Dollar ... $

Dunce ...

Defend ...

Increasing retention of students in the Vet Sector

Dr Cheryl Livock
TAFE QLD Brisbane
Workshop Aims – Offering Suggestions & Seeking Input:

SUGGESTIONS – BASED ON FINDINGS FROM TWO STUDIES AT TAFE QLD BRISBANE initiated by Dr Cheryl Livock

1. Collaborative research with Queensland University of Technology’s Children and Youth Research Centre

REPORT: Language Literacy and Numeracy in TAFE Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled/Division 2 Nursing)

2. Ongoing collaborative action research investigating causes of low student retention

OUTCOME: Collaboratively developed intervention program using IBSA’s Foundation Skills Training Package [FSK20113]

SEEKING INPUT – Workshop participants to Answer Questions on post-its & attach to correct wall poster.
MAIN FINDINGS

System wide arrangements influencing LLN and inclusive learning and teaching in the VET sector:

• There is an imperative to support LLN learning as an integral part of the course, contextualised within the enrolled nursing scope of practice;
• The importance of building the capability of practitioners and the system more broadly is a key factor in meeting the needs of learners with low LLN skills in the vocational education and training sector;
• Recent policy and reform agendas have adversely impacted staffing levels, administration, resources, LLN and academic learning support;
• The impact of the new contestable market as an implied driver of student attainment places considerable strain on accomplishing a fully integrated approach to meet the LLN needs of learners;
• Internal administration systems, communications, and accessibility of resources creates problems for students.
1) How is Focus on the Dollar affecting ...

THE DELIVERY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
especially in the TAFE Sector?
In 1870 VET Researcher Brentano wrote:

“Guild brethren were bound by the guild statutes – mutual assistance, the aid of the poor, of the helpless, the sick, of strangers, pilgrims, and prisoners, the burial of the dead, and even the keeping of schools and schoolmasters – was considered, in the time when these Guilds existed, as an exercise of religion ... the practice of the religious maxim, “Love thy neighbour as thyself” (Brentano, 1870, p.x).

On the History and Development of Gilds, and the Origin of Trade-unions – Lujo Brentano
... Is the Ethos that HAS UNDERLAY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR CENTURIES NOW AT RISK?
2 weeks ago Australian Author Tim Winton on ABC Radio¹ said:

• “Heartlessness seems to be mainstream”
• “It’s a shock to me to have grown up in a country that prided itself on its decency, on its fairness, on its ideals of humanity and hospitality ... we have these amazing blind spots as to who we dispense our fairness and hospitality to.”

Summarised Teacher/Student views:

“Concerns raised suggest that the recent deregulated market emphasis in VET funding arrangements is influencing the quality of services provided to students, reduced the support available to students with LLN difficulties, and within the new governance arrangements accountability is determined by student quotas and monetary concerns more so than, teaching and learning practice and outcomes, a point also argued by Noonan, Burke, Wade & Pilcher (2014).”
FUNDING CUTS affecting TAFEs in Qld.

• Some examples of VET funding cuts in Qld
  – **2012, Mar to 2013, Dec:** TAFEs across Queensland lost “1,610 full time positions and 1,889 positions by headcount” (Terauds & McCollow, 2014, p.10)
  – **2012, Sep:** $78.8 million reported cut from Queensland Training, Tertiary Education and Employment budgets (Wheelahan & Sheehan, 2012).
  – **2015, July:** reduction in TAFE campuses from 95 in 2013/14 to 50 in 2015 (Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, 2015).

Positively – the new Queensland government Passed into Law on 22 July 2015

*Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Repeal Act 2015 Act No. 9 of 2015*

Rectifying this exorbitant “Rental” cost for TAFE Qld.
TYPE OF TRAINING?

