

Comments on “The quality of teaching in VET: options paper”

I enjoyed reading your paper and think that this debate is long overdue... more importantly – ACTION on this issue is well overdue and absolutely necessary to ensure the vitality of the future of the VET sector.

Some comments below in dot point as I know you are probably both very busy (as all Educators seem to be).

Background

I have been teaching for about 10 years. My background is in Industry (Construction, Agriculture, Airline and Business) and Private RTO's, just last year started teaching at TAFE (NSW).

I gained Cert IV quals in the BSZ days – have since upgraded to TAA and now TAE.

I also have a Bachelor Adult and Vocational Edu.

Currently undertaking Diploma Training and Assessment and looking to do further study at the University level perhaps next year or year after.

I teach Cert IV TAA and general Business.

Options Paper

Response to Q1: “do you believe that current arrangements for assuring the quality of VET teaching are satisfactory”.

In short – No.

Reasons for this:

- In my experience the requirement for trainers to have Cert IV and beyond in the Private Sector is quite strong. Most training jobs advertised seem to state you need Cert IV as a minimum. Most employers look at this as a minimum training skill set. Employers now seem to be well educated about the content of the Cert IV. It appears to me that someone with a Cert IV plus appropriate experience will get the job over someone who doesn't have Cert IV. Unfortunately it has also created an industry that believes “this is all you need” – rather than as a starting point for an industry training career.
- To most trainers the cost of improving your teaching skills is prohibitive. These barriers need to be removed for the industry to grow and improve. Until this changes – I don't think the industry will change.
- I am surprised by the number of TAFE teachers who are teaching “under supervision” and yet have been teaching for a number of years without formal quals. I find this inequitable to someone like me (who “does the right thing” i.e. has the quals, does PD etc....) who gets payed the same as someone without any quals – perhaps a sliding payscale to reflect qualifications would also be part of the debate and perhaps would encourage trainers to do more study – gain more pay etc.....
- WE now have a national Auditing Body and yet not all states will participate – I don't see that as improving our industry. I see it as another layer of paper that doesn't have any real teeth to get things changed. Would like to see that sorted out. Would

also like Auditing bodies to place more importance on the requirement for trainers to have more formal teaching qualifications, especially after a person “teaches” for “x” amount of time.

- Conversely to my “no” statement – I do believe that the Cert IV is an appropriate entry point for industry / VET trainers – keeping in mind that most industries suffer from extreme skills shortages and we need aging artisans to share their knowledge and skill and quickly with new entrants. I think that the Cert IV has fulfilled that purpose – but now needs to grow beyond that requirement. In addition – how many people would leave the VET sector – or decide not to even join – if we force them to have higher education qualifications to teach? I don’t know any “tradies” that would go to Uni to learn how to pass on their trade..... - does a Uni education make you a good trades trainer?

Response to Q2 “To what extent do the options outlined here allow teachers, RTO’s and/or VET more broadly to build on existing processes to improve and ensure the quality of VET teaching”

I think the options presented are a good place to start. They offer a framework, choices and some flexibility.

Response to Q3 “Do you find helpful the paper’s presentation of options in stages” – Yes I think change will be required to be implemented in stages in order for the change to be ultimately successful – especially when you are dealing with TAFE trainers who have been teaching for a very long time without even a Cert IV and don’t even see a need to update their TAA / BSZ

Response to Q4 “do you find helpful the paper’s analysis of VET teaching into elements” – YES

Response to Q5 “have we missed any element of might some elements be combined” - I think “pay structure relating to qualifications and experience” might need to be considered?

Response to Q6 – Is there a reason the term “andragogy” is not used ? Also perhaps consideration / discussion with Industry about how to assist in relation to industry placement would be helpful. Perhaps industry are interested in sponsoring trainer industry placements in an organise way?