

Practitioner expectations and experiences with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104)



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A NATIONAL VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING
RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
PROGRAM REPORT



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment
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Additional information relating to this research is available in *Practitioner expectations and experiences with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104): support document*. It can be accessed from NCVER's website <<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2312.html>>.

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Australian Government

**Department of Education, Employment
and Workplace Relations**

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This work has been produced by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) under the National Vocational Education and Training Research and Evaluation (NVETRE) Program, which is coordinated and managed by NCVER on behalf of the Australian Government and state and territory governments. Funding is provided through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Apart from any use permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part of this publication may be reproduced by any process without written permission. Requests should be made to NCVER.

The NVETRE program is based upon priorities approved by ministers with responsibility for vocational education and training (VET). This research aims to improve policy and practice in the VET sector. For further information about the program go to the NCVER website <<http://www.ncver.edu.au>>. The author/project team was funded to undertake this research via a grant under the NVETRE program. These grants are awarded to organisations through a competitive process, in which NCVER does not participate.

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ISBN 978 1 921809 35 4 web edition

978 1 921809 36 1 print edition

TD/TNC 102.19

Published by NCVER

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Practitioner expectations and experiences with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104)

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The Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104) is seen as the standard entry-level teaching qualification in the vocational education and training (VET) sector. The qualification is widely accepted and well supported as an essential requirement for VET practitioners. However, it has been criticised in relation to its ability to provide the level of skills and knowledge required. This report turns to the newly qualified practitioners themselves and asks them whether they believe that the certificate has provided them with an effective foundation for the delivery and assessment of training in the VET environment.

The report surveys new graduates of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, via an online survey just after they had completed the certificate, and again via semi-structured interviews six months later. The survey and interview focus on the graduates' sense of preparedness and confidence in planning, delivering and assessing training, as well as their views on the benefits and limitations of this qualification.

Key messages

- ❖ When taught well, the certificate provides some if not all of the essential skills required of new practitioners, particularly if they already have some experience of training if they are supported by mentors and if they undertake further developmental activities after they graduate.
- ❖ Participants felt less well prepared to manage the needs of diverse learners, to undertake assessment, to use training packages and to manage classroom issues. These areas should be given more emphasis in the program.
- ❖ A more flexible program structure is needed to cater for the diversity of job roles and responsibilities of VET practitioners, as well as for the differing levels of experience of training and VET that participants bring to the program. The authors suggest this might be addressed through the introduction of differentiated qualifications, skill sets and an orientation program for those unfamiliar with VET when they embark on the certificate IV.
- ❖ Those delivering the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment must be appropriately experienced and qualified and capable of modelling good practice.

Tom Karmel
Managing Director, NCVER

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Executive summary

This report presents the findings of a study examining the expectations and experiences of teachers and trainers with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104). This qualification was introduced in 2005 and is mandated as the nationally endorsed entry-level qualification for teachers and trainers in the VET sector. By 2008, however, there was clear evidence (Innovation & Business Skills Australia 2009; Precision Consulting 2008; Robertson 2008) that, like its predecessor, the qualification was seen not to be providing the essential ‘toolkit’ required by practitioners on entry to the sector.

This research was designed to provide a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding the qualification by capturing the perceptions and experiences of teachers and trainers who had recently completed the program. The goal of the study was to ascertain the extent to which the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment added value to their skills in training and assessment.

The research involved a review of the literature on teacher preparation, the development of a discussion paper, an online survey of 56 new graduates of the certificate IV, and follow-up, through semi-structured interviews, with 20 of those graduates six months later. The focus of the online survey and interviews was on the graduates’ sense of preparedness and confidence in planning, delivering and assessing training. Views on the benefits and limitations of the certificate IV programs undertaken were also gathered.

After an initial analysis of data, a focus group consisting of nine stakeholder representatives with a direct interest in the quality of delivery and outcomes of the certificate IV was convened to test the initial findings of the research. Stakeholder representatives were from state and territory training authorities, public, private and enterprise registered training organisations and Innovation and Business Skills Australia, the body responsible for development and maintenance of the certificate IV.

