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## TEACHING THE TEACHER - TAFE TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE 1990s

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### INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on research conducted by Hall, W. C., Hayton, G., Scarfe, J. and Mageean, P.

The TAFE National Centre for Research and Development has been commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training and the Australian Conference of TAFE Directors to conduct a national review of TAFE teachers' preparation and development. This paper discusses the early findings of the review.

The Commonwealth Government in such documents as Skills for Australia (1987) and TAFE 1990 Commonwealth Programs and Priorities is emphasising the need for reforms of Australian vocational education and training arrangements. These reforms aim to improve the skills of the workforce and to lead to improved economic development and structural change.

TAFE has a central role in Australia's vocational training arrangements. As with any education provider, TAFE's major resource is its teachers. If TAFE is to respond appropriately to the challenges flowing from industry and award restructuring it will be necessary to ensure that newly appointed teaching staff are appropriately equipped, and current teaching staff expand their levels of competence, in terms of professional and vocational skills. To ensure that TAFE can respond appropriately to the challenges arising from industry and award restructuring it will be necessary to ensure that newly appointed teaching staff are appropriately trained and current teaching staff expand their levels of competence, in both professional and vocational skills.

This review is concerned with full-time teachers who account for 65% of total TAFE teaching hours. Much of it will also have relevance for part-time teachers. Its purpose is to assist TAFE to develop policies for TAFE teachers based on the present and future skill needs of vocational training. From this detailed investigation of the training needs and current skills of TAFE teachers will emerge the key directions for initial and continuing education for TAFE teachers in the next decade.

#### Aims:

The review is divided into four stages each with its own aims:

#### STAGE 1A - TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

To identify the skills and competencies which will be required by TAFE teachers in the 1990s, having regard to the need for an appropriate balance between skills in each of the following areas:

teaching and related skills, including those required for:

- new delivery approaches e.g. team teaching, modularisation, achieving minimum skill standards;
- new technologies;
- emerging assessment and certification requirements, e.g. competency, on-the-job training;
- non-traditional groups of students;
- education/training guidance and counselling;
- curriculum development;

extension and upgrading in teacher's own subject/  
(vocational) specialisation;

management skills, including:

- educational enterprise management;
- educational process management (e.g. self-paced learning, computer assisted learning, team teaching);
- educational program management (e.g. program evaluation, trouble-shooting);

skills relevant to TAFE's broader role as an educational services provider, especially to industry (on a fee-for-service basis):

- industrial relations/workplace organisation awareness;
- communication (negotiation and liaison) skills;
- training needs analyses supporting curriculum development;
- on- and off-the-job training linkages.

#### STAGE 1B - SKILLS ANALYSIS

To identify the skills and competencies held by the existing (full-time) TAFE teaching workforce, taking into account:

the content of initial TAFE teacher training

the range of existing professional development activities;

an assessment of the extent to which teachers are already involved in providing training in a competency-based, cross-skilled environment and its implications for their professional skills (it may be that only some teachers currently have this type of involvement);

an assessment of the extent of understanding among TAFE teachers of the implications for TAFE and TAFE teachers of industry and award restructuring.

STAGE 2A - TAFE TEACHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - MODELS.

STAGE 2B - TAFE TEACHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT -

## STRATEGY FOR EXISTING TEACHERS.

This paper discusses the first two stages which have now been completed and are described more fully in National Review of TAFE Teacher Preparation and Development - Stages 1A and 1B Skills and Competencies (1990) by Hall W.C., Hayton G., Mageean P. and Scarfe J. A consolidated report covering all four stages will be published at the end of 1990.

### Methodology:

Stage 1A (training needs analysis) relied on four techniques: submissions, a literature review, interviews and a two-round Delphi survey.

Stage 1B (current skills analysis) relied on six techniques: submissions, a literature review, access to records/knowledge, interviews, survey and observations.

In both stages of the research, skills were classified into seven categories:

- teaching
- curriculum development
- determining client needs and industry liaison
- management/administration
- updating in own specialist area
- workplace context
- general personal qualities.

In all,

- 25 submissions were received
- 81 people were interviewed
- 59 people (48%) returned the Delphi round Two Survey
- 594 questionnaires were returned (50.4% overall return rate; net useable response rate of 46.1%)

### Results:

The general picture that emerged can be summarised as follows:

- almost all the TAFE teachers reported that they have a formal teaching qualification (certificate, diploma or graduate diploma);
- whether they are beginning or experienced, teachers are expected to possess and use a very wide range of skills;
- the changing vocational education environment is a persistent theme, with implications especially for

teaching methodologies and contact with industry;

when current skills are compared with skills deemed necessary for the future, the largest gaps occur in client need/industry liaison and curriculum development;

there are marked similarities in skill profiles and trends between states/territories;

responses across research techniques consistently described current levels of skill as less than the level expected to be required by TAFE teachers in the 1990s.

