

Comparative study of TAFE NSW teachers  
and further education lecturers in the  
United Kingdom, in relation to continuing  
professional development

NSW Teachers Federation

Eric Pearson Study Report

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# Foreword

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Eric Pearson was President of the NSW Teachers Federation from 1974 to 1975. He was also President of the Australian Teachers Federation. He commenced his teaching career in small country schools as a two year trained teacher prior to active service in New Guinea and Borneo during World War 2. He subsequently returned to teaching and further study, and received a PHD from London University. He had a distinguished teaching and lecturing career, and was head of the department of education at Sydney Teachers College. He died on June 8, 1977.

Originally called the Eric Pearson Memorial Travel Grant, the Eric Pearson Study Grant was established as a fitting tribute to his outstanding contribution as a scholar and unionist.

The first award was made in 1980 to Gus Plater, a teacher and activist from Armidale Teachers Association who investigated the social impact of microprocessor technology and its impact on schools and unions.

Areas of investigation since then have covered the range of issues affecting teachers and the role of the union. Examples include the study by Jim Gallagher (1981) of teacher education programs to meet the need of indigenous people in Canada and the United States. Ross Rinehart (1983) examined methods of control of teacher stress in the United States and Canada. Richard Walsham (1984) studied peace education in Europe. Sally Edsall (1986) tackled the role of teacher-librarians and function of school libraries in the United States. Phil O'Neill (1987) looked at the privatisation of public education in western Europe. Gary Rogers (1988) covered rural education issues in the United States. Viv White (1993) considered the restructuring of education and its implications for teachers' work. Patricia Simpson (1994) looked at devolution, schools and collective bargaining. Mary Fogarty (1995) studied the impact of the national curriculum, assessment and testing on teachers' work in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom. Frank Barnes (1997) surveyed issues affecting lesbian, gay and bisexual teachers and students in western Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States. John Dixon (1998) studied how technology could enhance union campaigning and Gary Zadkovich (1999) developed strategies for union organising. In 2004 we published *Redefining Activism: Gender Perspectives in Union Participation* by Sui-Linn White, in 2005, *Staffing an empty schoolhouse: attracting and retaining teachers in rural, remote and isolated communities* by Phil Roberts and in 2006, *The impact of on-going professional training and development for teachers of students with disabilities* by Vivienne Harling.

The investigations arising from the Eric Pearson Study Grant have contributed significantly to the work and ongoing development of the NSW Teachers Federation.

I thank Kerry for her contribution.

**John Irving**  
**General Secretary**

# Introduction

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The state of NSW, like the rest of the Australian economy, faces current and future key skills shortages in several industry sectors. While the causes of the shortages are multiple, one of the main government responses at both federal and state levels has been calls for the vocational education and training (VET) sector, which includes Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes, to train more people in the skill shortage areas.

However, TAFE Institute Managers themselves face similar types of skill shortage issues as do other industry employers. Clayton et al (2005) claim that sustaining the skill base of the TAFE workforce in each Australian state has become a critical issue. These authors indicate that not only do VET teachers have to train people to live and work in a constantly changing world of work, they also have to simultaneously deal with the changing nature of their own teaching practice.

There are several key issues that are currently impacting on the nature of the TAFE teaching workforce's skills base. These include the changing type of pedagogical practices expected in the VET sector, the types of continuing professional development (CPD) programs required to meet this changing pedagogy, the casualisation of the TAFE teaching workforce, and the demographic profile of the VET workforce.

## Aim of the study

Against this backdrop, the study aimed to document key information relating to the above issues in TAFE NSW and in United Kingdom further education colleges in England and Scotland. The issues canvassed included:

- the main new ways of working in VET expected of NSW and of Scottish and English further education (FE) teachers; in other words, the main aspects of the emerging NSW and UK VET pedagogy
- the types of continuing professional development (CPD) each of the workforce groups obtain access to and how it is funded
- how the FE colleges in the UK determine the CPD needs of each group of teachers
- whether there are useful CPD models in UK FE colleges that enable casuals as well as full time teachers to gain access to professional development that is critical to the demands of an emerging VET pedagogy and to their institution's succession planning
- the full time/part time casual teaching workforce profile in TAFE NSW and in Scottish and English FE colleges

## Methodology

This study used the following sources to gather information:

- literature search for relevant information on VET teaching and learning and CPD issues in NSW, and in the UK FE systems in England and Scotland and related CPD issues
- internet search engine Google “alerts” set up for key web and news items. The key words used to elicit the “alerts” were: further education in England; further education in Scotland; vocational education and training in England; vocational education and training in Scotland
- interviews with teacher union officers at the Educational Institute of Scotland and the University and College Union in England
- interviews with teacher union representatives at several colleges in England and Scotland

- interviews with other key informants who have been involved with researching CPD issues and needs in UK FE colleges, or whose role is to develop CPD activities for teachers in FE colleges (see Appendix I for list of interviews).

## Relevance of the study to TAFE teachers and the NSW Teachers Federation

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) standards for registered training organisations (RTOs) like TAFE NSW require organisations to provide relevant opportunities for professional development of staff.

TAFE NSW management is currently imposing high expectations on its teachers to remain abreast of changes in their industry area (often called technical currency), changes to delivery modes, knowledge of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the implications of the use of these for delivery, and particular types of learners' needs (Clayton et al, 2005; McNickle and Cameron, 2003). There is, however, much evidence of burnout and work overload among full time TAFE teachers and head teachers (Clayton et al, 2005; McNickle and Cameron, 2003; TAFE NSW/NSW Teachers Federation Head Teacher Survey Results, 2003).

Like the rest of Australia's VET sector, TAFE NSW has an ageing teaching workforce, and the profile indicates that 78 per cent (by headcount) of teaching staff are non-permanent, non-full-time workers (Junor, 2005; NCVET, 2004a). These factors have important implications for the provision of the types of CPD seen as required to meet the challenges of what is now being called the new VET pedagogy.

TAFE NSW has a model for ascertaining current and emerging CPD needs of teachers in general in each of its 11 Institutes, and for prioritising these, via its Professional Development Framework for Teachers 2004–2006. But it doesn't distinguish between the needs of full time and part time casual teachers. Nor does it have a state funding model that commits to targets, nor a model that ensures all teachers who need access to particular CPD activities are given such access, regardless of job status.

There is no central collection of data from all Institutes to give a clear picture of the range of CPD activities that different categories of teachers have undertaken. TAFE NSW does not have any mandatory minimum amount of CPD that teachers have to complete each year, although the industrial award allows for 10 days of professional development each year for full time teachers.

Since 2005 TAFE NSW Curriculum Centres are no longer given additional, separate funding for institute CPD activities and are looking for other ways to ensure that CPD in training package implementation is still available to teachers. Following the restructure of the NSW Professional Development Network and Vocational Education Assessment Centre into the TAFE NSW International Centre for Vocational Education and Training Teaching and Learning (ICVET), funding for the types of CPD activities these units used to offer has also been severely reduced.

Given this context, it was felt that fuller documentation of the critical CPD issues facing TAFE teachers and how these compare with the UK case would be useful to the union.

It was felt the Federation may be able to draw on suitable CPD models that might be identified in the UK, to assist arguments for appropriate CPD of all TAFE NSW teachers. This could assist all to access the CPD that TAFE NSW managers see as critical to meeting the changes in VET pedagogy that they want implemented by teachers. It may also assist the Federation in its discussions with the Department of Education and Training (DET) on renewal of the TAFE workforce, agreed to in the recent TAFE staffing agreement (Office of the Director-General, NSW DET, 2007).

# TAFE NSW case study

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## Background

TAFE NSW is funded directly by the NSW Government, which in turn relies on the funding agreement with the Federal Government, with policy increasingly driven by industry needs and the Federal Government's VET agenda.