*Impact on how learners are trained*

- curriculum
- length of training
- rigor & real life application of assessment
- ability of teachers [teaching & trade expertise]
DELIVERY - TRAINING PROBLEMS

1. Curriculum
   - Training packages inflexible & inappropriate
   - Crowded curriculum,
   - Death by power point,
   - Poor visual design
   - Content not delivered in logical order

2. Shortened length of training
   - Diploma – originally 2 years, now 1 ½ yrs
   - Cert III – AQF guidelines = 1 to 2 years; BUT some RTOs 15 weeks for Cert III Aged Care

3. Rigor & real life application of assessment
   - Teachers concerned about impetus to pass all students; also a concern about plagiarism;
   - Particularly at Diploma level VET students come with an expectation of more practical work and assessments.

4. Ability of teachers [teaching & trade expertise]
   - Teachers report vacillation in teacher training expectations – from uni quals [bachelor or masters] to Cert IV [can be obtained over a weekend at some RTOs]
   - No requirement for VETiSchools teachers to be trade registered experts

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1. Damian Oliver and Serena Yu, “Australia’s VET system needs fundamental change – here’s how it can be fixed”, the Conversation, September 22, 2015 6.13am AEST
2) WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON THE VET STUDENT’S ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & EMPLOYABILITY When the Dollar is a High Priority?
HOW IS TODAY’S ECONOMIC SITUATION AFFECTING THE LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION?

TRAINING WHO?

*Impact on which learners are trained*

- who is chosen to enter training?
  - their ability to pay;
  - their ability to do the training [academic & practical skills from prior learning]

- factoring in poor VET RETENTION?
- factoring in LACK OF CREDIBLE CREDENTIALLING
- factoring in EMPLOYER DISSATISFACTION?
Joy RIngrose is a Friend of The Conversation

Why are private providers being given taxpayer money to loan to students, putting them into debt? Surely that money needs to go to funding TAFE institutions and their staff and courses. TAFE once provided affordable vocational education to lift people out of unemployment. Now our most poor and vulnerable people are being thrown deeper into poverty with Mickey Mouse courses, which add debt to their unemployment. We need to re-open the TAFES that have been closed and kick start this wonderful system that has for years provided a social safety net, a means to advancement, and so many of the workplace skills that our society needs.

1. Joy RIngrose “Reader Comment” in Damian Oliver and Serena Yu, “Australia’s VET system needs fundamental change – here’s how it can be fixed”, the Conversation, September 22, 2015 6.13am AEST
BACKGROUND OF VET LEARNERS

VET RETENTION FIGURES

- Qld VET completions under 40% (Mark & Karmel, 2010)
- ‘less than 50% of those who start an apprenticeship were actually finishing’ (Toowoomba Chronicle 2013, ¶3)

LOW LITERACY / NUMERACY OF AUSTRALIAN ADULTS

- ‘More than 7.5 million Australian adults do not have the literacy and numeracy skills to participate fully in today’s workforce’ (Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills & Employment 2012)
- 81.9% of Queenslanders aged 15-74 have only literacy at or below the level of a Grade 9 student – ACSF Level 3 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014, Table 3).

EMPLOYER DISSATISFACTION

Reasons for dissatisfaction with vocational qualifications as a job requirement
- View that “Relevant skills are not taught” an increase from 2011 to 2013 of 25.4% to 36.3%¹
- View that “Training is of a poor quality or low standard ” an increase from 2011 to 2013 of 39.5% to 54%¹

Reasons for dissatisfaction with apprentices and trainees
- View that “Relevant skills are not taught” an increase from 2011 to 2013 of 27.1% to 39.5%¹
- View that “Apprentice/trainee had a poor attitude ” a decrease from 2011 to 2013 of 37.0% to 7.6%¹

### Number and Proportion of People at Each Literacy Skill Level, 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Level</th>
<th>Prose '000</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Document '000</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Quantitative '000</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>2,607.4</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>2,580.3</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>2,531.8</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>3,631.9</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>3,738.3</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>3,590.8</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>4,668.9</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>4,774.2</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>4,764.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4/5</td>
<td>2,312.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>2,128.0</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>2,334.2</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,220.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,220.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,220.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Aspects of Literacy, Assessed Skill Levels, Australia, 1996 (cat. no. 4228.0).

