

Engaging reform through using language: Vocational education and training in Queensland schools

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Abstract

This paper argues that one of the challenges for education and training leaders is to generate and/or explain and justify new concepts, the changed point of view these concepts convey, and what constitutes an intelligible form of senior secondary schooling. Australia-wide reforms to Senior Learning (Years 10-12) bring with them a loss of existing concepts. This in turn means a loss of the point of view these concepts conveyed and a loss of the ability to decide what constitutes intelligible actions that people can understand in this field. Reforms such as the introduction of vocational education and training in schools (VETiS) can leave educators and trainers with no idea about what is now worthwhile knowledge and skills. Leaders have a significant role to play in this context. Lear (2006) argues that successful leaders facing significant cultural change benefit in part from tracking changes in reality, including the call for new concepts which comes from the declining power of existing ways of naming the world. This paper analyses the language now being used by education and training leaders working in and with schools in Queensland to institutionalise VETiS to become everyday practice. Data from interviews with 58 leaders in Queensland have been analysed with the help of NVivo. New concepts have been identified as providing a new point of view about what makes VETiS intelligible. The frequency of the terms expressing the concepts reflects the changes leaders are now dealing with Senior Learning in Queensland schools.

Key words: senior learning; vocational education and training; educational leadership

1. Introduction

This paper analyses the language used in interviews in the study of vocational education and training in schools (VETiS) to determine what change of language one is facing. Language reflects changes of policies and practice. It makes visible the changes of times as new concepts occurring. An analysis of the language used by former UK Prime Minister Mr Tony Blair and his New Labour to determine if their 'new politics' was more than just empty words (Fairclough, 2000). The kinds of work that language does in workplaces were studied to find the ways workers develop new language practices to do their work by Farrell and Holkner (2006). Language change could also reflect changes occurring in education and in schools. The traditional concept of senior secondary schooling is doing literacy and numeracy, selecting people for tertiary education. In this paper, we explore the change of language

occurring in Senior Learning in Queensland. We argue that one of the challenges for VETiS leaders is to generate and/or explain and justify new concepts, the changed point of view these concepts convey, and what constitutes an intelligible form of senior secondary schooling.

2. Learn and/or earn

In Australia, there are a certain number of young people aged 15-17 who are disengaged from either learning or earning. 526,000 young Australians not engaged in full time work or study (Rudd, Swan, Smith, & Wong, 2007). They are at the risk of neither learning nor earning. Research shows that the longer the students stay in school, the better opportunity they have in employment (Chen, 2009; OECD, 2008). The transition from school to either decent work or further education and training becomes important to both students and the society.

The current Australian Government recognizes the importance of VETiS for young Australians. Learning and earning was the focus of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting in 2009 (COAG, 2009). The VETiS innovations corresponds with the Governments concerns about young people's learning and earning. In the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, there are educational goals for young Australians relating to VET and transition to work and further education (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs, 2008). The Australian Governments support VETiS as an important part of Senior Learning.

The Australian Government funds for three years the establishment of twenty five (25) Australian Technical Colleges (ATCs) across Australia in areas where there are skills needs, a high youth population and a strong industry base. ATCs are for Years 11 and 12 students, who can both study academic subjects for their Year 12 certificate and start an Australian School-based Apprenticeship. The Government contracted with local community partnerships (LCPs), which deliver LCP career and transition programmes to school students aged 13-19; and partner with industries, schools, career advisers, community organisations, parents, young people, youth service providers and other organisations to help students transfer to further education, training and employment.

The nation-wide initiatives also include the Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) Programme, the Career and Transition Support (CTS) Programme, the Adopt a School Programme, the Australian School-based Apprenticeships scheme that includes apprenticeships and traineeships, which can be full-time, part-time or school-based. Rudd Government initiated *Skilling Australia for the Future*, which includes the establishment of trade training centres for secondary schools in Australia (Rudd, et al., 2007).