### Training packages and skills councils

In Australia each major industry area is represented by a Skills Council or in a few cases (still) by an Industry Training Authority Board. These bodies are responsible for developing industry training packages, which contain various levels of qualifications, each with the lists of competencies to be taught to learners. Currently there are 75 training packages available for delivery by those organisations accredited to do so ([www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au)). Each training package undergoes a cycle of review, with the revised package then replacing the current one (approximately every 3–4 years, although there is mounting pressure in some industries for “rolling reviews”).

NSW is the only state that has a statewide curriculum development facility, where training package units of competence are developed further into curriculum documents, with value-added delivery and assessment advice, and associated learning resources. This work is carried out by the five TAFE NSW Curriculum Centres which cover the full range of NSW industries.

TAFE NSW institutes share some similarities with TAFE institutes in other states, but there are critical points of difference across the states (see NCVER, 2006).

### Casualisation of TAFE workforce

Australian research (Junor, 2005; NCVER, 2004a) indicates a very high proportion of TAFE teachers are part time or casual. The authors claim that 78 per cent of teaching staff in NSW (by head count) are part time or casual. Although, there have been two staffing agreements between DET and the union since this data was collected. The most recent agreement commits to increasing use of permanent full time and part time employment “where this is appropriate and sustainable, based on TAFE business and education needs” (Office of the Director-General, NSW DET, 2007). Evidence from the TAFE TA is that only some institutes had been working towards increasing the numbers of full time staff under the earlier agreement (NSW TAFE TA, 2006).

A highly-casualised staff profile implies significant succession planning issues for TAFE management not yet being addressed in professional development planning (Palmieri, 2003). As Junor (op cit) points out, there is an urgency to adopt a stable approach to staffing the TAFE sector, due to its central role in securing national skill requirements.

The Australian Senate Committee Report, 2003, *Bridging the Skills Divide*, claims that the casualisation of the workforce has led to the erosion of the TAFE teaching skills base. Casualisation also causes problems for access to professional development. A study by Stehlik et al (2003) of contract and casual VET teachers involved in providing flexible and online learning found that professional development opportunities were more accessible to full time and permanent educational staff. This was despite the finding that many contract and casual staff often carried out the same range of teaching and other educational functions as their full time and permanent colleagues. The authors conclude that access to professional development by contract and casual staff is vital for succession planning. They claim that professional development in underpinning educational knowledge, learning styles and curriculum development are as important for skilled and flexible responses as are technical skills (for the online environment), industry knowledge and content skills.

## Demographic factors and succession planning issues in TAFE

Clayton et al (2005) point out the same demographic factors that contribute to the looming skill shortages in several industry sectors are also at work in the TAFE sector.

A NCVET study found that VET practitioners in TAFE are, on average, older than VET practitioners as a whole. In 2001, 61 per cent of VET practitioners were aged more than 45 years, 16 per cent more than 55 years, and 66 per cent of permanent staff were aged 40 years or more (NCVER, 2004a). As the study states, in the context of workforce planning, the issue of ageing is particularly pronounced in the TAFE sector.

One of the problems caused by the high casualisation of the NSW TAFE teaching workforce has been the marked lack of succession planning for head teacher positions, which flows on to the TAFE NSW Curriculum Centre educational positions, because head teachers have in the past been the most common recruits to program manager (industry-related) positions in the Curriculum Centres.

Restructures and “downsizing” have resulted in substantial losses of organisational history and know-how in TAFE NSW. The wheel is often reinvented and duplicated, for example in delivery of training packages, where there can be high staff turnover as casual staff are forced to constantly come and go depending on demand. There is a need to support experienced skilled VET teachers, permanent and casual, full and part time, to develop skills in the emerging demands for management, planning and policy development in the VET sector.

As a result of restructuring, the constant changes in TAFE top level management may mean that the complex functions behind curriculum development in the Curriculum Centres is less likely to be well understood by those in a position to encourage succession planning for these educational positions.

The new minimum teaching qualification for TAFE teachers, the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA), will present problems for replacement of retiring full time teachers, most of whom currently have a degree and/or university diploma of education. According to Mitchell (2005) and Palmieri (2003) the Certificate IV TAA will not prepare a replacement workforce for the increasingly complex educational judgements that are required for planning, management and delivery of quality teaching and learning as well as the support of curriculum development, and that are being made by full time and some of the more qualified casual teachers at present.

## Pedagogy and continuing professional development

### Changing VET pedagogy

Several recent reports indicate there is a growing body of research on VET teaching and learning that implies a distinctive VET pedagogy has emerged in Australia, and other similar countries, in the context of competency-based training and rapidly changing workplaces.

A summary of this literature implies the key features of VET teaching and learning as including:

- learning aligned to industry standards, thus practitioners expected to adopt ‘best practice’ according to industry standards
- collaboration/relationships with industry
- adult learning principles
- learner-centeredness or knowledge of learner styles
- flexible delivery/blended learning

*(Clayton and Blom, 2004; National Centre of Vocational Education Research, 2004b; TAFE NSW, 2004a; Waters, 2005).*

Whilst some aspects of these features are not new to VET teaching, the current government and employer agenda for more direct links between VET and workplaces means there is a push for a stronger focus on the first two features in particular.

Analysis of the research relating to VET pedagogy provides a useful list of pedagogic knowledge, skills and strategies seen as important to current practice in VET, that can be summarised under learning approaches, professional practice and industry knowledge (sometimes called technical currency). Table 1 summarises key aspects of VET pedagogy discussed in much of the literature, and can be used to ascertain the broad skill (and therefore broad CPD) needs of teachers in the system.

However, a purely technicist approach to VET pedagogy would be simplistic, given the complex nature of human learning, and the atomised approach to competency-based training that does sometimes occur (Wheelahan, 2005).

Each one of the aspects of VET pedagogy is complex, requiring informed discussion about the best approaches to developing CPD relating to them. Wheelahan, just one of many, raises important points about the way people learn, particularly in work-based learning situations. The author provides a critique of both positivist and constructivist positions on learning (including of workplace learning) that are useful to those who may be developing CPD activities around learning theories and work-based or workplace delivery.

Webb and Cox (2004) suggest that pedagogical practices have both generic and subject-specific aspects, and that conceptions of pedagogy are changing in response to developments of our understanding of cognition and meta-cognition and in response to the perceived opportunities offered by information and communication technologies (ICT). (Table 2 shows a list of these emerging technologies, and Table 3 a summary of Webb and Cox's analysis).

Finlayson et al (2006), in a study of the outcomes of e-learning in further education, concluded that teachers were more willing and able to make effective use of information and learning technology where they were provided with subject specific information learning technology training in addition to generic training and where they were given the time needed to work with colleagues to source, develop and evaluate research and practices related to their subject areas. One of the authors' recommendations was for colleges to focus on supporting subject areas by releasing time for teams to develop their practice, underpinned by subject specific information learning technology training.

Segrave, Holt and Farmer (2005) outline a useful model used by Deakin University's Online Studies Program for the professional development of teachers involved in online delivery. They argue for a strategic, systems based approach to professional development.

### **Professional development of TAFE teachers**

The current study is concerned with continuing professional development of staff already in the workforce, it doesn't refer to initial teacher training. At this point in time, in NSW most full time TAFE teachers have a teaching qualification issued by a university. This is not the case for many part timers and casuals, however. From 2006 the large group of part timers and casuals without formal teaching qualifications are required to complete (or gain recognition for current competencies in) the national training package qualification, the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. In TAFE NSW course documents, which are used by teaching staff to deliver the National Training Package Units of Competence, minimum teacher qualifications are laid out.

In a study on the role of continuing professional development in VET, Harris et al (2001) draw distinctions between three different types of continuing professional development activities, these being:

1. programs that support professional teaching practice
2. activities relating to "reforms" in the VET sector (for example, provision of information on things like New Apprenticeships)
3. activities that support institutional operations, including policy changes (for example, occupational health and safety, equal employment opportunity, and copyright).

These categories are useful for describing the types of activities available to TAFE NSW teaching staff. Whilst all three types of activities are important to the CPD of TAFE teachers in NSW, anecdotal evidence points to a heavier weighting toward provision and attendance at the third type of activity in a lot of TAFE Institutes.