Drawing together the information collected through the questionnaire and the interview, it was evident that the majority of new graduates considered their experience with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to be a positive one. Importantly, the general sense of preparedness amongst participants and the sense of confidence they had in their ability to perform the role of teacher or trainer were both quite high at the outset and improved further after six months of experience in the field. This increase in confidence and skill levels was, to a marked degree, influenced by individual practitioners having access to ongoing development and professional support from experienced colleagues in the workplace, a factor validated as crucial by both the literature and focus group participants in the study.

While the levels of satisfaction with the content covered were consistently high across the Learning Environment, Learning Design, Delivery and Facilitation and Assessment fields, participants questioned the usefulness and coverage of some of the qualification’s content. The units of competency within the Learning Environment field, for example, were seen by those with some understanding of VET as ‘bureaucratic’ and ‘mundane’, although those with limited exposure to the sector found the units informative and useful. Additional concerns were registered about the lack of depth and amount of work in the Assessment field, and the majority of new graduates would have liked more time to develop and test different approaches to assessment. In addition, some reservations were expressed about whether the content prepared people well to work as trainers

and assessors, with some content not meeting expectations and the program not being sufficiently practical for participants to 'do it rather than talk about it'. Focus group discussants affirmed the potential for such deficits to occur in certificate IV programs that were not taught well, suggesting that this revealed the lack of expertise by some training providers. With no regulation covering who can deliver the TAA40104, it was considered that inexperience was breeding further inexperience in certificate IV delivery.

Significantly, a majority of participants commented that they had entered the program expecting to learn much more about *how to teach* and were disappointed when this did not occur to the extent they had anticipated. As the intent of the qualification is to provide the initial step into training, this expectation is probably unrealistic. However, it does emphasise the importance of clear information being provided by training providers about what the intended outcomes are for the certificate IV.

The importance of offering more opportunities in the program to develop teaching techniques, to test different approaches to training, to tailor training packages to suit specific client needs and to practise the many skills being learnt were constant threads in participant responses. Other responses included the desire for more opportunities to develop: specific teaching strategies, including assessment; a greater understanding of how students learn and the psychology associated with learning; and skills in learner feedback, learner engagement and class-management strategies.

At the same time, suggestions were made about the structure and timing of the program, including 'block release' in tandem with opportunities to practise in the field, and multiple weekly sessions in longer programs to enable learning to be consolidated. Although a number of participants had undertaken the programs in 20 hours or less, there was general agreement that the material could not be effectively covered in shortened timeframes, particularly for those with a limited understanding or experience of training.

In offering suggestions for change, those with some training experience behind them voiced strong views about the need to recognise and to use the relevant training skills and knowledge people bring with them and to pitch the learning and assessment in a way that suited the needs of all individuals within the group, not just those with minimal understanding of training or the sector. Without such recognition, they considered the credibility of the qualification would be brought into question.

Despite having some concerns about aspects of the programs they had undertaken, new graduates in this study agreed that the Certificate in Training and Assessment had provided them with some survival skills and a degree of confidence in their own abilities. On initial completion most considered they had a firm foundation upon which to build and they felt sufficiently prepared and confident to plan, deliver and evaluate training. They considered themselves less well prepared to manage the needs of diverse learners, to undertake assessment, to utilise training packages or manage classroom issues. With six months of experience in the field, individual confidence levels were generally higher, with many supported by mentors and experienced colleagues. Importantly, most had undertaken additional formal training, professional development activities and informal work-based learning. For the less experienced, these additional developmental activities were seen to be absolutely critical to their survival as trainers and assessors.

This research does confirm that the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment can provide some if not all of the essential skills required of new practitioners, particularly if they come to the program with some understanding or experience of training. However, it is also evident from this study that outcomes from the certificate IV could be markedly improved if serious consideration were given to a number of critical factors, namely:

- ✧ the allocation of sufficient time and space for program participants to practise and apply their teaching and assessment skills and techniques and to develop their ability to recognise and respond appropriately to the diverse learning needs of VET students and clients