Australia-wide reforms to Senior Learning (Years 10-12) bring with them a loss of existing concepts. This in turn means a loss of the point of view conveyed by existing concepts and a loss of the ability to decide what constitutes intelligible actions that people can understand in this field. Reforms such as the introduction of VETiS can leave educators and trainers with no idea about what is now worthwhile knowledge and skills. Leaders have a significant role to play in this context.

Queensland education and training reforms initiated in 2006 aimed to tackle the issue of young adults' transition to work and/or further education and training, and thus the larger issue of skills shortage faced by Australia (Harreveld and Singh, 2007). The reforms bring changes to the schools, industries and local communities. There are worries, anxiety and uncertainty from education and training leaders. To explain change leaders need a change of language and imagination. One of the changes occurring during and after the implementation of the education and training reforms is the change of language in Senior Learning. Queensland education and training leaders have contributed to the development and/or use of language – giving new meanings to senior secondary schooling.

3. Lear's concept of language change

Lear (2006) argues that successful leaders facing significant cultural change benefit in part from tracking changes in reality, including the call for new concepts which comes from the declining power of existing ways of naming the world. Lear (2006) describes the life of the head of the Crow nation in the USA in late 19th century and beginning of 20th century. The Crow were confined to a reservation in late 19th century. They could not pursue their traditional way of life on their reservation. The destruction of the Crow's traditional life destroyed their extant conception of happiness:

“The Crow had a conception of happiness, a conception of what life was worth living *for* ... With the destruction of this way of life came the destruction of the end or goal ... their conception of *what happiness is* could no longer be lived. The characteristic activities that used to constitute the good life ceased to be intelligible acts. A crucial blow to their happiness was a loss of the concepts with which their happiness had been understood” (Lear, 2009, p. 55).

Cultural collapse refers to a situation when a nation’s traditional way of life is lost and when the people lose the conception of what happiness is. The leader of the Crow, Plenty Coups, needed to think about “how to live...how to lead his tribe” (Lear, 2006, p. 56). But for him, there was little to aid his practical reasoning. It seems that Plenty Coups was in an abysmal situation, an unliveable conditions for the Crow people. Plenty Coups’ reasoning was driven by an abysmal reasoning.

We are vulnerable in the contemporary world where the economic and cultural globalisation, financial crisis, is leading to changed views towards senior schooling and, learning and earning. Because the future is not known, the consequence of the risks that leaders will take is not known. It was painful for the Crow to lose those traditional practices associated with buffalos and horses. Likewise, it might be anticipated that it could also be uncomfortable and painful for traditional teachers in a senior secondary school to know that many of their students are not there to do traditional subjects, such as advanced language or science, but to do apprenticeship in a trade. It could be unthinkable for traditional high school teachers to train students for a trade, not just teaching them the knowledge they require for university entry.

This paper focuses on Lear’s theory of leadership and the role of language. It analyses the language now being used by education and training leaders working in and with schools in Queensland as they institutionalise VETiS to become everyday practice. The purpose of this paper is to identify the concepts mostly talked by leaders at different levels or in different sectors. The concepts used by each group of leaders are compared to find out the differences and similarities. The reasons for these similarities and difference are then explored.

3. Method

The research reported in this paper is part of a much large research project which investigates multi-level leadership in Queensland’s Senior Learning (Harreveld & Singh, 2007, 2009). The authors of this paper are members of this project. Interviews

were undertaken by the authors and other project members during 2008 and 2009 for data collection. Interviewees were selected to include leaders at different levels from different systems across sectors relating to VETiS. The data for this paper come from 51 interviews with 58 interviewees in 7 different cities or towns in Queensland. The interviewees are all leaders from different levels of education and industry involved in Queensland's education and training reforms to the Senior Phase of L/earning, through the introduction of VETiS. Figure 1 displays composition of interviewees showing the multi-tier, cross sectoral leadership in engaging young people in Senior L/earning.