Standard 7 of the AQTF Standards for RTOs requires organisations like TAFE NSW to provide opportunities for CPD and to encourage participation by all staff. While evidence of institutions in meeting Standard 7 is tested at the time of regular “quality” audits conducted in TAFE NSW, the nature of this evidence is not always rigorous in its measurement of actual access to and completion of CPD activities. The high rate of casualisation of the teaching workforce in TAFE NSW makes compliance to Standard 7 much more costly and difficult. The Standard does not, however, indicate what the balance of content of CPD for teachers should be.

Any tightening of evidence of compliance around Standard 7 could mean institutes will not only have to show what opportunities in CPD they offer, but staff take-up of such opportunities – that is, participation and completion rates. (Note: the new standards, to be implemented from July 2007, imply more rigorous evidence collection, given auditing against them is to be tied to funding.)

VET pedagogy literature indicates there are several key aspects of VET teaching and learning that require a planned approach to the provision of continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers (including head teachers) in TAFE institutes (McNickle and Cameron, 2003; Mitchell, 2003).

Guthrie (2006) cites the “Future now” report as stating there are nine areas of skills currently needed by TAFE teachers:

- teaching, learning and assessment expertise
- program and resource development skills
- strategic enquiry
- technology
- business and client focus (including learner support)
- vocational expertise and industry currency
- VET system knowledge
- management and leadership
- personal qualities and attributes.

The *Consortium Research Program: Supporting vocational education and training providers in building capability for the future* is also a rich source of information about the nature of VET pedagogy. Hopefully, once all the research projects being conducted by the Consortium are completed, the key insights will inform the federal and state VET policy and funding bodies.

However, in most of the literature, there is little distinction made between full time and part time casual teachers’ needs, and none made between the differing states’ needs. In NSW there is a case to more clearly differentiate the skill needs of full time and part time casual teachers, given that 78 per cent of teaching staff are part time casuals and given that NSW has unique central curriculum and resource development facilities (albeit under-funded), unlike most other states. It can be argued that TAFE NSW should be better placed to deliver more consistent national training package qualifications and skill sets than other states that do not have statewide curriculum facilities, if it were not for the huge task of providing CPD to the significantly high proportion of part time casual staff in this state.

### **Access to continuing professional development**

Since about 1997 the Australian Government has been funding national staff development programs designed to build a professional workforce, for example, *Reframing the Future* ([www.reframingthefuture.net.au](http://www.reframingthefuture.net.au)) and Australian Flexible Learning Framework ([www.flexiblelearning](http://www.flexiblelearning)).

*net.au*). However, this funding is granted on a competitive basis, and there are still many college staff who have never been involved with any of the projects.

Reframing the Future is one of the main Federal Government sources of funding for VET professional development. By 2005 it had funded 1656 projects since 1997, to the value of about \$18 million; with TAFE NSW being funded for 200 projects in this time frame (McKenna, 2006), an average of 25 projects a year across 11 institutes (10 of them with multiple campuses). Given that the average funding per participant in projects between 1999 and 2004 was \$682 (ANTA, 2005) and there were 9818 full time equivalent teaching staff employed in TAFE NSW in this period (TAFE NSW Annual Report, 2004), this has not been a significant source of funding for TAFE NSW teachers' professional development. The initiative supports teaching practice, although it is a program geared toward e-learning and e-delivery.

Most of the Federal Government funding for VET professional development has been for up-skilling technology-related delivery. The Australian Flexible Learning Framework, for example, is currently conducting research into staff learning and development with a focus on use of social software technology.

Most Australian states also provide professional development for their VET practitioners, a lot of it now based on the notion that there is a distinctive pedagogy for VET. Victoria, for example, has established the TAFE Development Centre, which carries out research into VET pedagogy and offers CPD. This Centre offers a program through which TAFE teachers can apply for funding to acquire current industry skills.

Dickie, cited in the Consortium Research Program (2005), claims that, at provider level, professional development has focused on compliance, occupational health and safety and new information technology systems – with those most involved being full time, permanent teachers.

TAFE NSW offers a range of professional development activities through individual Institutes, the five TAFE NSW Curriculum Centres, the TAFE NSW International Centre for VET Teaching and Learning (ICVET), and other specialist units (for example, TAFE Accreditation and Registration Quality Assurance Services).

Each of the Curriculum Centres offers CPD activities relating to training package delivery issues, although, with constantly restrained budgets, may not be meeting the real demand that probably exists amongst teachers (especially part time casuals) for development in specific training package delivery issues.

As the inheritor of the 2003 NSW VET Pedagogy project, ICVET provides a web resource with summaries of recent research, discussion of new ideas and teaching practice and professional development models and frameworks (see <http://www.icvet.tafensw.edu.au/>). It is not funded, however, to run a lot of regular CPD activities.

Each TAFE NSW institute has established, in recent times, specialist professional development positions to lead and foster the professional development of all staff. Each Institute allocates funding to professional development of its teaching (and other) staff. The main statewide strategy for professional development of teachers is the TAFE NSW Professional Development Framework for Teachers 2004–2006 ([http://www.icvet.tafensw.edu.au/aboutus/ourwork/pdmodels/framework\\_teachers.htm](http://www.icvet.tafensw.edu.au/aboutus/ourwork/pdmodels/framework_teachers.htm)) instigated in December 2004, which is assisting to clarify the sorts of priority areas for institutes' expenditure on professional development. Each institute has its own model, however, for allocating funding, and some use incentive schemes to encourage teachers to participate. The current Framework is being reviewed during 2006 to inform the subsequent Framework to 2010.

The 2004–06 Framework outlines six professional development domains for teachers, these being professional currency, technical currency, interpersonal skills, compliance, leadership development, and career enhancement. The Framework includes a mix of all three types of activities identified by Harris et al (op cit).

Annual statewide priorities are established by seeking feedback from each institute and the

statewide units (mentioned above) which conduct professional development on what they believe are important areas for focus of professional development activities for the following year. Institutes can focus their effort on those areas which meet local needs but they are also expected to take into consideration statewide priorities.

Each of the institutes and statewide units has to report annually against the Framework. The reporting pro forma enables the capture of major initiatives, including those against the three priority areas for each year. However, it doesn't capture any quantitative measures of effort, like Institute expenditure, number (and status) of teachers involved, number of programs run or hours involved. As yet, reporting requirements do not enable a tally of the amount spent on teaching staff professional development across the sector each year.

There is a range of programs used by the various institutes to deliver professional development activities, which include:

- mentoring schemes
- return-to-industry schemes
- attendance at industry conferences
- improving teaching qualification levels
- supporting Learnscope projects
- online and e-learning projects
- assessment and validation strategies relating to AQTF compliance
- development of individual professional development plans

*(TAFE NSW, Annual Report, 2004).*

However, it is difficult to establish how much funding is actually spent on any one of these programs, as Institutes reporting does not have to itemise CPD expenditure.

The Department of Education and Training also offers a CPD program each year for staff in all registered training organisations, including TAFE NSW teaching staff. Many of these focus on general implementation of new training packages and issues relating to delivery. In 2006 the personal development program focused on the sports training packages, recognition of prior learning and Vocational Education and Training Board regulation and compliance.

Research relating to the roles of teachers and head teachers in TAFE NSW (Clayton et al, 2005; Stehlik et al, 2003 ) indicates the pressures on these staff to develop the wide range of knowledge and skills required in the training package context. Yet there doesn't appear to be a systematic approach by TAFE NSW management to the planning and funding required to meet the CPD needs of these staff. There is evidence that full time teachers are overloaded and in many cases teachers fund some of their own personal development (Palmieri, 2003; Dickie, 2004 cited in Consortium Research Project 2005).

This NSW situation may be little different to that in Victoria. In a submission to an Inquiry into teacher education in Victoria, the peak professional association for managers and leaders in the vocational education and training (VET) sector in Victoria, VISTA, noted the dire situation in relation to maintaining industry skills currency for VET practitioners. The submission pointed out that current professional development programs in Victoria did not factor in the time or funding to support such skill acquisition, probably as a result of inadequate government funding for VET professional skills acquisition (see June 2005 Newsletter at <http://www.vista.org.au/html/newsarchive.html>).

