers) have not been formally defined in many countries. They also argue that it will not be possible to recruit “enough new young competent VET teachers, instead those already working in vocational schools need to be given an opportunity to update their qualifications” (Cort, Härkönen et al. 2004: 23). They do not explain why, but it is presumably because of the aging population and emerging skill shortages. While VET teachers can undertake pre-service training and obtain a teaching qualification, it is more common for teachers to undertake teacher training while they are teaching (Volvani, Helakorpi and Frimodt 2009: 19). The Council of the European Union has made the professional development of VET teachers and trainers a priority for cooperation in education and training:

“The focus is on the quality of initial education, early career support for new teachers and on raising the quality of continuing professional development opportunities for teachers, trainers and other educational staff.” (Volvani, Helakorpi et al. 2009: 9)

### **Germany**

The highly regarded German system also differentiates between VET teachers in VET institutions and workplace trainers. VET teachers fall into two main categories. The

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<sup>35</sup> See [http://www.australiantrainingawards.gov.au/entering\\_the\\_awards/default.htm](http://www.australiantrainingawards.gov.au/entering_the_awards/default.htm) viewed 9 March 2010.

first category includes teachers who teach vocational subjects and general subjects: “These teachers provide young people with the necessary subject-specific theoretical knowledge and with in-depth and extended general education in the context of their future occupation” (Hippach-Schneider, Schober, Toth and Woll 2009: 47). These teachers are required to have a university level qualification or equivalent, and their training is undertaken over three phases or stages. The ‘first stage’ is based in the university (or equivalent) and this includes among other things “relevant specialised teaching methods” as well as teaching practice. Candidates must have a relevant vocational qualification in the occupational field or work experience in the field. There is a state exam at the end of this stage. The ‘second stage’ consists of teaching practice which normally lasts two years and ends with another state exam. The ‘third stage’ consists of “lifelong ‘on-the-job learning’. It covers the whole of the career and provides for further development, maintenance, updating and extension of teachers’ vocational competence” (Hippach-Schneider, Schober et al. 2009: 49).

The second category of teachers are those who teach vocational practice focusing on practical skills: “In vocational schools (industrial/technical schools), state-examined technicians or certified masters are used to teach vocational practice” (Hippach-Schneider, Schober et al. 2009: 47). These teachers are not required to have higher education qualifications, but they are highly qualified in their field and have usually attained the status of “a foreman or skilled worker (industry) or a qualified craftsman (crafts)” (Hippach-Schneider, Schober et al. 2009: 49). They must also have had a number of years of vocational experience. They undergo training for their role and undertake “teaching practice in a school and in pedagogic vocational seminars (single-stage training)” (ibid).

Hippach-Schneider et al. (2009: 50) explain that “the obligation of teachers to undertake further training is expressly laid down by law or statutory regulation. The employer (usually the Ministry of Education) is in turn obliged to ensure appropriate training measures.” This type of continuing professional development is differentiated from continuing teacher training which is formal training followed by a state examination. The latter allows teachers to teach in a new subject area or undertake other roles.

Trainers are usually ‘in-company’ trainers and while there are no formal qualifications for initial training for trainers, the requirements for these positions are governed by legislation and ordinance (called the Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude) (Hippach-Schneider, Schober et al. 2009: 50). Hippach-Schneider et al. (2009:15) explain that the ordinance covering trainers was suspended in 2003 to remove barriers to companies providing in-company training. However, while more training was provided, an investigation found that the quality of training suffered and the ordinance has now been reinstated. The legislation requires trainers to be:

“suitable both personally and in terms of specialised knowledge to train young people. Subject aptitude involves, in particular, the specialised vocational skills and knowledge required for the relevant occupation. As a rule, trainers must have a qualification in a subject area appropriate to the training occupation. However, vocational training also includes knowledge of the educational theory of the occupation and job.” (Hippach-Schneider, Schober et al. 2009: 48-49)

Regional chambers (industry bodies) have responsibility for monitoring the quality of training.

Community adult education is much more unregulated and consists of unpaid volunteers, those teaching for a few hours in addition their main job (often school teachers) and those working freelance full-time or part-time (Hippach-Schneider, Schober et al. 2009: 50). The trust in, and quality of, the German system also rests in broader institutional arrangements at the federal, state and regional levels. This includes a social consensus on curriculum and teaching and learning at the regional level as these have to be agreed by industry chambers, unions and educational institutions.