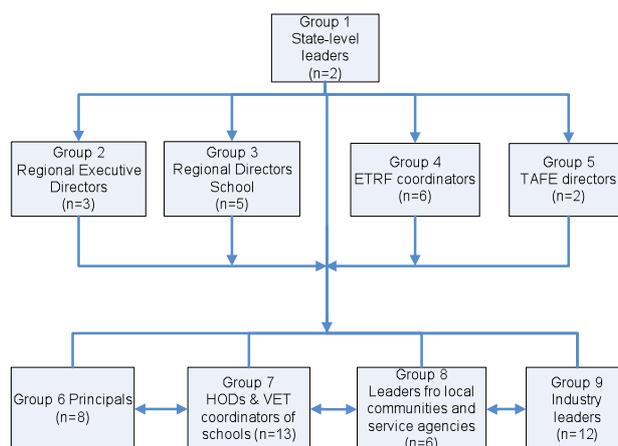


Figure 1 Multi-level cross-sectoral interviewees

The interviewees were categorised into 9 groups of leaders plus one group containing the interviews of all leaders. QSR NVivo was used to query the frequency of each term that was identified to find the frequency of language being used. The reason for doing this frequency query was based on the assumption that the more frequent the words are used, the more important these concepts are.

Altogether 10 NVivo 'projects' were set up, one 'project' for one group of leaders (9) plus one containing all interview transcripts. 486 terms used by the interviewees/leaders were identified as free nodes, and coded into 10 NVivo 'projects' and each of these terms was queried one by one for each group of leaders.

The result of querying the identified language for each NVivo 'project' (each group of leaders), showed in which interview transcripts a certain term appeared and how many times it occurred. The list of the free nodes from each NVivo project was exported and then were combined together in one Excel sheet, that is, the exported lists of language for the 9 groups of leaders were put into one table. In this table,

each term was put in the left hand column, and the name of each group was put at the top of the table. The frequency of each term was put under the respective name of each group of leaders.

It might be claimed that the list of language were selected to accord with the researcher, and thus is biased. There may be doubt that the frequency generated from query of the whole terms is not objective. In order to avoid this potential source of bias, NVivo Word Frequency Query was also used to ensure inter-rater reliability, as this involved the automatic counting of the occurrence of words. As a result of the automatic searching of NVivo Word Frequency Query, 1000 words, which is the maximum counting, were automatically identified. Then all those words that are not meaningful for the data analysis were deleted, such as “you, have, know, got, all, yeah, one, well”. The rest (n=479) were kept.

4. Language used in Senior Learning

Some concepts were identified as providing a new point of view about what makes Senior Learning intelligible. Education and training leaders are using concepts in arguing the case for VETiS. By using NVivo’s query function, all the 486 free nodes were queried. As a result, a list of free nodes was exported. The most frequently-used new terms (n=50) by all groups of leaders are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Most frequently-used terms by leaders

Ran k	Name
1	<i>work</i>
2	<i>industry (s)</i>
3	time
4	teacher(s)
5	<i>training</i>
6	<i>certificate (s)</i>
7	<i>business</i>
8	TAFE
9	<i>skill(s)</i>
10	different
11	learn
12	<i>employer(s)</i>
13	VET
14	<i>apprenticeship(s)</i>
15	<i>apprentice (s)</i>
16	change
17	support
18	level(s)
19	<i>money</i>
20	community
21	<i>engineering</i>
22	parents
23	involve
24	<i>building</i>
25	opportunity
26	<i>pathway(s)</i>
27	<i>funding</i>
28	<i>construction</i>
29	OP
30	<i>partnership(s)</i>
31	<i>workplace(s)</i>
32	curriculum
33	<i>link</i>
34	role
35	<i>work</i>
	<i>experience</i>
36	<i>traineeship(s)</i>
37	relationship
38	QCE
39	<i>career</i>
40	Certificate 2
41	<i>aviation</i>
	competency and competencies
42	
43	private
44	<i>facility(s)</i>
45	leadership
46	timetable(s)
47	<i>qualification(s)</i>
48	<i>manufacturing</i>
49	<i>trade training</i>
50	15

The top five terms with highest hits are ‘work’, ‘industry’, ‘time’, ‘teacher (s)’ and ‘training’. Using data from Table 1 it was possible to establish how closely these terms connected VET to literacy and numeracy learning. In Table 1 words in italic denotes that the concepts denoted by them are related to VET, the words in bold denote that concepts denoted by them are only related to literacy and numeracy. The concepts denoted by the rest of the words are related to both VET and literacy and numeracy. From Table 1, over half of the terms out of the top 50 are about VET (n=28). Less than half of the terms out of the top 50 are related to both VET and literacy and numeracy learning (n=21). Only one term is solely related to literacy and numeracy learning, that is ‘OP’.