## Role of the union

TAFE TA covers TAFE NSW teachers and educational staff within the NSW Teachers Federation (Federation), and makes up approximately 10 per cent of Federation membership. While the union monitors the Professional Development Framework strategy adopted by TAFE

NSW to implement CPD, there is currently no policy in relation to content or accessibility. TAFE TA appears to be under-resourced for meeting the increasingly complex nature of VET pedagogy. This branch of Federation does not have a research officer to assist the executive with preparation of position papers on critical changes in TAFE NSW.

The most recent comprehensive survey of TAFE NSW head teachers carried out in November 2002 (TAFE NSW/NSW Teachers Federation, Head Teacher Survey Results, 2003) indicated all aspects of their role (teaching, administration/management, and industry liaison) had experienced increased workload and complexity. The key aspects of their role at the time of the survey are indicated in Table 4. Analysis of the survey data (Table 5) shows the dimensions of their workload and the pressures brought to bear by the changing dimensions of pedagogic practice.

# UK case study

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As is the case in Australia (including NSW), in the UK VET is provided by further education colleges, by independent trainers and by employers in workplaces.

In the UK, Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) are the national bodies responsible for identifying the skills and training needs of their sectors, for maintaining national occupational standards for those sectors, for gathering labour market information and for workforce development planning. These are UK-wide networks (*Education and Training in Scotland National Dossier 2005*, available at [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)).

In the UK the vocational training framework consists of the Scottish Vocational Qualifications and in the rest of the UK, the National Vocational Qualification. These are similar to the Australian Training Framework (ATF).

The UK Employment Act (2002) confers rights on trade union representatives, including what are called Learning Representatives (discussed in the next section). These Learning Representatives have time off for their duties, as part of the agreement for trade union duties.

The Scottish union which has the largest coverage of FE lecturers is the Educational Institute of Scotland. In England two unions, the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) and the Association of University Teachers (AUT) recently amalgamated to form the University and College Union.

# England

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## Background

*In the English FE system the agenda is centrally driven by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), with funding and planning for the post-16 year-olds sector the responsibility of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). This body has representatives from industry, the trade unions, colleges and community groups, with 47 local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) responsible (since 1992) for identifying regional and local skills and training needs. Training policy, on the other hand, is the responsibility of the Sector Skills Development Agency, headed by a business leader and governed by an employer-led Board (Moodie, 2005). There are currently 19 councils (and six in the pipeline), with the Life Long Skills Council being the Sector Skills Council responsible for the professional development of everyone working in the learning and skills sector, including further education lecturers.*

Each college has to agree to a plan with its local LSC and then have its progress reviewed. Colleges get about 80 per cent of their funding from the LSC.

There has been a lot of restructuring of key organisations in the sector in the past couple of years. The 2005 White Paper, *Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work*, follows the 2003 national paper, *Skills Strategy*, and clearly puts employers' needs at centre stage in the design of training and its delivery (available at [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)). The paper announces a national entitlement, from 2006–07, to free tuition for a first full level 2 qualification and new extensive support for learning and level 3, which has implications for the supply of trained lecturers in the system.

According to the University and College Union the main current emphasis in the FE sector is on implementing this national entitlement, and on provision for the 14–19 year age group in partnership with schools.

The Department for Education and Skills has a four-yearly cycle of inspections of educational providers, including FE colleges, which are carried out by the Office for Standards (since mid 2006 known as the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) – with the results used, amongst other things, as part of the colleges' funding formula. A comprehensive report of the results of inspections is published for the general public, providing information on items such as enrolments, retention and pass rates by curriculum area. Key aspects of teaching and learning are ranked, teachers are observed and their quality is ranked, as is the management, with key strengths and weakness noted. (Reports can be downloaded from: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>.)

The University and College Union believes that the Inspectorate system currently makes a lot of judgements about the teaching and management in colleges, without a lot of follow-up for those seen as not quite “up-to-scratch”. Whilst the union agrees with the concept of accountability for public funding, the quality system that the Inspectorate forms part of has been in a state of constant restructuring for some time. This has meant lack of consistent follow-through for colleges in need of assistance to “lift their game” in particular areas.

The experience of inspections at one college left lecturers with the feeling that insufficient areas of the very large college had been assessed to give a truly accurate picture of what the college was doing well or badly.

At the end of each year, several providers of those inspected during the year are named as having “Beacon Status”. This is an award that is said to recognise those which deliver outstanding teaching and learning and are well led and managed.

The union says the industrial relations environment in these Beacon colleges varies from college to college, claiming that staff in some Beacon colleges had to carefully toe the line for management in all respects. In others, the working environment was seen to be reasonable, apart from the usual pressures of the lecturing role.

In 2004–05 there were 74,632 full time equivalent teaching staff in England’s FE colleges; 49,860 were full timers and 82,626 were part timers; 62,112 had permanent status, 36,253 were fixed term, 7101 were casual, and 10,601 were agency staff (Learning Skills Council, 2006). According to the union, the casualisation of the teaching force has de-professionalised this workforce. It sees the move to the “licence to practise” (see next section) as a positive one in terms of building professionalism again.

## Pedagogy and continuing professional development

There are several bodies with either direct or indirect responsibility for professional development of FE lecturers in England. Currently there are significant changes taking place in the development of teaching standards and qualifications, and the planning of continuing professional development for the sector. Lifelong Learning UK is the sector skills council for the vocational training sector, and it has a key role in the changes to initial teacher training and continuing professional development (CPD). From 2007, there will be a new “licence to practise” system, which will include a continuing professional development requirement that lecturers will need to fulfil to have their licence renewed (Department for Education and Skills, 2005).

The union points out, however, that lecturers on new contracts will have to meet the requirement to complete 30 hours a year CPD, but this cannot be enforced for those on current contracts. When lecturers change jobs and get a new contract, they will have to meet this CPD requirement, but the union says there is still negotiation to take place at each college around mandating any CPD requirement for staff on current contracts.

Several union representatives commented that while colleges had spent a lot of money on new information communication technology (ICT), there had been very little in the way of CPD in how to use the equipment. There had certainly been scant discussion on the pedagogical issues around ICT use in their subject areas.

While the earlier work of Webb and Cox (op cit) focused on high school pedagogy, many of the issues raised are salient ones for FE pedagogy as well. The Webb and Cox research implies a much more complex relationship between pedagogy and ICT than is sometimes assumed by those who organise professional development activities for FE teachers. According to Webb and Cox, teaching practice is both shaped by the technological potentials of ICT, but also, in particular discipline areas, shapes the way students approach the technologies.

In an interview with Webb at Kings College, London, she indicated that her current thinking about pedagogy and ICT has been influenced by the research on formative assessment. She believes that there has been too much focus on ICT as the innovative force in pedagogy, which has meant the potentialities of other ideas have been overlooked. Claiming the “transfer” model of learning is not an appropriate one, she says the work of people like Paul Black et al (2004) is useful in that it places a focus back on formative assessment. This requires teachers to seriously reflect on what it is they want students to achieve. In Webb’s programs at Kings College that prepare trainee teachers, the pedagogical model is based on reflective learning. Webb says there is no “blueprint”

for developing teachers. The current model they are using to train teachers is based on on-going reflective learning by students, under the guidance of mentors. These mentors themselves are being trained to understand how beginning teachers learn by using reflective learning techniques themselves.

In a continuing professional development project being conducted in Jersey (that includes teachers from schools and one FE college), Webb and colleagues are trialling the reflective learning technique applied to teaching innovations. Self-assessment via constructive peer assessment appears to be the main way that the teachers reflect on what innovations (including use of ICT) worked and why. The project funds teachers to participate in this CPD as part of their working day. It is a more expensive model of CPD than others (which often rely on teachers taking part in CPD in their own time), but Webb claims it is a more productive one in the longer term. Webb sees the “cascade model” of CPD as not very effective, although it is the more common one used in England.

