

Summary feedback on the Options Paper

Context of feedback:

These comments are made from a Teaching and Learning Trades' perspective.

The arrangement of the Options Paper into broad themed headings offering several options within each, has facilitated reflection upon and critical analysis of the various models outlined. It further stimulated discussion and a development of other ideas not included in the options provided.

Summary of Comments :

1. The idea of VET teachers gaining higher level education qualifications may be conducive to changing occupational identity and increasing confidence in the capacity of professional educators and teaching practice. It is to be supported and encouraged.

However it may be a challenge for Traditional Trades teachers to develop the confidence and/or desire to take up study for higher qualifications beyond the Diploma of VET Practice. Currently teachers in Victoria are highly motivated to gain a Dip VET Practice as it is linked to the T5 teacher classification and increased pay scales as negotiated with the AEU under the MBA. It is important to have incentives for teachers if they are to be encouraged to undertake further study

Traditional Trade teachers often come to teaching with a Cert III trade qualification and have not necessarily had positive experiences of schooling and sometimes no experience of academic study. They more often than not see themselves as Tradespeople first and teachers second or trades teachers. This issue of occupational identity may also be an impediment to further study. If there were to be an incentive for further study this issue may recede.

In areas other than Traditional Trades, teachers may hold a Bachelors Degree or higher but it is usually in their field of industry expertise – unless of course they come from an education background. With the introduction of contestability study at a higher level than the primary qualification attracts full fees. This too may become a deterrent to study for higher qualifications.

Therefore to expect a 'qualification commensurate for entry into school teaching....' may be a barrier to recruitment in some areas of VET. Perhaps a B.ED maybe better replaced by a Grad Cert or some qual less onerous in terms of duration and cost.

2. Whilst there are a number of options in the paper that are positive and useful, there is no consideration given to the implications for funding or the Multi Business Agreement with the AEU. In particular this relates to Industry Release, Teacher registration and Qualifications.
3. 'Evaluating the quality of VET teaching' on p.7 discusses the use of student outcomes and satisfaction survey data to rate teacher performance. This data can be unreliable and inconsistent and therefore prone to bias outcomes. Perhaps it could be considered along with other data such as the Peer Evaluation suggestion in the Options Paper
4. The options on p 9 discuss the differences between the professional education environment such as TAFEs and RTOs who have teaching as their core business and those private providers who do not. For example some private providers have a training arm or department as a small addition to their core business which maybe manufacturing or

community service provision. Care needs to be taken that teachers are not divided into these categories and classified differently. This could become similar to the Instructor/Trainer/Teacher dichotomy that presently exists. If similar material and qualifications are being taught and assessed then the teacher qualifications would need to be similar. To this end it is important the base level qualification for ALL teachers /trainers needs to be higher than a Cert IV, which does not currently provide supervised practice or pedagogy.

5. The options on p. 13 suggest that teachers could be trained to teach across sectors. Whilst this may be useful it could have inherent difficulties. There is a difference between pedagogy and andragogy. Teaching students in secondary school is very different to teaching adults in VET and early HE and students are at very different developmental stages of life and learning. The learning environment of VE differs greatly from that of the secondary school. The VE learning environment incorporates adult learning principles and independence as befits adult learners.

Teacher training would need to reflect these differences in order to equip VET teachers to teach well and with confidence. It would be very useful for teachers of apprentices and VETiS students to have an understanding of the differences in teaching middle adolescents and young adults and the accompanying developmental stages.

Therefore teachers may require different types of training or cross sector teacher training skills. The secondary school cohort is very different to the sometimes mature age cohort of VET and early HE and cross sectoral teacher training would need to take this into account.

6. Under which award would the cross-sector teachers be employed? This may be a challenge industrially.

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October 4th, 2010