Data analysis to identifying free nodes through open-coding is open to be questioned. There may be doubts that the words coded were predetermined or the words thought to be unimportant were discarded. In order to ensure that the data analysis was more objective, NVivo Word Frequency Query was used and 479 words were identified as having the highest frequency of use after all unrelated words were deleted. Out of this list of 479 words, the top 100 most frequently-used words were listed in Table 2.

Table 2 Top 100 words most used by leaders through NVivo Word Frequency Query

No.	Word	Count						
		34		<i>money</i>	274	69	place	192
1	school	2109	35	course	271	70	principal	192
2	<i>work</i>	1434	36	<i>engineering</i>	271	71	subjects	191
3	kids	1351	37	staff	263	72	<i>construction</i>	180
4	schools	1234	38	<i>experience</i>	261	73	terms	179
5	people	1214	39	days	260	74	areas	178
6	students	1025	40	set	254	75	1	177
7	<i>industry</i>	935	41	trying	253	76	problem	177
8	time	756	42	level	252	77	senior	176
9	<i>training</i>	564	43	<i>centre</i>	249	78	side	175
10	<i>program</i>	489	44	area	243	79	<i>model</i>	173
11	<i>business</i>	455	45	parents	240	80	kid	171
12	<i>TAFE</i>	455	46	<i>programs</i>	238	81	issues	168
13	different	433	47	government	231	82	understand	168
14	education	410	48	new	230	83	six	164
15	young	401	49	<i>apprentices</i>	228	84	teaching	164
16	teachers	396	50	support	228	85	process	163
17	Queensland	387	51	college	226	86	<i>employer</i>	162
18	<i>working</i>	382	52	use	224	87	subject	160
19	state	379	53	building	221	88	<i>workplace</i>	160
20	<i>skills</i>	367	54	maths	221	89	curriculum	158
21	<i>based</i>	361	55	<i>certificate</i>	217	90	department	157
22	<i>VET</i>	350	56	point	207	91	Brisbane	154
23	12	343	57	own	204	92	<i>project</i>	154
24	<i>job</i>	340	58	2	201	93	best	152
25	10	329	59	<i>funding</i>	201	94	great	152
26	teacher	314	60	number	200	95	hard	151
27	learning	309	61	OP	200	96	interesting	149
28	<i>trade</i>	290	62	system	198	97	local	148
29	university	286	63	11	197	98	apprenticeships	146
30	student	285	64	Gladstone	197	99	months	144
			65	<i>apprenticeship</i>	195	100	real	144
31	<i>Cert [certificate]</i>	284	66	<i>employers</i>	195			
32	community	278	67	<i>change</i>	193			
33	person	275	68	involved	192			

Many words in Table 2 are related to both education and training. Among the 100 most-frequently used words generated from Word Frequency Query, 29 words [in italics] were about vocational education and training. Considering that leaders had much to say during the interview relating to Senior Learning, 29% is a substantial figure. This shows that leaders were much concerned about VETiS. The above findings are based on analysis of NVivo Word Frequency Query of the language used in the interviews with all the leaders from different sectors and systems. It has the similar results to what is identified as free nodes from open-coding, showing VETiS is much concerned by leaders.

5. Language valued by different groups of leaders

It would be unfair and invalid to compare the language used by each group of leaders according to the number of counts because for some groups, there are fewer leaders at higher levels than for groups at other levels. The length of the interviews are not equal for the different groups. So it is not desirable to compare each group of leaders according to the total number of the coded terms used. However, it is fair and reasonable to look at the ranking of terms used by each group of leaders.

