

of National Competencies for Workplace Trainers by Workplace Trainers

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The Employment and Skills Formation Council of the National Board of Employment, Education & Training in its discussion document *Industry Training in Australia: The Need for Change* acknowledged, as part of training reform in Australia, the need for a "significant initiative" to upgrade trainer training at small business, enterprise and industry levels (National Board of Employment, Education & Training, 1989). This need to improve workplace trainer training is part of the wider movement to provide a more efficient, effective, responsive and coherent national vocational education and training system. With this in mind, the National Training Board (NTB), a tripartite body, was established to assist industry to develop and implement a nationally consistent standards-based or competency-based vocational education and training system. At the time its primary role was considered to be "to endorse national competency standards for occupations and classifications of occupations in industry or enterprise awards or agreements determined by a national tribunal" (National Training Board, 1991). To this end the NTB formally recognises industry bodies, usually drawn from industry training advisory councils, as representing and reviewing the relevant national competency standards. Within this context the National Training Board has recognised the Competency Standards Body (CSB) for Workplace Trainers as being responsible for developing competency-based standards for workplace trainers in Australia.

Earlier this year the workplace trainer standards were presented to, and endorsed by, the National Training Board. In the development of the standards, the Competency Standards Body for Workplace Trainers extended the previous draft standards of the then National Centre for Research and Development, worked with training and development consultants from the university and private industry, and obtained feedback from over "five hundred organisations, government bodies, Industry Training Advisory Bodies, industry trainers, teachers and private individuals". In order to ensure the relevance of the standards extensive consultations, involving questionnaires, tours, interviews and workplace visits, were undertaken over a wide range of industries. Also, the most appropriate components from competency standards developed and used overseas have been incorporated in the Australian standards. (Competency Standards Body-Workplace Trainers, 1991, p.IV).

The aim of the present study was to complement the previous validation process through the investigation of the importance of the endorsed trainer standards for the workplace as perceived by

individuals involved in training in the workplace.

The standards for workplace trainers have been presented as applicable for two categories of workplace trainers:

Category 1: applies to those people who provide training in the workplace but for whom the training function is not a major part of their job. These people play a key role in providing training and raising the levels of competency in the workplace. They are important providers of on-the-job training.

Category 2: applies to those people for whom training is a large part of their job. They may include training and safety personnel but could also be supervisory staff. They would be likely to be dealing with groups of trainees, as well as individuals, in a structured training environment and with considerable responsibility for documentation, reporting and recording.

Both sets of standards have the same units of competency, namely,

identify the need for training, design and develop training, organise training resources, deliver and evaluate training, assess trainees, promote training, and manage training .

Category 1 and Category 2 have 19 common elements of competency while Category 2 has an additional 10 elements of competency (See Appendix A for Category 1 Workplace Trainer Standards, and Appendix B for Category 2 Workplace Competency Standards). Consistent with current practice each element of competency together with its associated performance criteria and range variables compresses a standard each of which is a specification of expected performance in the role of the workplace trainer.

METHOD

Population

A questionnaire was mailed to all individuals who had completed a three day train-the-trainer course presented by an employers' organisation during the first two years of the implementation of the Training Guarantee Administration Act (1990). One hundred and twelve persons from this population (in a few cases, an alternate training and development person from the enterprise) returned completed questionnaires. This represented a response rate of 28 per cent (cost factors precluded the use of stamped return-address envelopes!).

Research Instrument

The questionnaire comprised items concerning background information together with the 29 elements of competency developed by the CSB : Workplace Trainers and endorsed by the NTB.

Individuals were asked to provide information on the nature of the work of the firm/organisation, the number of people employed

by their firm/organisation, an number of these people given formal training during 1991-92, the number of years they themselves had been involved in designs of conducting training, and the amount of their work-time they themselves were involved in training activities with designing trainer programs, preparing, presenting and evaluating training and administering/managing training..

The recipients of the questionnaire were asked to indicate on a five-point rating scale, by drawing a circle around the appropriate number, the degree to which each unit of competence and element of competence was important in training and development at their workplace. The response categories were (1) "not important", (2) "low importance", (3) "fairly important", (4) "high importance" and (5) 'very high importance". The completed questionnaires were processed by counting the number of respondents in each of the five response categories for each element of competence.