### Table 2: Labour force status by highest level of education attainment for those aged 15 to 64 years, living in households in 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest level of education attainment</th>
<th>Employed full time (%)</th>
<th>Employed part time (%)</th>
<th>Unemployed (looking for work) (%)</th>
<th>Not in the labour force (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate degree</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced diploma, Certificate IV, Certificate III</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate II, Certificate I, other Certificate</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8 or below</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3) HOW CAN WE IN THE VET SECTOR
DEFEND CREDIBLE CREDENTIALLING
In the Midst of Realigning Social & Political Priorities?
1. Curriculum

- Don’t take the view “curriculum training packages will never change in my lifetime” … become involved in your industry skills council & professional associations … make change happen!!

2. Shortened length of training

- *Politicians /VET executives* - take on the social as well as financial obligations; extended training means less stress on students – more likely to complete;
- *Teachers* - explore options for extra practice / more support through co-teaching with support staff
- *Team leaders / managers /time-tablers* – be committed to implementing and maintaining innovative approaches; don’t quickly ditch one new approach for another.
DEFENDING – SOLVING TRAINING PROBLEMS

3. Rigor & real life application of assessment

- TQB/QUT study findings revealed student expectation of more practical hands on approach for VET.
- *Assessment examples* ... acting out scenarios with detailed checklist; mechanic teacher obtaining old cars & parts for students to work on & be assessed.

4. Ability of teachers [teaching & trade expertise]

- *Qld newly developing Vet Teaching Standards* a good start, but there needs to be a will to put this into Legislation and become an enduring requirement [not adhering to the past history of forever changing teaching requirements].
How TQB Action Research ... $ IN Volving Diploma Of Nursing Teachers & Students Has Helped Defend Teaching & Learning Standards And Accessed Funding
FOUNDATION SKILLS NEEDED BY DIPLOMA OF NURSING STUDENTS

HIGH LEVEL OF LLN NEEDS FOR ENROLLED NURSES
- information technology literate,
- critical and reflective thinking,
- contributing to the formulation of care plans,
- interpreting patient’s charts (temperature, pulse and respiration rates),
- administering and monitoring medication,
- knowledge of legislation and common law pertinent to enrolled nursing practice (Australian Nursing Council, 2002)

CONCERN BY NURSING MANAGER RE LLN LEVELS
- Literacy testing of past students revealed many were below the level needed to confidently complete their assessment tasks,
- Teachers were also concerned about lack of critical thinking skills.

HOW TO BEST SUPPORT DIPLOMA OF NURSING STUDENTS TO COMPLETED THEIR COURSES?
Classroom observations
- almost no students were taking notes;
- few students were answering questions in class;
- in theory classrooms teacher in front of the class lecture style predominated.

Conversations with Nursing/Support teachers

Review of Curriculum workbooks/powerpoints
- nursing diploma has a high level of complex terminology;
- nursing has a dense compacted curriculum;
- teachers reported many students struggled with terminology & dense content;
- teachers reported many students had poor critical reading/thinking strategies resulting in plagiarism.

Use Foundation Skills (FSK) Training Package units:

- **FSK DIG 03**  Use digital technology for routine workplace tasks
- **FSK RDG 07**  Read and respond to simple workplace information
- **FSK LRG 11**  Use routine strategies for work-related learning
- **FSK WTG 09**  Write routine workplace texts
- **FSK RDG10**  Read and respond to routine workplace information

Dr Cheryl Livock, AUSTAFE National Conference 2015, 28-30 Oct, 2015
ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS utilizing new funding

- Assess students Literacy skills at ACSF Level 4
  - ACSF Level 4 = entry level for a Diploma course
  - Competent at ACSF Level 4 = 75%

- Connect FSK units to Nursing Diploma units:
  - Anatomy units, HLTAP401B, & HLTAP501C;
  - Infection control unit HLTIN301C

- Implement 14 day program /record attendance & assessment results

- Compare with completion results of 1st studied Nursing Diploma Unit HLTAP401B

- Access available foundation skills funding

Dr Cheryl Livock, AUSTAFE National Conference 2015, 28-30 Oct, 2015
Data re LLN Levels and Student completions

**LLN Levels – Average Scores & Range**

Students at Alexandra Hills achieved an average of 46% literacy and 43% numeracy with scores ranging for literacy from 29% to 66%, and for numeracy from 29% to 77%.