- ✧ the creation of a more flexible program structure, one which can be readily adapted to cater for the diversity of job roles and responsibilities of VET practitioners, possibly through the introduction of differentiated qualifications, skills sets and an orientation to VET programs
- ✧ an expectation of continuing professional support and advice through mentoring, coaching and supervised practice, particularly for those who have no previous experience of training or the sector, built into the certificate IV
- ✧ the provision of appropriately experienced and qualified teachers and trainers capable of modelling good practice in the delivery of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

Introduction

Under the Australian Quality Training Framework, the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104) is the benchmark qualification for trainers and assessors working in the VET sector. Endorsed in 2005, the training package consists of 39 units of competency with the potential for a further 16 units to be imported from other training packages. To attain the certificate IV, a candidate must complete 12 core competencies and two elective competencies. This represents a significant shift away from the higher-level diplomas and bachelor degrees previously in place for initial teacher preparation in the sector. Since the introduction of competency standards for trainers and assessors in the early 1990s, the initial training of VET practitioners has been a preoccupation for a multiplicity of registered training organisations and has been a matter for constant and considerable debate. Like the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training before it, TAA40104 has now come under close scrutiny, with a national strategic audit and a review of the qualification by Innovation and Business Skills Australia, the industry skills council responsible for the training package. Such is the context in which this research was undertaken.

When beginning this project, the revised version of the Certificate IV in Training and Education (TAE40110) had not been undertaken. This project was a longitudinal study and the analysis of data and write-up of this report occurred at the same time as the new qualification was being finalised and endorsed by the National Quality Council.

Research purpose and questions

The purpose of this research was to provide VET stakeholders with a deeper understanding of the expectations and experiences of VET teachers and trainers with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and to examine their perceptions of how completion of the qualification added value to their skills in training and assessment and whether completing the qualification had met their expectations. The questions addressed in the research were:

- 1 On initial completion, do practitioners believe that the TAA40104 provides them with an effective foundation for the delivery and assessment of training in the VET environment?
- 2 As practitioners gain experience applying the knowledge and skills gained through completion of the TAA40104, do the initial perceptions of practitioners about the utility of the qualification change?
- 3 Do practitioners believe that the TAA40104 qualification enables them to make confident judgments, over time, about the kind of training and assessment strategies needed to meet the needs of diverse student groups in a range of training settings?

Research method and procedure

The research involved a staged examination of the views of teachers and trainers who had recently completed the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. The particular focus of the study was to explore participant expectations and experiences at different points in time, namely:

- ✧ upon completion of the qualification

- ✧ after approximately a six-month period of application in the field
- ✧ a final reflection on the usefulness and impact of their training, approximately 12 months after completion.

In the first phase of the study, a review of literature was undertaken which examined material relating to the training of practitioners in the VET sector and the preparation of beginning teachers in the broader educational environment, both nationally and internationally. From this review, a discussion paper was developed which provided the focus for the next phase of the research.

The second research phase involved an online survey which was designed to gather information from individuals who had completed the qualification in the last three to four months and who had gained minimal or no recognition of prior learning.

The quantitative and qualitative information sought through this survey focused on:

- ✧ the programs individuals had undertaken, with particular reference to issues of program flexibility, balance, delivery modes and perceptions of trainer competence
- ✧ the sense of self-efficacy gained in relation to the planning and delivery of training and the assessment of that training
- ✧ the benefits and limitations of the qualification they had undertaken
- ✧ suggestions for future improvements to the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

Participants in the survey were recruited via the Innovation and Business Skills Australia national course coordinator network using a snowball sampling approach. The survey was made available online for approximately two months and elicited 56 valid responses.

At the end of the survey, respondents were invited to participate in the next phase of the study. Twenty-five respondents provided contact details for this purpose, although only 20 were available to be interviewed by telephone six months later. Interview transcriptions were analysed by hand using a coding strategy that identified major themes, patterns and interrelationships, while a holistic cross-analysis process was also undertaken of survey and interview responses (Leedy & Ormrod 2005).

Copies of both the survey instrument and interview schedule are included in the support document.