Data analysis

Frequency counts in response categories enabled comparisons to be made between elements of competency in terms of their perceived degree of importance in the workplace. Further analysis was undertaken using type of industry, size of enterprise, experience in designing or conducting training, and amount of work time spent in different training activities as independent variables and degree of importance of element of competency as the dependent variable.

RESULTS

Respondents

The respondents came from a wide range of industries, for example, finance, property and business services (29%), manufacturing (21%) wholesale/retail (17%) community services (14%), construction (5%), recreation, personal and other services (3%), communication (3%), transport (3%), mining j(2%) and others. The size of their enterprises ranged from a one person small business to an organisation of 2400 employees with the median size of enterprise 39 employees.

Thirty-three (29%) enterprises had between 1-19 employees, fifty-five (49%) had between 20-99 employees, and 29 (22.%) had 100 or more employees., between 1-25 percent of their work time in designing training programs, or preparing, presenting and evaluating training, or administering/managing training (See Table 1). Seventy-six respondents (67%) spend between 1-25 percent of their work time on each of all three types of training activities.

Table 1

References

- Burleigh, J. (1991). Validation of draft standards for workplace trainers. Ultimo: Burleigh & Burleigh.
- Competency Standards Body-Workplace Trainers (1991). Workplace trainer competency standards. Canberra : CSB
- National Training Board (1991). National competency standards : Policy and guidelines. Canberra : Author.
- Peak G. (1991). Australian trainers look at British competency standards. Training and Development in Australia, 18 (4), 11-14.
- x.y{>dl°É·Ñ·ng questionnaires, focusinterviews and workplace visitsted in the Australian standardsy-Workplace Trainers, 1991, p.iv
- a group of on (in a few cases, a substitutesame as the member of the population which was acceptable in that had consisted of two posts : the first to elicit ~~~~~T~~~~;

@~p~0~Û~Û~~~~~f~, the second was made up of in d by their firm/organisation, thethe percentage of annual salary as wages payroll spent by their firm/organisation on formal training in 1991-92, ves had been involved in designing or the amount of their work-time given to training activities such asor dministering/managing training.To complete the second partthe recipients with the independent variables the dependent variable being..

ng (21%) wholesale/retail (17%), n (3%), transport (3%), mining (size of enterprise 39 employees. .%) had 100 or more employees The number of persons provided formal training ranged from 1 to 2,000 with the median being 14.5. The median amount of gross salary and wages payrole of the respondents' enterprises spent on formal training was 4.5 percent. The experience of the respondents in the design or conduct of training was : less than one year (15 persons), 1 - 2 years (50), 3-4 years (12) and 5 or more years (35). Most reported spending

Importance of Competencies

Table 2 shows the number of elements of competence for three levels of degree of importance of each of 10 levels of response frequency. From this table it can be seen it

TABLE 2

that no element of competency was perceived by at least 50 percent of the percent of the respondents to be of very high importance (only one element was rated by more than 30 percent as of "very high importance") , 15 elements by 50 percent or more to be of "high importance" and 29 elements by 50 percent or more

(in fact, by more than 60 percent) to be at least "fairly important". Looking at the data another way, it would appear that 23 elements of competency were rated as of "same importance" or higher by at least 90 percent of the respondents.

Table 3 presents the six elements of competency considered to be most important. Three of these elements

TABLE 3

consultancy namely, "maintain training activities within enterprise and legal requirements", "maintain training records", and "plan training expenditure" are from the unit of competency "manage training"; "provide opportunities for practice" and "follow up and support trainees" are from the unit "deliver and evaluate training"; and the remaining one from the unit "identify the need for training"

Table 4 contains the six elements of competency considered to be least important. Two of these elements of

TABLE 4

competency, namely, "arrange location and facilities" and "arrange equipment, tools and resources" are from the unit "organise training resources" "evaluate promotional activities" and "publicise training benefits" are from the unit "promote training"; and each of the other remaining two from one unit "assess trainees" and "manage training"

replaced which was considered reasonable consisted of two parand n the nature of the work of their percentage of annual salary orÇ%..