## **England**

Teachers in the Learning and Skills Sector (LSS) (or further education sector) in England were not required to have formal teaching qualifications until 2001. Teaching appointments were generally made on the basis of “an individual’s industrial experience, and their professional or craft expertise and teaching experience and teaching qualifications (or the lack of them) were not always taken into account.” However, teaching qualifications had existed for the FE sector for many years, and the majority of teachers were qualified (Steward 2009: 13). The LSS sector was established in 2001 when the FE sector was widened beyond the FE colleges to include sixth-form colleges, FE colleges,<sup>36</sup> work-based training and workforce development, adult and community education, business links, and prisons.<sup>37</sup> Government policies for expanding the sector were to achieve a more highly skilled workforce, and the increased participation of people from disadvantaged backgrounds in further education (known as the widening participation agenda). Reforms also sought to create a ‘demand-driven’ and ‘industry-led’ system in a more competitive sector (Steward 2009).

Occupational standards for teachers in the FE sector were first developed in 1991, but “it took almost a decade of development, debate and disputes before they were introduced” (ibid). This included disputes over the form of the standards that were to be introduced. It was proposed to introduce standards based on units of competency (like the Certificate IV TAA). The first standards to cover teacher training became effective in 2001 and these were called the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) standards and teachers were required to possess or obtain a compulsory teaching qualification. Higher education providers and Awarding Bodies of FE teacher education programs were required to seek ‘endorsement’ for their

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<sup>36</sup> FE colleges include ‘sixth form’ or senior school education. ‘Sixth-form colleges’ are colleges specifically focused on senior school.

<sup>37</sup> The LSS sector was restructured again in 2007 so that responsibility for the sector was now shared by two government departments – the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), which has responsibility for education and ‘youth issues’ for children and young people up to the age of 19 years. The second department is the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, and this includes science. “This new partnership of science and innovation with further and higher education does mean, however, the separation of school and further and higher education, as the responsibility for schools now lies with another government department” (Steward 2009: 23).

programs from FENTO (Holloway 2009: 187). Around this time a voluntary professional body for LSS teachers was established and the aim was to have a fully qualified workforce by 2010.<sup>38</sup>

Concerns were raised in the early 2000s about the FENTO standards and quality of teaching. In particular, Ofsted (the government's inspectorial body) was concerned about the absence of vocational specialisms in teacher education programs (Steward 2009: 18). There were also concerns that trainees could not teach across the breadth of standards ("especially quality assurance and student guidance"); that the language of the standards was ambiguous or remote, that they were an inappropriate tool for designing courses and that the curriculum and pedagogy needed to be improved (Holloway 2009: 187). Steward (2009: 18) explains that as a result of Ofsted's review of teaching for the LSS sector in 2003, "it was decided that the FENTO standards were to be replaced with new and clearer professional standards".

The new standards were developed by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK),<sup>39</sup> which is an "independent employer-led sector skills council" responsible for the professional development for those working in career guidance, community learning and development, further education, higher education, libraries, archives and information services and work based learning across the UK."<sup>40</sup> It is an employer body, not a professional body representing teachers (Holloway 2009: 190). Regulations were introduced in 2007 governing teachers' qualifications and teacher registration and CPD requirements.<sup>41</sup> Teachers are now required to register with the Institute for Learning as the professional body.<sup>42</sup> They must meet the LLUK standards, and teacher education programs must be 'verified' by the LLUK.

In the UK, around 90% of FE teachers undertake their teacher training part-time in-service (Orr and Simmons 2010: 75). Teachers are now required to obtain a recognised teaching qualification within five years, but they are required to, on entry or within a year, obtain a 'Preparing to teach' qualification. All teachers are required to undertake this.<sup>43</sup> There are different categories of teachers: the first is a 'full teaching role' called a 'Qualified Teacher, Learning and Skills', while the second is an 'associate teacher' which is for those with fewer responsibilities (which may include, for example, sessional staff). Full-time teachers must undertake at least 30 hours of CPD (Steward 2009: 37-38), while part-time teachers must complete pro-rata hours.<sup>44</sup> Ofsted conducts inspections of teaching education programs for LSS teachers that would spark terror into the hearts of many (see, for example, Ofsted 2009). Teacher education for LSS teachers has gone from 'benign neglect' to now being highly regulated, perhaps more so than the other sectors (Lucas 2007). This leads to different perceptions of the extent to which these reforms empower teachers and the

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<sup>38</sup> See <http://www.ifl.ac.uk/about-ifl/ifl-vision-and-strategy/five-year-strategy-2009-14/20> viewed 3 March 2010.

<sup>39</sup> LLUK replaced FENTO in 2005 (Holloway 2009: 190)

<sup>40</sup> Source: <http://www.lluk.org/2818.htm> viewed 3 March 2010.

<sup>41</sup> See the qualifications regulation: [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi\\_20072264\\_en\\_1%20](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20072264_en_1%20); See the regulations covering registration and CPD: [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi\\_20072116\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20072116_en_1) viewed 4 March 2010.