Interestingly all of the four students who achieved either the lowest or highest scores successfully completed their HLTAP401B unit.

Also all four students attended the 123 Program.

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**Completion % of 1st Nursing Unit HLTAP401B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. Students attending</th>
<th>No. of passing students</th>
<th>% Pass Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra Hills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students attending 123 Program</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students NOT attending 123 Program</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL number of students in HLTAP401B</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**123 Program Participation**

Note: 75% = competent at ACSF Level 4
Students at Loganlea achieved an average of 39% literacy and 44% numeracy with a scores ranging for literacy from 14% to 66%, and for numeracy from 14% to 87% - evidencing a wider disparity in LLN acquisition than at Alexandra Hills campus.

Two students scoring 14% in literacy.

PTO...
LOGAN cont.

Two students scoring 14% in literacy. One of these did not complete the numeracy assessment, yet went on the successfully complete the first nursing unit; the other student scored 23% numeracy and had not completed HLTAP401B.

One student who scored 14% in numeracy with a 38% score in literacy also failed to complete the first unit.

These very low LLN scoring students had also participated in the 123 Program.

### Completion % of 1st Nursing Unit HLTAP401B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOGANLEA</th>
<th>No. Students attending</th>
<th>No. of passing students</th>
<th>% Pass Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students attending 123 Program</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students NOT attending 123 Program</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL number of students in HLTAP401B</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: 75% = competent at ACSF Level 4

123 Program Participation

Dr Cheryl Livock, AUSTAFE National Conference 2015, 28-30 Oct, 2015
ANALYSIS

• As noted in the analysis of the literacy levels, at Loganlea campus with greater diversity there was a greater range of literacy levels.

• At Alexandra Hills the lowest literacy score was 29% whereas at Loganlea the lowest literacy score was 14%.

• Additionally when reviewing data for each student it appeared that when students’ literacy drops significantly below 30% at ACSF Level 4, in spite of receiving intensive literacy and learning skills support, this support in the majority of cases is not sufficient to enable success in a diploma level vocational unit.
• **Who is chosen to enter training?**

**THEIR ABILITY TO PAY**

- **Problem with the Cert III guarantee funding** & VET Fee Help for Diploma = no funding for Cert IV

- students proceed straight into a Diploma – no scaffolding of Cert IV – if they have been “helped” through Cert III, they then have little ability to complete their Diploma but end up with a lifelong debt.

- **funding for Cert IV needs to be rethought**
ACTION RESEARCH
COMMENDS & RECOMMENDATIONS
HOW TO ROLL AWAY THE CONTRACTING DOLLAR?
HOW TO DEFEND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
HOW TO ENABLE STUDENTS TO SUCCEED IN TRAINING

• Who is chosen to enter training?

THEIR ABILITY TO DO THE TRAINING  [academic & practical skills from prior learning]

– Students lacking sufficient foundation skills are entering VET courses;

– Federal new legislation tightening up foundation skills entry requirements – is a positive;

– Entry requirements should be visible, accessible & consistent ... executives, 1st contact call centres, LLN teachers, managers, timetablers all need to have a consistent approach;

– LLN testing should be credible & consistent ... with results easily available for all teachers [including non permanent staff who are often unaware and uninformed about available information]

– Have a set of Alternative pathways already prepared for students not meeting entry standards
HOW TO ROLL AWAY THE CONTRICTING DOLLAR?
HOW TO DEFEND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
HOW TO ENABLE STUDENTS TO SUCCEED IN TRAINING

• Type of Training?

**FOUNDATION SKILLS TRAINING PACKAGE**

– *Currently attracts less funding $ than Generic Foundation Skills programs*

– This training package has been developed by IBSA to support specific vocational units;

– Can be used to develop ... stand alone programs; workshops; co-teaching of Support Teachers with Vocational Teachers;

– *There should be MORE FUNDING $ allocated to the FSK Training package & a greater utilization to support students.*
Increase retention of students in the Vet Sector?

Dr Cheryl Livock
FOR MORE INFORMATION
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