The different research instruments generally produced similar results.

The main findings, for each category of skill, taking into account all the research instruments were:

Teaching -

Teachers see themselves as highly skilled in traditional teaching roles (such as interpreting the syllabus, lesson planning, writing lesson objectives and presenting theory lessons). In the future, however, responses show that it is anticipated that they will need more skills in alternative, more flexible teaching strategies. There were two major areas where change is anticipated over the next decade. Firstly, changes in teacher strategies. There will include developments in:

- competency-based training;
- competency-based assessment;
- recognition of prior learning;
- encouraging self-paced learning;
- individualised learning systems;
- distance education;
- use of new technologies - computer managed learning
- counselling;
- creating a positive learning environment.

Secondly, changes in the TAFE student population. These will include:

- students from industry (user-pays);
- overseas students;
- retrenched older workers;
- special labour market programs.

Curriculum development -

Respondents identified a shortfall between current skills in curriculum development and those anticipated to be required by teachers in the 1990s. Differences occurred, however, in the degree of expertise most teachers will require. The areas in which it is anticipated teachers will need to develop greater skills are:

- self-paced design and delivery;
- acquisition of generic, transferable skills;

- capacity to modify syllabuses;
- quality assurance;
- short courses;
- instructional design;
- adult learning;
- evaluation.

#### Determining clients' needs and industry liaison -

Strongly held views emerged from some respondents on the need for teachers to acquire a wide range of skills in response to a new and closer relationship with industry. Other respondents (notably the TAFE Teacher Survey) indicated that an increased level of skill was required in working with industry, but not of the same order of magnitude or priority as suggested elsewhere. The areas in which it is predicted that teachers will need to develop greater skills are:

- changing relationship between TAFE and industry;
- fee-for-service;
- responsiveness to industry restructuring;
- industry skills audits;
- training needs analyses;
- off-campus teaching;
- marketing;
- quality assurance;
- knowledge of industry/networking;
- entrepreneurial skills.

#### Management/administration skills -

There was a small but important gap between the current level of skills, and the level deemed necessary for the 1990s. Experienced teachers were regarded as needing a range of specialised or advanced skills in this area. Several broadly-based skills, however, were seen as important for all teachers. It was anticipated that TAFE teachers will need to develop their skills in:

- time management;
- organising work;
- planning;
- computer literacy;
- mentoring skills;
- supervisory skills;
- priority skills;
- human resource management;
- financial planning;
- responding to change;
- self appraisal;
- education economics.

#### Updating in own specialist area -

A priority on teachers updating their vocational speciality emerged from all research instruments. In practice, the results indicated a considerable gap between the skills teachers perceive themselves to have

currently in this regard and those they believe they require in the next decade. The greatest gaps were noted in:

- currency of technical skills;
- changes in workplace technology and organisation;
- occupational health and safety;
- quality management;
- multi-skilling;
- broadbased skills.

#### Knowledge of the TAFE Workplace Context -

This was accorded varying degrees of importance across the research techniques. Key areas for future professional development were in:

- understanding the TAFE system;
- the nature and purposes of TAFE;
- special client groups;
- the ability to respond to broad contextual issues;
- networking within the college, within TAFE, with industry and with the community;
- knowledge of government priorities;
- multi-culturalism;
- equal opportunity, equity;
- links with other educational sectors.

#### General Personal Skills -

These were not only identified by teachers as their highest level of current expertise, but as their highest skill requirement in the 1990s. The personal qualities it was predicated TAFE should foster in its staff are:

- the ability to work co-operatively;
- communication skills;
- openness to new ideas;
- the ability to manage stress;
- listening skills;
- interpersonal skills;
- adaptability to change;
- decision-making skills;
- initiative;
- research skills;
- career development skills;
- problem solving skills;
- critical thinking;
- ability to transfer skills;
- ability to address the implications of social change;
- responsibility.

The report of Parts 1A and 1B lists current skills used by TAFE teachers and their assessment of their level of expertise. The details illustrate several key points which have major implications for both the roles of TAFE teachers and appropriate training programs to enhance their expertise:

there are relatively few skills in which teachers

believe they currently have a high level expertise;  
the most characteristic level is medium or moderate,  
or somewhat less;

the highest levels of perceived expertise occur in  
two categories - teaching and general personal  
qualities;

the perceived current skills levels are below the  
anticipated necessary levels for TAFE in the 1990s,  
in a number of categories which are expected to be  
vital during the next decade. Client needs/industry  
liaison and curriculum development are the most  
striking of these.

#### Implications for Stage 2

The findings of Stage 1 of the review of TAFE preparation and development form the essential prerequisite for Stage 2. The second stage of this project (Stages 2A and 2B) will translate these findings into models of and strategies for TAFE teacher preparation and development in the 1990s.

#### References

Dawkins, J. S. and Holding, C. (1987) Skills for Australia. Canberra: AGPS.

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