training programs, preparing/presenting/ (4) "high importance" and (5) "being the dependent variable being in the workplace. ng (21%), being wages payroll

TABLE of competency of importance at t as of "very high importance") at least of respondents to be of high importance, at least 50 percent fairly important or more competency were rated as of "low of competency, s", "maintain training records" is ; nit "promote training"; and one of the remaining two from the the other from the unit re from the unit of competency "

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se competency standards categories of workplace trainers (Competency Standards Body-Workplace Trainers, 1991, p. iv): competency competency while Category 2 has additional

Competency Trainer

With the enactment of the Training Guarantee (Administration) Act in 1990 many small-size and medium-size enterprises have at least one person qualified by having completed a train-the-trainer course to design or approve training programs. Although not requested under the Act these same individuals tend also to deliver training programs. However, for most of these persons the training function is not a major part of their occupational role. As the number of these trainers has increased considerably over the last two years particularly in small-size and medium-size enterprises, it would not be unreasonable to ascertain the importance given by them to the endorsed trainer competencies in their workplace. Therefore, it was the aim of the present study to investigate a group of individuals who hold a three-day train-the-trainer certificate the degree of importance given by them to the performance of the CSB/NTB competencies in their workplace.

the two competencies opportunities ng resources"the two competencies Type of Industry, Size of Enterprise, Training Experience, Training Activities and Importance of Competencies Table 5 contains those elements of competency for which the degree of importance differed according to the size of the enterprise, length of training experience or amount of work-time given to specific training activities of the respondents. As in Table 5

be seen comparisons between respondents from different types of industry failed to reveal any statistically significant differences in the ratings of the respondents.. These respondents belong to large organisations, having larger training experience and being more involved in preparing, presenting and evaluating training tended to give a greater degree of importance to certain elements of competency. for example, persons from large firms thus to assign more importance to elements within units of designing and developing training, and delivering and evaluating training, and assessing training. Those with longer experience likewise tend to rate higher those elements within the unit associated with designing and developing training. The amount of work-time spent on designing training programs, or administering/managing training does not appear to have the effect that the amount of work-time spent on preparing/presenting/evaluating training has on the perceived importance of the elements of competency. Those respondents who spend more time in preparing/presenting/evaluating training tend to rate ;higher those elements within the units concerned with organising training resources and managing training.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study point to the validity of the set of elements of competency for workplace trainers as developed by the CSB: Workplace trainers and endorsed by the NYB. Each of the 29 elements of competency was perceived to be at

least fairly important in their workplace by 60 percent or more of the respondents.

Twenty-two elements were rated as of "very high importance" by up to 20 percent of the respondents compared with only 6 elements rated as "most important" by less than 20 percent of these individuals.

The concept of two categories of workplace trainer competency standards is supported by the finding that with an increase in the amount of work-time spent in preparing/presenting/evaluating training there is an increase in the perceived importance given to competencies exclusive to Category 2 such as select internal

as external training, arrange for appropriate staff, disseminate training information and advise on training trends and practices. Further support comes from the finding that for the present "part-time" trainers came competencies exclusive to Category 2 were among the list of the least important, for example, to evaluate promotional activities, publicise training benefits and to procure and maintain training support equipment.

The findings, however, suggest a need to review the location of some elements of competency within Category 1 and Category 2 Workplace Trainers competency standards. In particular, Category 2 defined as appropriate for individuals for whom "training is a large part of their job" contains competency standards which are considered among the most important by the participants in the present study most for whom training is not a large part of their job. These people completed a train-the-trainer course so that under the Training Guarantee (Administration) Act 1990 their/enterprises or clients could claim as eligible training expenditure those costs associated with structured training programs designed or approved by them. The majority of the respondents spent some of their work-time designing training programs, some work-time preparing/presenting/evaluating training, and some work-time administering/managing training. They do not represent those for whom training is a large part of their job. Yet in the context of the Training Guarantee they consider it to be most important to "plan training expenditure" and "maintain training within enterprise and legal requirements". The fact is that in order to ensure that their enterprises comply with government legislation these "part-time" workplace trainers are requested to perform some competencies contained within Category 2. In this situation a problem might arise should it be decided to develop a national vocational qualification for workplace trainers based on elements of competency within Category 1 and another such qualification on elements within Category 2. As can be seen from the findings of the present study a national vocational qualification based on Category 1 competency standards would not be adequate for those not a large part of their job.