<sup>42</sup> See the IfL <http://www.ifl.ac.uk> viewed 4 March 2010.

<sup>43</sup> Source: [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi\\_20072264\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20072264_en_1) viewed 4 March 2010

<sup>44</sup> Source: [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi\\_20072116\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20072116_en_1) viewed 4 March 2010

profession,<sup>45</sup> or whether it represents attempts to regulate their work further. There are arguments that the school teaching profession in the UK is becoming much more regulated (see Beck 2009), so it may be a matter of different timing of reforms in the sectors. However, Orr (2010: 50) says, in discussing the UK standards for teachers in LSS, that:

“Such detail and even the length of the LLUK standards (190 statements) are in contrast to the equivalent single page of broad statements that cover higher education (HEA 2007), or even the much simpler General Teaching Council statement of standards relating to school teachers.” (GTC 2006)

He argues that this imposes a diminished form of professionalism for FE teachers and for those who teach FE teachers, because it is not premised on autonomy, which is a key definition of a profession (Orr 2010: 50).

### **What can we learn?**

As already stated, the trend internationally is towards greater professionalisation of VET teachers. This is certainly the case in the European Union (which mostly has a system quite different to ours) and in the UK (which has a system that is quite similar to ours). It would be instructive to study other western nations as well, but it must be assumed that they face the same pressures of increasing the education and skill levels of their populations and supporting social inclusion. There is much that we can learn from the European and UK examples, while still ensuring that we develop a national system that supports Australia’s needs.

The European approach in general, and the German’s in particular, shows that even systems that have much more developed VET teacher education traditions and VET systems still regard the increased professionalisation of their teaching workforce as a high priority. They have also developed a suite of programs, qualifications and professional development programs for teachers and trainers in different contexts to ensure that the quality of education is maintained in different sites. The collaboration of the employers, unions and educational institutions on curriculum at state and regional levels also produces a high level of confidence and trust in the outcomes. Yet, they have been more successful in institutionalising teacher education in their formal VET system focussing on young people, and less successful in doing the same for adults, particularly through community education or ‘continuing vocational education’. Developing lifelong learning policies and frameworks is seen as increasingly important in these countries (Volmari, Helakorpi et al. 2009).

It is not clear that Australia could afford the system that the UK has, or that it would be appropriate if implemented in its entirety. A system that regulates VET teachers more than it does school teachers is unlikely to provide the profession with the scope it needs to develop a strong identity. It is also unlikely to help raise the status of VET teachers – at least to that of school teachers. On the other hand, the registration requirements for teachers and accreditation requirements for teacher education programs may contribute to increasing the skills of teachers and providing them with

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<sup>45</sup> See the IfL <http://www.ifl.ac.uk> as an illustration of the empowerment argument.

a knowledge base and the skills that are greater than that which they currently have, particularly for new entrants. Different models of accrediting programs are possible, and they are more likely to succeed if they directly involve a wider range of stakeholders in determining ‘what matters’ in teacher education programs. A range of models of registration and accreditation could be developed as well as approaches that had a ‘lighter touch’, which would also probably cost less. The way in which the UK has incorporated specialisms as part of its teacher education programs could be considered. It would be difficult to develop the economies of scale to focus on specialisms, however this issue could be explored and different approaches may be identified should it be thought that this was a concern.

### *Where to next?*

Investment in, and the development of, VET teachers and the VET workforce more generally is becoming more urgent in the light of government policy objectives, and the anticipated growth of VET. Skills Australia (2010) has developed a national workforce development plan that seeks to raise workforce participation, increase skill levels, and improve adult language, literacy and numeracy skills. This plan operationalises the government’s objectives for educational achievement and participation, and it suggests that participation in both VET and higher education would need to increase 3% per annum to 2025. This requires a significant investment in the tertiary education workforce and not just VET. The challenge is to increase the number of VET teachers, maintain those we have, and help them develop the knowledge and skills they need to meet new demands for a much wider range of students.

This literature review has situated current and emerging demands on VET teachers within the new policy framework and it has problematised existing approaches. It asks about:

- The changing demands made of VET teachers;
- The differences and similarities between VET and the schools and higher education sectors, the differences and similarities between teaching in those sectors and VET, and what we can learn from the other sectors;
- The knowledge and skills that VET teachers need to support high quality learning and diversity of students, contexts and industries;
- Whether the industrial or disciplinary area should figure more prominently in VET teacher education and CPD;
- The kinds of qualifications that VET teachers need to support them on entry and as they develop as teachers, and the sort of CPD that is required to support them throughout their careers;
- How the quality of VET teaching qualifications and CPD can be evaluated;
- How the VET teaching profession can develop and how teachers can be supported to develop dual identities as industry experts and as teachers; and,
- The lessons we can learn from overseas.