Limitations of the study

To gain access to recent graduates of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, the research team accepted the offer by Innovation and Business Skills Australia to forward invitations to participate in the project through the existing Innovation and Business Skills Australia national network of course coordinators, all of whom are responsible for the delivery of the certificate IV in a registered training organisation and who act as a conduit for Innovation and Business Skills Australia information in their respective states and territories. This reliance upon this network of course coordinators meant the research team could not determine the true extent of distribution of invitations or the population size. Thus there was no way that a strategy to follow up on non-responses could be initiated. As a consequence, it is acknowledged that there may be some bias in the information gained from this cohort of TAA40104 graduates examined in this study.

With only 48 respondents completing all sections of the online questionnaire, there were insufficient data to validly determine any relationships between responses to the various sections of the survey. However, it was possible to analyse in some detail the responses of individuals in both the survey and the interview.

In addition, while the original design of the study included two semi-structured interviews—one six months after completion of the certificate IV and another a further six months later—only the first of these interviews was undertaken, as there proved to be insufficient numbers of participants

willing to continue making ongoing data-gathering either worthwhile or valid. As a consequence, the research design was modified to include a focus group consisting of interested stakeholders whose role was to validate the findings of the study and provide insights into how the research might inform future vocational education and training policy and practice. The focus group discussion paper and the focus questions used in this final stage of the study are included in the support document that accompanies this report as is the list of focus group participants.

Insights from the literature

This section provides a brief overview of the literature shaping this study. It has been drawn from a more extensive examination of literature on initial teacher education in VET and schools entitled *Practitioner experiences and expectations with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104): a discussion of the issues* (Clayton 2009). This paper can be accessed at <<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2183.html>>.

After an extensive consultation and development process, the TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package was endorsed in 2005. The document consisted of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104) and the Diploma of Training and Assessment (TAA50104) and was specifically designed to address the failings of the previous qualification, the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ40198). At the time of development, Carnegie (2002, p.20) emphasised:

We are endeavouring to create a Training Package that provides an initial set of minimum benchmarks for entry and which can represent, and give recognition for, ongoing skills and professional development needs and career options.

As a consequence, considerable effort was expended in making the new qualification more inclusive of the broad range of people engaged in teaching and assessing in the highly diverse and complex VET sector. Moreover, the content of the qualification focused on teaching and learning issues such as e-learning, developing learning programs, and fostering and promoting an inclusive learning culture, thus raising expectations that the qualification would provide a more adequate teaching toolkit for new entrants to the field than had been the case with its predecessor. The Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, therefore, was seen as a mechanism for raising standards (Down, De Luca & Galloway 2009).

Despite the significant changes made to the qualification, the certificate IV, like its predecessor, soon became an issue of concern. Precision Consulting (2008), for example, found that industry's expectations of assessment were not being met. Emphasising this point, it was noted:

Some interviewees claimed that there were RTOs awarding a Certificate IV in TAA on completion of a two-day program. This qualification is seen as the VET system's linchpin. If assessors perceive that there is no rigour involved in the qualification for their own job, it is unlikely that they will in turn model rigour in the assessments they conduct.

(Precision Consulting 2008, p.18)

Further consultations with key stakeholders undertaken on behalf of the National Quality Council (2009) highlighted limitations in the assessment competencies in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, variations in the delivery of the qualification and a lack of mentoring, coaching and support for participants. Mitchell (2008) and Guthrie (2009) stressed the importance of VET practitioners having a greater level of skills and knowledge than that provided through the certificate IV. Robertson (2008) also questioned the program's capacity to prepare people to take on the pedagogically and technically challenging roles performed by VET trainers and assessors, particularly since the professional knowledge bases required by those roles were virtually being neglected in the certificate IV. Drawing on the work of Shulman (1987) and Turner-Bisset (2006), Robertson concluded that the beginning trainer would develop only foundational skills and

knowledge through the TAA40104 and that knowledge about the specifics of teaching the subject, of educational contexts and of learners would require considerably more professional learning.