What she calls the “cascade model” of CPD is the one of providing CPD activities to a few teachers in the expectation they will share and/or demonstrate in their practice the ideas picked up at the CPD activity.

Loveder (2005) outlines the global trends that are impacting on the need for CPD of VET teachers. He points to the changing nature of students coming into the system; the rapidly changing technology and growth of the “knowledge economy”; the need for flexible approaches to delivery; and work intensification in workplaces (which results from flatter management structures and increased emphasis on team work that can result in job enlargement). As Loveder points out, staff development intersects a number of other professional practices like teaching standards, qualifications and organisational change agendas. Loveder claims research in the UK indicates that there are serious challenges facing FE managers relating to professional development that may not yet have been addressed.

## Role of the union

Unionlearn is the skills and education program run by the Trades Union Congress (which represents 67 unions in the UK). It currently has 14,000 trained Learning Representatives, assisting 100,000 members to access courses (commonly from basic numeracy/literacy level through to the end of high school). By 2010 the Trades Union Congress hopes to have 22,000 Learning Representatives helping 250,000 workers into learning every year. Apart from the benefits to individuals, the scheme has already shown it can cut employers’ recruitment costs and staff turnover rate (Further Education section, *The Independent*, August 10, 2006. See also [www.unionlearn.org.uk](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk)).

The National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (before the recent amalgamation with the Association of University Teachers to form the University and Colleges Union), developed the Unionlearn program for the FE sector. (Officials said they had been keen on a system of learning representatives before the Trades Union Congress started to promote the notion of workplace learning representatives.)

The National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education piloted its first Learning Representatives course in 2003 and has developed a system of three permanent Learning Organisers, who work with college union branches to encourage appointment of local Learning Representatives and support them in their role of encouraging lecturers into CPD. The union has 100 Learning Representatives in FE colleges (including community colleges and 6th form colleges which offer FE courses), thus far, which represents about 25 per cent of college coverage.

Some college managers are more positive about the concept of Learning Representatives than others. College principals are the ones who have to agree to give remission of one to two hours per week from the normal teaching load.

The union's Education Policy Senior Officer explained the union sees the Learning Representative role as more industrially strategic than just providing CPD advice to individual members. The Learning Representative is expected to act as a resource in the collective bargaining process at each college, on issues to do with lecturers' CPD. The union's vision is that the workforce development issues of the Learning Representatives will become embedded in everyday policy and practice, just as the work of occupational health and safety representatives has over time.

Whilst the CPD requirements of those with new contracts imply a certain priority for CPD of lecturers, to date the provision of CPD has been fairly ad hoc in many colleges. From 2007 all new lecturers will also be required to join the Institute of Education, which will be strengthened to become the professional council for the FE sector, just like the General Teaching Council (GTC) is the professional body for school teachers. According to the union, this move should also add to the professional status of FE lecturers.

Most of the lecturers interviewed said that their workload often precluded them from attending many of the CPD activities offered. Both the lecturers and the union claimed that the majority of CPD activities in many colleges covered compliance-type issues. There did not appear to be much offered in some colleges on pedagogical themes. One lecturer commented that, given the high incidence of students with mental health issues, there needed to be more activities dealing with its awareness and management at his college.

Most of those who had been teaching for a long time at one particular college noted that there actually seemed to be less CPD being offered at their college than had been the case several years ago.

It seems the curriculum manager role (similar to the head teacher role in TAFE NSW) had grown in size and complexity over the past few years, with not much recompense for the additional load. As a result several had left their college, or relinquished the role to return to lecturer, and others already in the department were unwilling to step into the role.

# Scotland

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## Background

*The Scottish education system has a qualifications framework that covers both school and tertiary level academic and vocational qualifications.*

Whilst some further education is provided in higher education colleges, by private trainers and in workplaces, the 46 FE colleges are the main providers in Scotland. These are self-governing, “incorporated” entities, which are funded by the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council. One of the main policy documents driving the agenda appears to be the *16+ Action Plan*.

Most FE courses are composed of units (called unit specifications) listed in the Scottish Qualifications Authority catalogue (grouped under 23 industry categories) and developed to meet the needs of particular employment sectors or to meet individual student needs. Colleges can tailor programs to suit the needs of specific industries or local employers, and the system is competency-based. Employers are represented on the college Boards of Management (*Education and Training in Scotland National Dossier 2005*, available at [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)).

In Scotland 63 per cent of teaching staff (by headcount) were part time in 2004–05, with 81 per cent of part timers having temporary, and 19 per cent having permanent, status. Data by full time equivalent (FTE) indicates 30 per cent of the teaching workforce is part time, with 58 per cent of these having temporary status (Scottish Funding Council, Staffing Statistics for Further Education Colleges in Scotland. Available at [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/statistics/fe\\_information/facts\\_figures/0405/staffing/staffing\\_0405.htm](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/statistics/fe_information/facts_figures/0405/staffing/staffing_0405.htm).)

As of July 10, 2006, staff who worked on successive fixed term contracts for a period of four or more years (effective from July 2002) became permanent employees (Briefing Note from Eversheds LLP, July 2006 to HR Managers in Scottish Colleges, provided to the author).

One notable difference between NSW TAFE and Scottish Colleges is that some Scottish Colleges have established research offices. Reid Kerr College, for example, conducts research in vocational education issues, community development, and social exclusion. It also attempts to identify training needs of local businesses (Reid Kerr College Prospectus 2006–2007, Paisley, Scotland).

Because the Scottish Colleges are autonomous, many have been duplicating the efforts of others. In more recent times, however, there have been efforts to avoid such duplication by more collaboration with other colleges and by the establishment of groups like College Open Learning Exchange.

At Reid Kerr College, staff who have an initial qualification are encouraged to pursue the jointly-offered (with University of Aberdeen) qualification called “Teacher Qualification – Further Education”. The scheme at Reid Kerr has three mentors attached to support staff in the program. There is a range of CPD activities offered to all staff, with emphasis on upgrading both technical/vocational skills and professional teaching skills.

## Continuing professional development

There is no minimum teaching qualification (as at August 2006) for temporary FE lecturers, but if they do more than 10 hours per week teaching, they are encouraged to complete the induction sessions run by each college. Full time staff without a formal teaching qualification are

expected to complete the Scottish Qualifications Authority Professional Development Certificate, Introduction to Teaching in Further Education, which is an initial teacher training qualification.

The Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges, which was published in June 2006 (available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/13164029/0>), sets out professional standards for CPD. The document includes both statements of what lecturers should be able to do and the indicative content of CPD programs to meet the standards, under the following headings:

- Managing an Inclusive Learning Environment
- Promoting Good Relations Between People of Different Racial and Ethnic Groups
- Promoting Learning and Equality for People with Disabilities
- Managing and Leading a Curriculum Team
- Teaching Children and Young People
- The use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for Learning and Teaching.

There are very prescriptive statements of what could be included in CPD for FE lecturers, with clearly enunciated rationale for each standard, giving good indication of the anticipated role of lecturers in VET pedagogical practice in Scotland.

In 2004 the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU) was commissioned to undertake research relating to the provision of staff development for FE lecturers. While the research found that there was a fair amount of staff development taking place, it also found there were gaps in provision and wide variations in the level of support teaching staff received to participate in staff development. The report identified the following priorities for professional development:

- embedding legislative competencies (relating to, for example, race relations and disability) into everyday practice
- embedding ICT in teaching and learning activities
- promoting innovative teaching and learning methods
- facilitating technical/subject knowledge update

*(Scottish Further Education Unit, 2004).*

Following the research findings, the unit devised a CPD model and toolkit for use by individual colleges (at [www.sfeu.ac.uk](http://www.sfeu.ac.uk)).

In Scotland it is colleges' responsibility to develop appropriate staff development policies and activities. Most seem to adapt the Scottish Further Education Unit CPD model to their own local needs. At Reid Kerr College, for example, all teachers do an annual training and development review with their head of department, and this forms the basis of their CPD plan.