The relative importance given to some competencies by respondents reflects the needs of the workplace trainer performing within the context of government legislation. For example, among the most important competencies are maintaining training activities within enterprise and legal requirements and maintaining training records which are necessary under the Training Guarantee Act. Also, the importance given to competencies such as providing opportunities for practice and following-up/and supporting trainees can be related to the fact that periods of "closely supervised practice" count as eligible training expenditure under the Act. However, it is rather ironic that persons qualified under the Act to design and approve training programs place more importance on competencies within the "deliver and evaluate training" unit of competency than on those within the "design and develop" unit of competency, especially as the government does not require designers to have a qualification. It is not until persons have considerable training experience and/or are employed in a large size enterprise that they assign more importance to preparing training plans, developing training programs and developing assessment methods.

The relatively low importance given to some competencies may be due to the nature of the training environment of the respondents. In particular, ongoing on-the-job enterprise training may not require the workplace trainer to arrange the location and facilities, to arrange equipment, tools and resources, or to procure and maintain training support equipment. They are already there.

As yet assessment of trainee competence accorded its proper

degree of importance, especially as our country moves toward a competency-based vocational education and training system. This observation holds also for full-time trainers undertaking formal courses at the university (Peak, 1991). However, among the present group of respondents there was variation in degree of importance given to developing assessment methods according to enterprise, size, training experience and training administration/management activity. Also, respondents from large-size firms/organisations tended to place more importance on reviewing the learning process and recording assessment results.

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common an 10 elements of competency (See In the developing programs. Although not required under the legislation derably over the last two years, of the nationally developed and for these persons among the CSB workplace trainer/rurse presented by an employer association) comprised itemsto provide training was tency was perceived by at or more one element was rated by at least

ranked as the most important in terms of response frequencies in "high importance" and "very high importance" categories. ranked as least important in terms of response frequencies is "low importance" and "not important" categories. type of industry, size of to specific training activities. It presents the outcomes of data analysis using a chi-square in terms of level of statistical significance (.05, .07, .001). As can be on each competency failed to yield significarences. On the other hand, tholing to large-size of having lonrtain elements of competency. F-size firms tended ofon designing training programs has no effect on the rating of the importance of the competencies in the workplace. However, tting/evaluating trainingd of Those who spend more time administering/managing training rate higher in importance the competencies "develop assessment methods" and "evaluate training". eveloped by the CSB: Workplace Trainers and endorsed by the National Training Board. Each of all given a rating of "" 0 percent or more of the respon Even though some elements jof competency have been presented as relatively least important there competencies were rated as "not important" by no more than 15 percent of the respondents.

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with two categories "part-time" trainers some least important, for example, evaluating promotional activities, publicising its and procuring its study in Category 1 and Category 2 workplace in particular, Category 2 considered by the CSB job" contains competencies These people completed a train-(Administration) Act 1990 their Act workplace trainers are required by the profession underpinned by of competency train-the-trainer graduates for whom training is National Board of Employment, Education and Training (1989). Industry training in Australia : The need for change. Interim report on consultancy of the Employment and Skills Formation Council. Canberra. : AOPS

19 , the tendency was perceived by rated". terms of response frequencies in .
Statistic and making decisions at conventional level of significance. As can be seen from the table, #

findings of small-size firms indicate certain competencies in designing and evaluating training, and promoting training training experience likewise indicate certain competencies in designing and managing training a greater proportion of their work-time in importance in certain competencies, delivering and evaluating training Time spent had little effect ; on perceived importance of competencies in the workplace except for
An estimate of total time spent in training activities during work-time for each respondent was derived from the addition of the time spent in designing training programs, preparing/presenting/evaluating training, and administering/managing training. As shown in Table 5 the more time one spends on training activities the more important become certain competencies within the units of identifying of training needs designing and developing training organising training, promoting training and managing training.