As mentioned in the method section, one combined Excel table with lists of free nodes from the 10 NVivo projects was set up. Microsoft Excel's sorting function was used to rank the language used by each leader group. Then the top 100 most-used language for each group of leaders was selected and combined together into one Microsoft Word document. '1' denotes the highest ranking while '100' is the lowest ranking. These Appendices are not included here because the lists are too long and because there are not many occurrences for the words whose overall ranking comes after 100.

It is reasonable to start analysing the ranking of the language examining the some most frequently-used terms generated from all the interviews together.

'work'

The word 'work' is ranked as number 1 when all the interviews are considered. All leaders talked of 'work'. It is ranked as number 1 for Group 4, ETRF coordinators, and Groups 6-9 (principals, school HOD and VET coordinators, leaders from local communities and service agencies, and leaders from industries). It is ranked as 2 for Groups 1-2 (State-level leaders and Regional Executive Directors), number 3 for Group 3 (Executive Directors Schools) and 6 for Group 5 (TAFE leaders) (For the names of each group of leaders, please see Figure 1). Queensland's education and training reforms show that the focus is now on 'work'. With these reforms, work is frequently talked about among leaders. This is new language in Senior Learning.

'industry/industries'

The word 'industry/industries' is ranked number 2 when all the interviews are considered. It is ranked in top 5 in the new language used by all group of leaders.

'time'

The word 'time' is ranked overall number 3. It is ranked as number 3 for Groups 5 & 7; number 4 for Groups 4, 8 & 9; number 5 for Group 1; and number 6 for Groups 2 & 6. This shows that leaders from all groups consider time is an issue for Senior Learning and Earning.

'teacher(s)'

The word 'teacher (s)' is ranked number 4 when all the interviews are considered. The word 'teacher (s)' is ranked within top 10 except for Group 3 of Executive Directors Schools. This seems exceptional, suggesting that teachers play an important role in the reforms to Senior Learning in Queensland. Executive Directors Schools talked less about teachers during the interviews than other groups of leaders. From this ranking, it seems that Executive Directors Schools give considerable attention to the role of teachers less than other groups of leaders in the reforms to Senior Learning.

'training'

The word 'training' is ranked overall number 5. 'Training' is ranked lower by Group 1 (State-level leaders) and Group 3 (Executive Directors Schools) and Group 8 (local communities leaders) than by other groups of leaders.

'business'

The word 'business' is ranked overall number 7. It is ranked as number 3 for Group 2 (Regional Executive Directors); number 20 for Group 3; and number 49 for Group 1 (State-level leaders). 'Business' was used less by Group 3, Executive Directors Schools, and far less by State-level leaders than by other groups of leaders. This shows that these two groups attach importance to business less than the other groups of leaders.

'TAFE'

The word 'TAFE' is ranked overall number 8. It is ranked as number 1 for Group 5 (TAFE leaders); and number 33 for Group 1 (State-level leaders). It seems 'natural' that 'TAFE' is ranked as number 1 for leaders from TAFE institutes. Leaders from TAFE would use the word 'TAFE' frequently. That, the word 'TAFE' is ranked as 33 for Group 1 (State-level leaders), the lowest among all the groups of leaders, may suggest that for State-level leaders, TAFE is less important.

Skill

Overall the word 'skill' is ranked overall number 9. That 'skill' is ranked in the top 10 suggests that it is an important issue for young adults, especially by principals. 'Skill' has the highest ranking among the 9 groups of leaders.

Following the top 10 new language comes the word 'learn'. The word 'learn' was queried using stemmed search. 'Learn' was ranked 11 when all the interviews are considered. It is a little surprising that 'learn' was ranked the lowest by HODs and VET coordinators when compared with other groups of leaders, given that the former are also engaged in or closest to day-to-day teaching. It might be assumed that they would use 'learn' more frequently than other leaders. But the result is to the contrary.

There is no significant difference in the ranking for the words 'work', 'industry(s)', 'time', 'skill (s)', 'different', 'learn', and 'support'. All these words are ranked in top 20 when all interviews are considered. This suggests that leaders think that the concepts conveyed by these words are important to the reforms to the Senior Learning.