A CPD log system is being introduced to encourage lecturers to log all the CPD activities they complete, both as a way of reflecting on what they have achieved, and also to enable better record-keeping of CPD in the college.

At Reid Kerr College, staff involved in developing and conducting CPD said they had two challenges. Firstly, how to get all staff to take a professional approach to their own CPD when the pressures of teaching in the rapidly changing environment are great. The team at Reid Kerr have a number of strategies, including offering short workshop sessions at convenient times of the day (for example, "twilight" sessions) and offering a staff drop-in centre where assistance is at hand for those wanting to practice or follow-up on recently-learned ICT skills in a non-threatening environment.

The second challenge relates to the maintenance of lecturers' vocational/technical skills. Reid Kerr has recently become involved in a project with Adam Smith and Northern Highland colleges. The Enhancing Professional Practices in Engineering project is designed to build a sustainable approach to professional updating and reflective practice. The project includes an online tool where staff can access a range of professional information, via:

- webcast briefings/master classes by leading experts in particular sectors of the industry
- information/advice from leading industry bodies/sectors skills councils
- briefing updates on new products/services/techniques/standards
- information on placement opportunities and completed placement reports
- search for companies willing to support placements
- details of relevant professional bodies' CPD requirements.

Another initiative at Reid Kerr College to encourage participation in CPD is the quarterly staff development newsletter, which features CPD opportunities, innovative projects and reports on staff participation and achievements.

According to staff at Adam Smith College (Priory Campus, Kirkcaldy) who are responsible for professional development of teaching staff, there are several challenges facing lecturers. One of the key ones is the shortage of time to fit professional development activities into their busy teaching week. The full time lecturers have a 22-hour per week face-to-face load, with the curriculum manager role having additional duties of managing a curriculum area and student issues for that area. The ageing profile of the teaching staff is another challenge, both for planning workforce replacement as well as for getting some people in the older age groups to retain their enthusiasm to try new approaches.

The professional development managers have come up with a few strategies to deal with the time-poor lecturers, including offering 45-minute drop-in information technology clinics for staff, where banks of computers are provided for teachers to get hands-on experience in the theme of the clinic. The information technology clinic leader also offers what he calls "house calls", visiting staff at their desks to assist them with their information technology learning needs as they arise (for example, learning how to prepare *Powerpoint* presentations).

The one thing that does strike you in some colleges in Scotland is the number of opportunities senior teaching staff are given to attend programs with visiting international speakers and/or to visit other countries to learn from others.

The overall role of the Scottish Further Education Unit is to support the colleges, although the specific form that this support takes still seems to be evolving. Until about 10 years ago it was mainly a curriculum development unit, but over the past decade it has evolved into a unit that provides professional development, quality enhancement initiatives and a research function. While the unit receives funding from the Scottish Funding Council, and each college pays a nominal fee (£1) membership, the unit has to tender for commercial sources of funding and charge commercial rates for many of its professional development programs.

The unit offers continuing professional development programs for teaching staff as well as other college staff, but they are also competing with other, often private, providers for the money spent by colleges on staff professional development activities.

A recent evaluation of the Scottish Further Education Unit's action learning-based Leadership Programs indicated the strengths of providing college managers and aspiring managers with the opportunity to be involved in a 12 to 18 months action learning team project with their peers (Whelan and Kerr, 2005).

One of the challenges facing the further education sector in Scotland is succession planning, both of teaching and management staff. The Scottish Further Education Unit's Leadership Program is, in part, a response to the ageing college profile. However, the unit's commissioned research into the amount of professional development being undertaken by current middle managers, half of whom aspire to higher management positions, found that half of the middle managers surveyed had received less than seven days professional development, 40 per cent had received no professional development in leadership/management, and 35 per cent had received between one and three days in the past year (Whelan, Kerr and Rauch, 2006).

The use of mentors appears to be a popular strategy at the Scottish Further Education Unit. An

initiative called eMerge [in collaboration with two Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Regional Support Centres], designed to enhance the application of ICT use in colleges, is initially using eight subject mentors to work with staff in several ways to encourage and support ICT use in delivery (see <http://www.sfeu.ac.uk/projects.asp?pageID=5.8>).

The SFEU has also just launched Subject Networks, with four areas being piloted initially. Each will have a subject mentor, who will be a lecturer on secondment from a college for about 30 days a year. Part of their role is to assist the development of a website that contains subject content, best practice information, a blog and chat facility with the mentors, and links to other relevant groups like sector skills councils that support the industry area.

## Role of the union

The Education Institute of Scotland represents about 80 per cent of the unionised teachers and lecturers in the education sector, and is taking a pro-active and innovative approach to the CPD needs of its members, including FE members. Following the *Twenty First Century Agreement*, which sets a benchmark of 35 hours a year of CPD for all teachers, the union saw the opportunity to support its members in the area of CPD. It set up its own Learning Representatives initiative in 2002, as part of the wider UK Trades Union Congress-supported Learning Representatives program. It is the only teacher union in Scotland with Learning Representatives.

The duties of Learning Representatives include:

- learning about CPD opportunities from a variety of providers, including employers and universities
- informing, advising and supporting lecturers to access a range of accredited courses and CPD activities
- encouraging the introduction of quality CPD programs for teachers/lecturers
- working with local authorities to identify CPD needs and ways of improving opportunities for CPD.

The Education Institute of Scotland has developed standards and protocol for their Learning Representatives, and they have put in place a program to keep Learning Representatives skills up-to-date (for full details of the Learning Representative initiative see [www.eis.org.uk](http://www.eis.org.uk)).

The Education Institute of Scotland believed the standard five-day course was not appropriate for FE lecturer-level Learning Representatives who already had a degree, so a university Masters level course was developed in partnership with Paisley University. The course is 150 hours in length and consists of an essay and case study (each about 2000 to 3000 words in length) plus the following units:

- Lifelong learning
- Mentoring and facilitation
- Training and development
- Providing online support.

There is an undergraduate level course for Learning Representatives who do not have a degree.

The union aimed to have a minimum of one Learning Representative in each college (46 colleges in total) and was only one college short of its target (at August 2006). The Education Institute of Scotland pays the course fees for each participant who does the training, but once they are appointed to their college as the Learning Representative, the college management picks up the cost of the time dedicated to the representative role by the Learning Representative lecturer. Each representative has something like two, three or four hours a week set aside from their usual lecturing hours as time they can act in the role, depending on the local agreement with the college principal.

It is important to note that the role of the FE Learning Representative is to support the CPD learning needs of lecturers – they are not the union branch representative whose role is to deal with industrial issues. In some colleges it has taken a while for principals to be convinced that their support of the Learner Representative role is beneficial to the college. The Education Institute of Scotland claims that it sees the immediate benefit to colleges in the outcomes of the training of the representatives themselves. Their Learning Representative course training has resulted, on the whole, in improved teaching practice of the representatives themselves, who then pass on their enthusiasm to those colleagues who seek their advice on CPD issues.

The role of the Learning Representative is to assist the lecturer to work out what CPD courses may assist them in their career enhancement or in meeting targets in their professional development plan agreed to in their annual review. The Learning Representative would assist with finding information about relevant courses to do, possible funding sources and then act as mentor/guide through the lecturer's studies.

The Education Institute of Scotland also has Learning Representatives in primary and secondary schools and many work closely with the Continuing Professional Development Coordinators that many of the local authorities have appointed. In the Fife area, for example, the Learning Representatives (for all levels) are able to work out of a multi-purpose teaching resource centre (the Auchterderran Centre), where a four-member specialist CPD team is also based. This has enabled some good synergies to develop between the CPD team and the Learning Representatives. The two groups believe that they are seeing a cultural change in teachers' attitudes to and understandings of CPD, with much more collegial approaches to sharing good practice and working through new ideas, where these may not have existed before.

As part of its pro-active role in CPD, the Scottish Trades Union Congress recently commissioned the Scottish Further Education Unit (jointly with the employers' association, the Association of Scottish Colleges) to undertake research into the Scottish college workforce (both teaching and administrative staff), to assist with future workforce planning and development.