Analysis of the background information provided by respondents showed that they came from most of industry groups within the Australian Bureau of Statistics classification, most were employed in small-size and medium-size enterprises (although surprisingly 22 percent came from large-size enterprises), most of these firms spend more than the average on formal training, most had less than 5 years experience in designing or conducting training, and most spent part of their work-time in each of the activities within the training cycle.
Even though some elements have been presented by the researcher as the least important the high degree of respondents reflects the situation of the workplace training political requirements" and

training activities in order to validate by means of sub-group comparisons the location of each of the competencies within categories

In presenting two categories workplace trainer competency standards the CSB for Workplace Trainers has not acknowledged the present political context within which workplace training takes place. A sizeable group of trainers has emerged in the workplace over the last two years which comprises who have sepeople spend"". In,to perform these competencies which have been assigned to Category 2 by the CSB for Workplace Trainers. In the United Kingdom National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Scottish National Qualifications (SVQs) in Training and Development, based on national standards developed by the Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB), have been accredited by the national Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) and the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SCOTVEC). At present there are those NVQs/SVQs in Training and Development set levels three and four of the NCVQ/SCOTVEC framework. Each of these represents a different mix of competencies from a single set of national standards for training and development. (Training and Development Lead Body, 1992). The concern of the present researches is that in Australia having accepted two sets of national standards for workplace trainers the training and development profession may decide to develop two national vocational qualifications for workplace trainers, one based on the competency standards within Category 1 and the other on those within Category 2 of the Workplace Trainer Competency Standards. As suggested by the findings of the present study and vocational qualifications based on Category 1 competencies alone may not be adequate for those persons holding a three -day train-the-trainer certificate who work within the context of the Training Guarantee (Administration) Act 1990. Canberra : Author Training and Development Lead Body (1992). National standards for training and development : Qualifications structure. Rugby : Author~&~&Ç~&ç~

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Training Activities of Respondents

Training Activity	Amount of work-				
	None	1%-25%	26%-50%	51%-75%	76%-100%
Designing training programs	9	98	3	1	0
Preparing, presenting & evaluating training	9	88	11	3	0
Administering/managing training					

6 92 5 5 3

TABLE 2

Competencies by Degree of Importance and Level of Response

Degree of Importance	Level of Response	Count
Very high importance	Very high importance	715
High importance	High importance	284
Very high importance	Fairly important	157
High importance	Fairly important	157
Fairly important	Fairly important	157
Low importance	Fairly important	157
Very high importance	Low importance	157
High importance	Low importance	157
Fairly important	Low importance	157
Low importance	Low importance	157

TABLE 3

Most Important Elements of Competency	Element of Competency	Count
Very high importance	Maintain training activities within enterprise and legal requirements	63%
High importance	Maintain training records	63%
Very high importance	Determine if training need exists	29%
High importance	Follow up and support trainees	60%
Very high importance	Provide opportunities for practice	26%

TABLE 4

Least Important Elements of Competency

Element of Competency	Count
Low importance	Count

Not importantNot importantArrange location and facilities 38%
13%Arrange equipment, tools and resources 38% 13%Evaluate
promotional activities 38% 13%Procure and maintain training
support equipment 38% 11%Record assessment results 36%
10%Publicise training benefits 32% 10%

TABLE 5
Importance of Element of Competency By Industry, Enterprise
Size,

Training Experience and Training Activities

Elements of CompetencyIndustryEnterprise

SizeTraining

ExperienceDesignPrepare/

Present/

EvaluateAdminister/

ManageTraining

ActivityDetermine if training needs exist.**Identify competencies
for specific jobs/roles. Identify competencies held by individuals
for specific jobs/roles. Define training requirements.* **