It is quite distinctive that there is great difference in ranking for some language. There is a marked difference in ranking of the following words:

Table 3 Language with marked difference in ranking among different groups of leaders

<i>Qualifications</i>	<i>Stakeholder s</i>	<i>Fields</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Sites</i>
certificates	employer	VET trade	apprenticeships	trade training centre
Certificate II	parents	engineering	pathway	community
Certificate I	Apprentice	traineeship	timetable	organisation
Certificate III	Indigenous	manual arts	engage	work placement

workplace	coordinator	aviation	career
competency	private	cost	flexible
QSA	trainer	manufacturing	training
	Accounting	construction	funds
	RTO	hairdressing and beauty	qualification
	school-based apprentice		senior schooling
			involve
			safety
			strategy
			ETRF

These terms were ranked lower being over 100. Some new terms ranked higher being between 60 points higher in difference among the 9 groups of leaders. These include words such as *'quality'*, *'strategy'*, *'hairdressing and beauty'*, *'partner'*, *'organisation'*, *'capacity'*, and *'network'*. The difference in the ranking either higher or lower suggests that there is much different thinking about the concepts represented by these terms. It is interesting to see that the lower overall ranking of some terms, the more difference there is in their ranking among different groups of leaders. There is more difference among different groups of leaders after overall ranking 48. This suggests that leaders may have more different opinions towards the words ranked lower than 48.

6. Worries, anxiety and uncertainty among leaders

The frequency in the use of these categories reflects the changes leaders have been dealing with Senior Learning in Queensland schools. At the beginning of the educational and training reforms in Queensland, leaders at different levels and in various fields had their anxieties, worries and uncertainties about the reforms.

“There was a bit of doubt, are kids going to be able to go to the centre and behave safely and not do the wrong thing? That was probably a worry from our side. It would certainly have been a worry from the other side ... we don't want fifteen or sixteen year olds running around the site ... strike a problem from day one so we cracked that right on the head” (Robert, Principal).

The students' safety in doing VETiS was one of the worries for leaders in implementing VETiS. There were anxieties and worries on both sides. The school was worried whether the students will go to the centre and behave safely; the

industry was worried about safety and did not want 15 or 16 year olds on the work site.

Leaders also have anxieties about the future of the youth labour markets, especially when considering the possible slump in the booming mining industry (which had a major slump in 2008-09 and substantial loss of jobs). The workers in the mining industry had to return to other industries in search of work. How can leaders face this future issue? One Regional Executive Director had a vision of preparing for such a possibility, thereby showing his worries for the future of young adults. He explained:

sooner or later the economic boom that sits around minerals which is basically provided by Queensland and Western Australia will plateau ... I think those jobs will have to roll back out and we will need to be able to capture those people in terms of the skills that they have and utilising them in business and industry” (Joshua).

Leaders’ worries lead them being proactive. They prepare for the future possibility of young workers losing their jobs in the mining industry. Leaders also had uncertainties about VETiS during its implementation.

“I had a student last year who had a traineeship to become a draftsman and turned up for work one day and was told it had been cancelled. So things happen very quickly and there’s a lot of uncertainty. The number of traineeship and apprenticeships being handed out by the council directly has been significantly reduced” (Ella, ETRF Coordinator).

The uncertainties of VET placements for students are a challenge to VETiS leaders. With the progress of VETiS, more young adults are engaged in doing traineeship and apprenticeships. Leaders have to consider the diverse range of traineeship and apprenticeship placements for students. Changes to local government authorities led to corresponding reductions in traineeship placements they offered, which was a sensitive for leaders seeking to provide enough placements for young adults.

The words ‘*anxiety*’, and ‘*worry*’ combined appeared 51 times all together among all groups of leaders. Together they ranked as number 96, falling within the top 100-word list. This suggests that anxiety and worry are important aspects in their leadership.