This broad framework will structure the questions that we explore with stakeholders and participants in the project.

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## *Appendix A*

### **Victorian Institute of Teaching**

There are eight standards in three domains: professional knowledge; professional practice; and professional engagement; and there are different elements under each standard. Graduating teachers must demonstrate that they meet these standards as a consequence of their pre-service education.

Professional knowledge:

1. Teachers know how students learn and how to teach them effectively.
2. Teachers know the content they teach.
3. Teachers know their students.

Professional practice

4. Teachers plan and assess for effective learning.
5. Teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments.
6. Teachers use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.

Professional engagement

7. Teachers reflect on, evaluate and improve their professional knowledge and practice.
8. Teachers are active members of their profession.

[http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1752\\_Standards-for-Graduating-Teachers-jan-09.pdf](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1752_Standards-for-Graduating-Teachers-jan-09.pdf) viewed 9 March 2010

### **ALTC awards for excellence in teaching selection criteria**

The following are the criteria that will be used to assess nominees for the various higher education teaching awards.

1. **Approaches to teaching that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn**, which may include fostering student development by stimulating curiosity and independence in learning; contributing to the development of students' critical thinking skills, analytical skills and scholarly values; encouraging student engagement through the enthusiasm shown for learning and teaching; inspiring and motivating students through high-level communication, presentation and interpersonal skills
2. **Development of curricula and resources that reflect a command of the field**, which may include: developing and presenting coherent and imaginative resources for student learning; implementing research-led approaches to learning and teaching; demonstrating up-to-date knowledge of the field of study in the design of the curriculum and the creation of resources for learning; communicating clear objectives and expectations for student learning

3. **Approaches to assessment and feedback that foster independent learning**, which may include integrating assessment strategies with the specific aims and objectives for student learning; providing timely, worthwhile feedback to students on their learning; using a variety of assessment and feedback strategies; implementing both formative and summative assessment; adapting assessment methods to different contexts and diverse student needs
4. **Respect and support for the development of students as individuals**, which may include participating in the effective and empathetic guidance and advising of students; assisting students from equity and other demographic subgroups to participate and achieve success in their courses; influencing the overall academic, social and cultural experience of higher education
5. **Scholarly activities that have influenced and enhanced learning and teaching**, which may include showing advanced skills in evaluation and reflective practice; participating in and contributing to professional activities related to learning and teaching; coordination, management and leadership of courses and student learning; conducting and publishing research related to teaching; demonstrating leadership through activities that have broad influence on the profession

[http://www.altc.edu.au/system/files/documents/awards\\_guidelines\\_2009\\_aug08.pdf](http://www.altc.edu.au/system/files/documents/awards_guidelines_2009_aug08.pdf)  
viewed 27 February 2010, p. 23

### **Links to the states' school teacher registration boards and standards**

#### **ACT**

The ACT seems to be in the process of establishing teacher registration. It is not clear how the establishment of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership will affect this

[http://www.det.act.gov.au/employment/teacher\\_registration\\_project](http://www.det.act.gov.au/employment/teacher_registration_project)

#### **NSW Institute of Teachers**

<http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/IgnitionSuite/uploads/docs/Professional%20Teaching%20Standards.pdf> viewed 28 February 2010

#### **Northern Territory**

Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory – standards for graduate, competent and accomplished teachers

[http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/standards\\_ethics/docs/ProfessionalStandardsPracticeTeaching.pdf](http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/standards_ethics/docs/ProfessionalStandardsPracticeTeaching.pdf) viewed 28 February 2010

#### **QLD College of Teachers**

<http://www.qct.edu.au/Publications/ProfessionalStandards/ProfessionalStandardsForQldTeachers2006.pdf> viewed 28 February 2010

### **Teachers Registration Board of South Australia**

SA Standards for registration

<http://www.trb.sa.edu.au/pdf/Standards%20-%20Entry%20to%20Register.pdf>

viewed 28 February 2010

SA Standards for change of status

<http://www.trb.sa.edu.au/pdf/Standards%20-%20Change%20of%20Status.pdf> viewed

28 February 2010

### **Tasmania**

Tasmanian Teachers Registration Board

[http://www.trb.tas.gov.au/teaching\\_standards.htm](http://www.trb.tas.gov.au/teaching_standards.htm)

Has graduate, competence and accomplished teacher standards viewed 28 February 2010

### **Victorian Institute of Teaching**

[http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/787\\_standards.PDF](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/787_standards.PDF) viewed 9 March 2010

### **Western Australian College of Teaching**

<<http://www.wacot.wa.edu.au/index.php?section=41>> viewed 28 February 2010

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