# Comparisons and discussion

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## Context of CPD

The literature and the interview data indicate that the general trends in further education in all three systems are similar. NSW TAFE and the providers in Scotland and England have the following features in common:

- qualification frameworks for competency-based delivery
- strengthened relationships between industry and FE providers at the local level
- curriculum increasingly directly driven by industry need
- increased focus on provision for young school students within a changed school curriculum
- “quality” frameworks in place
- the notion of “life-long learning”
- push for more emphasis on the teachers’/lecturers’ continuing professional development
- push for more ICT in delivery
- high proportion of part time and/or casual teachers, although NSW stands out as having the highest proportion.

Thus, the broad pressures on FE teachers/lecturers appear to be similar. In the UK the interviewees spoke of the constant pace of change and the challenges they were faced with. Timely and appropriate CPD was seen by many of the union representatives interviewed as one important strategy for assisting members deal with the VET pedagogy issues that confronted them.

What has been termed “changing VET pedagogy” reflects, in part, the workforce changes identified by writers like Buchanan (2006), Hall (2006) and others. Hall, for example, argues that the imposition of business models in the public sector has led to work intensification, labour flexibility management pressures, and flatter organisational hierarchies. He claims many professionals have borne the brunt of organisational restructurings and often have to manage the consequences of these restructurings for their areas of responsibility. Added to this are the changing technological demands, which sometimes see new communication technologies (like mobile phones, laptops, PDAs, email, and so on) blurring distinctions between work and non-work.

NSW TAFE head teachers, in particular, are juggling complex administration, management, teaching, and industry liaison roles within an ever-changing technological context. The UK interviews also indicated that the curriculum managers’ role (similar to that of the NSW head teacher) was becoming difficult to manage.

Keep (2005) claims that governments in England have created what he calls “a state of permanent revolution” in the institutional structures that control, manage, fund, inspect and deliver VET. This concept of permanent revolution could also be said to apply to VET in NSW, given the number of restructures of the TAFE system as a whole and of the internal reorganisations that many individual institutes have undergone in the past few years.

The flatter organisational structures noted by Hall and others, tighter (locally-managed) budgets, insufficient administration/clerical support, as well as the constant pace of change in the over-arching institutional structures (that Keep speaks of) all make the teacher and head teacher role more work-intensive.

## Continuing professional development

Given this context of TAFE teachers' work, it has to be argued that good models of CPD need to be based on appropriate understandings of teacher (and head teacher) roles and the appropriate allocation of time to attend CPD activities. In an analysis of the challenges facing those who design professional development programs, Hall (op cit) identifies several key challenges, some of which include:

- managing the tyranny of operational demands
- developing the job as well as the professional
- developing professionals as managers
- acknowledgement of the need to sustain multiple identities (as professionals, workers, family members, mentors, learners etc).

Loveder (op cit) in his summary of world trends in staff development and their implications for colleges, cites Cort et al as suggesting institutions should use CPD approaches that have the following features:

- integrate practice and on-the-job learning in the teacher's classroom with theory
- utilise flexible, modular approaches that meet needs and background of teachers
- use a "bottom up" approach that encourages teachers to reflect on their own teaching practice
- use "study circles" and/or "communities of practice" of staff across different departments, disciplines or institutes
- use ICT to encourage active participation.

Loveder claims CPD is too important to be left to individual teachers' own motivation, saying it should be regular and compulsory, and adequately supported by management, both time-wise and financially.

## Good practice CPD model

Analysis of all the data associated with the project indicates the following several aspects could inform a good model of CPD for TAFE NSW:

- appropriate balance between the three types of CPD activities:
- those that support professional teaching practice
- those relating to "reforms" in the VET sector (for example, provision of information on things like New Apprenticeships)
- those that support institutional operations, including policy changes (for example, occupational health and safety, equal employment opportunities, and copyright) (see Harris et al, 2001)
- a recognition that there are individual needs (like career development and job performance confidence) that are met through effective CPD (Scottish Further Education Unit, undated)
- a strategic, systems-based approach to ICT and on-line delivery that is underpinned by appropriate understandings and research of VET pedagogy and of specific ICT-discipline relationships (see Segrave et al, 2005; Webb and Cox, 2004; Wheelahan, 2005)
- setting professional standards for CPD (see Scottish Executive, 2006)
- implementing a CPD log, for reflection as well as a better record of all CPD (for audit purposes, this may become more critical with the new 2007 Australian Quality Teaching Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations outcomes-based auditing processes) (for *Continuing Professional Development Log and Toolkit* see Scottish Further Education Unit, undated)
- a professional organisation for VET teachers in NSW to lift their professional status (for example, the peak professional association for managers and leaders in the vocational

- education and training sector in Victoria called VISTA, the Institute of Education in England, the Scottish Further Education Unit; note the *TAFE Futures* report which calls for an institute for teachers)
- funding levels that allow teachers to:
  - reflect on their practice at regular intervals (reflective practitioner skills – see ICVET website, *PD Models and Frameworks*, 2006) since the cascade model of CPD may not work (Webb and Cox, 2004)
  - use an appropriate model for remaining abreast of technical/industry skills
  - a funded, pro-active role for the union, along the lines of the Learner Representative model in the UK.

## Role of the unions

The role of the two UK unions in response to lecturers' CPD needs differs to that of the Federation in regard to the needs of TAFE teachers in NSW. Both the English and Scottish unions have taken up the UK Trades Union Congress UnionLearn program, which promotes Learning Representatives in FE colleges. The Scottish union (Education Institute of Scotland) has managed to place a Learning Representative in all but one college in Scotland, while the English union (University and College Union) has managed 25 per cent coverage of colleges (although they have a larger number than Scotland) to August 2006.

Because the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) in Australia (equivalent to the Trades Union Congress) does not have a similar skills and education program, the NSW TAFE TA doesn't have access to the same type of support as its equivalent UK organisations.

Support for the Learning Representative role in Scotland and England indicates a commitment by FE employers and the two unions to implement CPD for lecturers and enhance the professionalism of those teaching in the sector.

Some of the interview data indicates, however, that both full time and part time casual lecturers may not be able to access the CPD they need. For full time lecturers, the difficulty with access appears to be related to workload issues. For part timers (and casuals) the access problems relate to up-front cost (where they have to self-fund) and unpaid time to attend.

The constant rate of change in the FE sector in the UK and consequent demands placed on VET pedagogy practice were commented on several times in the interviews. The survey of TAFE NSW head teachers (TAFE NSW and Federation, 2003) indicated that the pace of change has been an issue for NSW teachers as well. Keep's (2006) notion of "permanent revolution" is an apt one, and has critical implications for planning provision of CPD for FE lecturers/teachers.

When an organisation is in a state of constant flux, changes are implemented to meet perceived new "need", often without completing (and then evaluating) the previous implemented changes.

Unless the CPD of teaching staff is planned in a way that ensures critical key competencies will be maintained and not lost to the organisation, and enduring (rather than fad) technologies appropriately utilised, the content of CPD will reflect a crisis management approach rather than a measured and evidence-based needs approach.

These issues of access and content are important to all FE teachers/lecturers. In TAFE NSW the issues are only recently starting to be addressed. The challenge for TAFE NSW will firstly be to develop an improved CPD planning and reporting mechanism, given the current shortcomings in the *Professional Development Framework for Teachers 2004–2006*. The plan must be able to take into account the maintenance of core competencies and appropriate technology take-up and use, based on skills-gap analyses of all teaching staff (full time and part time casual).

Secondly, it must be able to guarantee access to the most appropriate CPD for all teaching staff, whatever their employment status. Given the high rate of casualisation in TAFE NSW teaching force, this will certainly prove a challenge.

As Junor (2005) argues (citing Rumsey and Associates) TAFE NSW needs targeted workplace development programs based on clear career pathways, particularly for part timers and casuals, and appropriate professional development.