7. Language about VET subjects in schools

Many concepts were generated during the implementation of VETiS reforms in Queensland. It is impossible to analyse all the language one by one in this paper. In this section a selection of terms are analysed to explore the change in leaders brought by the reforms to Senior Learning.

'A Plus'

To many students in senior secondary schools, their participation in VETiS is an enhancement of their academic literacy and numeracy, giving them an 'A Plus' to them. The phrase "A Plus" was ranked number 95 with overall occurrence of 40 times. Principal and CEO Daniel stated:

the employability skills – we use them – we use this whole process, which is around the A plus. We say, if you come to this college you're an A plus student. And the A plus has to be your attitude, your attendance, your appreciation and all those sort of things, around that.

The students' VET learning experiences give them appropriate attitudes, ensures their continuing attendance at school through enriching their learning experience. Principal Jason stated:

Once boys are 13, 14, 15, they really need some real life connection to the learning that's happening for them. So that plus, the use of technology and more kinetic learning environment, has sort of coalesced with that vocational agenda as well.

VETiS enables young adults to connect to engaging real life learning experiences. It offers an alternative pathway to well-established academic pathway for young adults. VETiS enhances their ability and resume for future work, providing them a good chance for future employment. Besides these benefits, VETiS keeps these students at school longer while they are doing VETiS and getting work-ready. Principal Charles explained:

See the other plus about it is that employers are looking for kids a bit older now. So we can actually keep them, give them a level of maturity and a level of responsibility, and then the employers are getting them when they're 17, with some skills that they can work on, but also some personal development.

Employers may not employ young adults if they are not old enough. So while the young adults are doing VET, they could become older, more mature, responsible,

and more work-ready so that employers would employ them. While the word “A Plus” is new it is well accepted by schools engaged in the implementation of the reforms to Senior Learning.

Certificates

One result of young adults participating in VETiS is the award of VET certificates. The certificates ranges from Certificates I to IV. Certificate II was frequently mentioned by different groups of leaders ahead of Certificates I, III and IV. The word ‘certificate (s)’ was ranked the highest, number 4 by principals among all the leaders groups. It can be seen that principals were especially concerned about what certificates and levels that their students could achieve as part of their academic learning. These leaders pay great attention to the certification of the learning and earning engaged through VETiS. Principal Brian stated:

You’ll notice that we don’t do any construction or furnishing or engineering. We – deliberately because ... we found that local industries are very – fuss about taking kids out of school with a Certificate II.

What certificates and what level of certificates delivered in school mainly depend on the industries. School leaders have to adjust their VET courses according to the market.

7. Discussion

Following Lear (2006) it seems reasonable to argue that education and training leaders in Queensland face significant changes arising from the reforms associated with VETiS. They work to keep a track of these changes. This work includes developing and/or using new concepts because the power of existing terms of naming the world of senior secondary schooling is in decline as it becomes part of the mass rather than elite education system, and in doing so integrates both vocation and academic into its services provision, and does so by linking with external education and training providers.

The life of students of Generation Y and present leaders has been greatly changed, being markedly different from the life of ‘Baby-boomer Generation,’ 50 years ago when comprehensive secondary schools were being established throughout Australia.

The economic conditions and educational situation have greatly changed. The meaning of senior secondary education has shifted from education of a select elite of people destined for the small number of available university places; now those once eliminated from senior secondary school of part of the mass of young adults required to engage in education, training of full-time work, that is learning and/or earning. Leaders cannot pursue their traditional way of leadership in senior secondary education. The traditional way of providing education at this level has now gone. They are now leading schools that provide mass education and training, which means learning and/or earning for all young adults from all walks of life.

The prevailing concept many people – educators, parents, employers – have of senior secondary education (Years 10-12) is one that sees this level of education as preparation for tertiary education. However, the Australian Government's goal now is for to bring forward the 90 per cent Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate target from 2020 to 2015 (COAG, 2009); the era of senior secondary schooling being mass education for all young adults has arrived. Leaders can no longer engage in practices that are grounded in traditional conceptions of senior secondary education; the age of senior secondary education for elites has ceased. This can produce a substantial uneasiness, perhaps for a cultural shock for leaders formed by these now passed traditions of education. Traditional leaders are witnessing the death of the traditional way of senior schooling; that is the death of the possibility of leading senior schools just for university-track elite (at the same time universities are becoming sites of mass education). As might be expected given Lear's (2006) theory, new language emerges from and is required to name these changes in senior secondary schools. The concepts through the emerging language are mostly related to VET. The traditional senior secondary education is undergoing a rebirth into an education for learning and/or earning.