*Prepare training plan.*** *Develop training programs.**

*Develop assessment methods.*** **Select internal or external
training delivery.** **Arrange for appropriate staff.*Arrange

location and facilities** * *Arrange equipment, tools and

resources.**Identify and arrange external training.**Deliver

training /learning opportunities.* ***Provide opportunities for

practice.**Follow up and support trainees.Evaluate

training.**Assess trainee competence.Review learning progress.* *

***Record assessment results* * *Provide training information.*

Disseminate training information.* * *Publicise training

benefits..Evaluate promotional activities.Maintain training

records.Report on training.* * **Plan training expenditure.*

**Procure and maintain training support equipment.* **Advise on

training trends and practices.* ** Maintain training activities

within enterprise and legal requirements.*

KEY: * Significant at .05 level

** Significant at .01 level

*** Significant at .001 level

High importanceTh

%ds Body-Workplace Trainers, 1992andards extensive
consultationsduring 1991-92 han one year (15 persons), one-two
years (50), three-four years (12) and five

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ing training support equipment. of er competency standards the CSB: fully resent political context of these official training program designers or approvers for "full-time" workplace trainers by the CSB:), have been accredited by the NEC). At present there are three at ds for training and development (Training &rn of the present researcherers, one based on the competencies indings of the present study a vocational qualificationsoley may not be sufficient some workplace trainers for whom training is not a "large part of their job", particularly that group of persons with a threeain-the-trainer certificate ingpolitical ds Body-Workplace Trainers (1992ard of Employment, Education &Training &.

it to be most important to "maintain training recordsl at onetency was rated3'", competences6 and 15 competences rated at least 6of respondents to be of "high importance", and 15 competencies by at least 80 percent (and all 29 competencies "fairly important" Table 3 presents the sixFollow up and support trainees 60 26Plain training expenditure 56Determine if training need exists 63% 22%ThreeNot important/ Low importanceAs seen from the table these competencies include "select internal and external training", "arrange for appropriate staff", "identify and arrange external training", "disseminate training information", 'plan training expenditure", "procur and maintain training support equipment" and "advise on training trends and practices" (all these are exclusive to Category 2 of the workplace trainer competency standards). and "plan trtraining expenditure" allThe present findings support to a certain extent the validity of the concept of the two-category framework of the CSB (although this was not the aim of the present study or accordingly was the research design the most appropriate for this purpose). In particular, an increase in the proportion of work-time spent preparing/presenting/evaluating training was found to be associated with a greater degree of importance given to most of the competencies exclusive to Category 2. Further, that the competencies exclusive to Category 2 such as evaluating promotion al activities, publicising

training benefits, and procuring and maintaining training support equipment were found to be among the least important by a group for most of whom training is not a major/large part of their job supports the placement of these competencies in that category by the CSB: Workplace Trainers. On the other hand, the degree of importance given to two other competencies exclusive to Category 2, namely, maintaining training activities within enterprises and legal requirement and planning training expenditure suggests a further look at their placement within the CSB classification. It would appear from this latter finding that in placing competencies within the two-category framework full consideration was not given to The Further Education Unit (FEU) in the United Kingdom, on the basis of its own survey and other studies/field trials has designed a provisional qualifications framework for two main categories of personnel in further education (FE) colleges, namely, lecturers in relation to learners, and staff developers and managers in relation to lecturers. The FEU has drawn from the TDCB competency-based standards (and as well as from Management Charter Initiative Standards) to propose two qualifications for FE lecturers, one for FE staff development providers, one for FE staff development managers, and one for FE staff mentors, like the NVQ/SVQs for trainers and developers, each of these proposed vocational qualifications is based on a different mix of competencies from a single set of national competency-standards for trainers and developers (Further Education Unit, 1992). In summary, among a specialist but fact-growing group within training and development it was found that the competencies developed for workplace trainers by the CSB : Workplace Trainers and endorsed by the national Training Board were considered to be important in the workplace. The findings suggest, however, that due to the requirements within the current political context some competencies assigned to "full-time" trainers may also be appropriate for "part-time" trainers.

Further Education Unit (1992). TDLB standards in further education. London : Author.

training/maintaining within enterprises and legal nt and planning training expenditure within the CSB classification. lecturers Plan,).the finding of further look at their placement

be most important to "plan training expenditure, and one for FE

staff mentors. Lthe training and development profession se Trainers and endorsed by the Nby the CSBnexpandingir some