The challenge for the union in NSW will be to remain abreast of the planning, reporting and access needs in order to influence the agenda. However, appropriate resourcing of TAFE TA by Federation remains an issue. TAFE TA requires a specialist research officer with an understanding of the increasingly complex issues facing the VET sector. TAFE NSW has been restructured five times in the last decade. As a consequence, teaching roles are constantly evolving to maintain workable relationships with the other evolving management, clerical and state-wide unit roles.

Federation Executive, being cognisant of the high casualisation rate in TAFE, needs to resource TAFE TA appropriately in order for the union to take a strategic approach to the new TAFE staffing agreement discussions on renewal of the TAFE workforce, and thus the planning and delivery of the CPD of TAFE TA members.

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# Appendix I: List of interviews

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Joan Archibald, Blended Learning Manager, Reid Kerr College, Paisley, Scotland

Alison Davidson, Continuing Professional Development Specialist, Adam Smith College, Kirkcaldy, Scotland

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Adrian Whittaker, Lecturer (.8), Basic Skills, and Branch Union Representative, City and Islington College, Finsbury North, London, England

# Tables

Table 1

Elements of VET pedagogy

VET pedagogy dimensions	VET knowledge, skills and strategies
<i>Learning and assessment approaches</i>	adult learning principles
	assessment: strategies, processes, tools
	flexible approaches in delivery/assessment
	learning styles of different learners
	integrating learning and assessment
	using problem-based learning approaches
	language and literacy
	cultural diversity in training
	enhancing learner autonomy: negotiated learning
	team teaching
<i>Professional practice</i>	facilitation skills
	reflective practice skills
	networking
	knowledge of ICT and its appropriate use for teaching, learning and administration
	implementing continuous improvement and compliance with Australian Quality Teaching Framework
	evaluating training
	incorporating key competencies (and employability skills) in delivery
	implementing innovative approaches
	mentoring peers
	knowledge of corporate software systems
<i>Industry knowledge (technical currency)</i>	knowledge of relevant training package/s and ability to interpret competency standards
	understanding of current workplace work and culture
	customising learning for different training contexts, including work-based learning
	collaborating with industry and community groups

Sources: TAFE NSW (2004a) *Theory into Practice*, TAFE NSW VET Teaching and Learning Project, TAFE NSW, Darlinghurst; NCVET (2004b) *The Vocational Education and Training Workforce: New roles and ways of working*, ANTA, Melbourne; Clayton and Blom (2004) *Doing it Well, Doing it Better: Practitioners, Pedagogy and Training Packages*, Paper delivered at AVETRA Annual Conference.

## Table 2

### Emerging technologies in education

Knowledge and skills	Details of information communication technology
<i>Current and emerging information and communication technology</i>	
Web-based administration tools	learning management systems
	student management systems
	digital student report card systems
	plagiarism detection systems
	online collaborative workspaces
	virtual classroom software systems
	e-portfolios
Content infrastructure	learning objects
	using existing content and information systems
Teaching and learning tools	interactive whiteboards
	online tutors
	storage devices
	personal digital entertainment devices and MP3 players
	personal digital assistants
	mobile phones
	laptops
	tablet personal computers
	gaming devices
	assistive and adaptive technologies
	Content delivery methods
podcasts	
vodcasts	
blogs	
wikis	
Others	voice over internet protocol
	moblogs and photoblogs
	digital cameras
	scanners
	swarming ("meetups")
	peer-to-peer networking and technologies
	Internet protocol version 6
	Chipification, RFID, smartcards
Solar powered computer networks and schools	

Source: ACT Department of Education and Training (2005) *Emerging Technologies: A framework for thinking*. Education.au limited. Canberra

## Table 3

### Pedagogy and ICT

Pedagogy features	Details
ICT-based learning	Requires more complex pedagogical reasoning than earlier models
	Teachers' beliefs about its value in learning are important in their pedagogical reasoning
	Teachers need to make their underlying theories more explicit as they explore learning opportunities provided by ICT
	Students' prior knowledge and skills important factor in success in learning in ICT-based environments
	Teachers need understanding of relationship between affordances of range of ICT resources and detailed knowledge of concepts, processes and skills in a subject
	Teachers need to use knowledge of learners to select appropriate ICT resources
	Teachers need to know most effective kinds of class organisation for ICT-based learning tasks
Specific subject learning	Pedagogical practices differ between subjects
	Pedagogy has both generic and subject-specific aspects

Source: Webb, M and M Cox (2004) A Review of Pedagogy related to Information and Communications Technology, in Technology Pedagogy and Education, Vol 13, No 3

## Table 4

### Key aspects of the head teacher role

Key area of role	Brief details
Teaching	maintain currency regarding changes in training packages and other courses
	teach wide range of courses, including apprenticeships, traineeships, commercial, TAFE-delivered VET, international students
	locate appropriate teaching resources for students
	plan appropriate forms of delivery for students' learning styles
	plan and conduct workplace assessment
	respond to students' needs, inquiries
	prepare for own performance reviews
Administration and management	locate and review appropriate teaching resources for others
	supervise other staff, both full time and part time teachers and others (clerical, technical); if rural, often on other sites
	manage plant and equipment, including maintenance monitoring
	manage student enrolments and student reporting, including data entry for the range of different programs
	manage unit's budget and its reporting
	oversee occupational health and safety issues in unit
	attend meetings – college, institute, industry, curriculum centre and other
	maintain official records
	prepare plans, including section risk management, business, professional development plans
	prepare for and participate in audits, including internal and external quality audits, records management system, financial
	assist with other staff performance reviews
Industry liaison	maintain industry knowledge
	build/maintain contacts for potential commercial contracts

Source: from author's analysis of TAFE NSW and Federation (2003) Head Teacher Survey. Available at: [www.det.nsw.edu.au/tafelteach\\_survey/report.htm](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/tafelteach_survey/report.htm)

## Table 5

Analysis of open-ended responses by head teachers regarding pressures of the role

Key area of role	Head teacher responses
<b>Teaching</b>	
Curriculum changes	63 per cent stated these impacted adversely on workload
Apprenticeships/traineeships	35 per cent stated these added to workload
	38 per cent did not respond or said not applicable
Teaching resources	36 per cent said inadequate or non-existent
	28 per cent said satisfactory
Equipment	37 per cent stated inadequate
	28 per cent said acceptable
	23 per cent did not respond or said not applicable
Students	29 per cent stated students demanding in terms of need (age, discipline, ethnicity, disability, learning)
<b>Administration and management</b>	
full time:part time teachers	45 per cent said unbalanced, need more full time teachers
	12 per cent said unbalanced
	4 per cent said unbalanced, need more part time
Course management systems	29 per cent stated added to workload and presented problems
Demands outside own section	50 per cent said high, increasing or unmanageable
	13 per cent said OK
Funding	55 per cent said inadequate
	13 per cent said had high impact and significant pressure on role
Geographic spread of supervision	19 per cent stated OK
	16 per cent said increasing and difficult
Head teacher teaching loads	40 per cent said too high
	17 per cent said too high, given lack of administrative support
	15 per cent stated OK
Administrative structure and support	31 per cent stated inadequate, unstable
	26 per cent said OK, improving
Level of administrative work	79 per cent said increasing workload, excessive, unmanageable
Level of class support	39 per cent said inadequate
	30 per cent said OK
	27 per cent did not respond or said not applicable
Support from (curriculum) divisions	35 per cent stated inadequate
	34 per cent said OK or improving
Commercial activity	49 per cent said demand to be involved high and increasing, high management pressure
Occupational health and safety	44 per cent stated increased workload and responsibility
training packages	42 per cent said increased workload, due to constant changes
	6 per cent had negative comments, without details
TVET	47 per cent did not respond or said not applicable
	26 per cent stated increased workload
<b>Industry liaison</b>	
Changing industry demands	28 per cent stated increased and insufficient time to spend on them

Note: return rate of responses to survey of 1208 head teachers was 21.5 per cent (n=259); the survey was designed to obtain feedback on the proposed industrial relations agreement (and supplementary guidelines) and was conducted in November 2002. Analysis carried out by this author.