The appearance of the language analysed in this paper suggests that great changes have occurred in Queensland's senior secondary schools. Leaders are especially concerned about 'work', 'industries', 'time', 'training' and 'certificates'. Overall, the word 'work' is the concept most used by leaders in their interviews about changes to senior secondary schools. This is not surprising as these leaders are much concerned about VETiS. A key change in the language used to talk about senior secondary schooling in Queensland is the change of the focus for leaders from Senior Schooling to the Senior Learning and/or Earning of students. This change has

been brought by Queensland's education and training reforms, which are expressions of and responses to changes in the labour market.

Part of the language gaining the frequency in senior schools include words used by leaders such as 'industry tour', 'SET Plan', 'skills centre', 'structured work experience', 'work placement', 'workplace learning', 'sustainable energies'. These new terms are indicative of the substantial change from senior secondary schooling to Senior L/earning. The subjects that constitute Senior L/earning vary greatly, with young adults being offered a richer array of VETiS subjects and corresponding increases in the Certificates being introduced.

Leaders of Senior L/earning now have to think and talk about how to lead in this new era. They have little to aid their practical reasoning about leading Senior L/earning in a critical situation, and the language of the Senior Secondary Schooling that existed in the past provides them few terms for thinking and discussing these changes.. There are risks in making the reforms that have initiated and focus on both learning and/or earning. Many students in senior secondary schools do not learn the traditional subjects of literacy and numeracy but do vocational and training in schools or doing apprenticeships or traineeships in workplaces in school hours during the week. This can be painful for leaders of Senior L/earning to lose the traditional way of Senior Secondary Schooling. It brings many worries and anxieties to them.

This change of language includes VET subjects which did not exist in schools before Queensland education and training reforms. Many young adults in Years 10-12 are doing subjects in these fields. As a result of their studying these VET subjects, they could gain Certificates I-IV depending on their learning efforts, apprenticeships and traineeships. Leaders are using this change of language in their work of bringing about change to senior secondary schooling.

Today's educational leaders also face a significant change, if not an educational revolution that is no longer being undertaken in the traditional sense where selected senior students study only in one educational site for a certain fixed period of time to get a certificate for entry into university. Such an approach to senior secondary schooling is changing in Queensland and throughout Australia more generally. The educational site for some young adult students no longer means the school where the students are enrolled but also includes other schools and industrial sites. The traditional way of education changes, but not collapsing in the way experienced by

the Crow or Indigenous Australians. Some leaders including teachers may not adapt to it easily. Their now outdated concept of senior schooling is the one undertaken by university-bound students in a classroom in the school in which they are enrolled. These leaders are enduring a breakdown in their way of schooling.

8. Conclusion

This paper does not intend to exaggerate the concept of Lear's (2006) change at critical time. We used Lear's notion of change to test the leadership of VETiS in Queensland. It analysed the language that marks the shift from senior secondary schools in Queensland to Senior Learning as a result of that State's education and training reforms. Leaders from different systems and sectors may vary in their use of this change of language. Leaders have their worries about the changes brought by education and training reforms, and anxieties that were reflected in their use of the reforms' language. Some concepts are losing their dominance in the language of school leaders. For instance, the concept of senior secondary schooling may be replaced by the idea of Senior Learning. Schools are now moving from a focus on university-oriented studies towards a focus on both the learning and/or earning of young adults.

This paper focused on the change of language now occurring among leaders of VETiS. There are other possible studies on VETiS such as the influence of VETiS on OP, the tertiary education entrance, transition to work and further education, or organisational change. Further research is needed on these aspects.

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