In a large study of beginning teachers and teacher education programs it was found that ‘teachers’ ratings of their overall preparedness are significantly related to their sense of self-efficacy about whether they are able to make a difference in student learning’ (Darling-Hammond, Chung & Frelow 2002, p.15). Furthermore, teachers who felt less well equipped were more likely to feel uncertain about their ability to meet the varying learner needs with which they were confronted. In a similar Australian study undertaken by Ingvarson, Beavis and Kleinhenz (2004), the researchers examined novice teacher perceptions of the teacher education programs they had undertaken. In particular, the study focused on opportunities for learning in four key areas; namely, the opportunity to learn content knowledge and how it is taught; the opportunity to learn the practice of teaching; the opportunity to learn via feedback from university staff; and the opportunity to learn assessment and planning. The authors found that those who felt well prepared were those who had:

completed courses that gave them deep knowledge of what they were expected to help students learn, and how students learned it, as well as skill in diagnosing students’ existing levels of understanding of the content to be taught, planning activities that would promote further development and assessing the extent to which development had taken place.

(Ingvarson, Beavis & Kleinhenz 2004, p.89–90).

The four areas identified by Ingvarson and his colleagues as critical to building a sense of preparedness in school teachers also have considerable relevance for practitioners engaged in the delivery and assessment of vocational education and training. As Clayton (2009) suggested, possession of the skills and knowledge of how to teach, how to teach content and how to assess and plan are equally crucial to the novice VET trainer or assessor as they are to beginning teachers in other sectors.

In 2009, Innovation and Business Skills Australia initiated a review of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. The consultation paper written to support this process acknowledged many of the issues raised by critics of the qualification. More importantly, the paper reiterated that the certificate IV was an entry-level qualification and, as such, was only designed to provide the ‘essential elements of what is needed and a firm foundation on which to build further knowledge and skills’ (Innovation and Business Skills Australia 2009, p.1). The point at issue, however, is the extent to which the qualification in its current iterations provides these essential elements for those stepping into vocational education and training and whether it builds the firm foundation upon which to develop the skill set demanded of practitioners in the VET sector.

In the beginning

This section sets out the findings from the analysis of the online survey of respondents who had undertaken the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment within the previous three to four months of completing the survey.

Profile of respondents

A total of 56 new graduates of the certificate IV provided responses to the questionnaire. The 26 male and 30 female respondents were drawn from metropolitan (34), regional (20) and remote (2) regions across Australia. Only ten (18%) were 35 years or under, 19 (34%) were aged between 36 and 45 years, and the remaining 27 (48%) were 46 years or older, confirming the accepted view that the VET workforce is older since, more often than not, new entrants to training generally come into the sector after embarking on another career.

The TAA40104 programs undertaken

Respondents were asked to identify the type of registered training organisation they had accessed to undertake the certificate IV qualification. The most common source of training were public registered training organisations (57%), with much smaller numbers accessing private (16%) and adult and community education (ACE) training providers (11%). The remaining respondents did not identify where they had gained the qualification.

Given the diverse nature of the VET sector and the ways in which training is delivered in different contexts, the respondents were asked to describe the amount of flexibility in the mode of delivery of the program and the degree to which that had satisfied their needs. Of the 47 (84%) who responded to the question, over half (54%) rated their programs as 'very flexible', or 'flexible'. However, 30% suggested there was 'little flexibility' in the mode of delivery, with programs being delivered face to face in a lock-step manner. To the question, 'How well did this degree of flexibility work for you?', the vast majority responded 'very well' or 'well' and only a small number responded that the degree of flexibility in the program had not suited them very well.

To ascertain the teaching approaches adopted in their certificate IV programs, respondents were also asked to identify the percentage of teacher-directed learning and self-directed learning they had experienced in the course and to indicate how well the balance between teacher-directedness and self-directedness had worked for them. Two-thirds of those answering the question indicated that courses involved somewhere between 50% and 75% of teacher-directed learning, with between 25% and 50% self-directed learning. Three-quarters of respondents suggested that the balance between teacher-directed learning and self-directed learning suited them either 'very well' or 'well'. Only a small number provided a 'not very well' response, indicating a sense of dissatisfaction with the balance between learner autonomy and teacher-centred delivery.

With the relatively high levels of teacher-directed learning as previously indicated, it was not surprising that a question on how the major part of the qualification had been undertaken elicited a 74% response rate against 'mostly face to face'. Only one respondent had undertaken the course completely online and a small number had attempted it with blends of face-to-face, distance and

online (4%); face-to-face and online (7%); or face-to-face and distance (7%) modes. While the majority indicated that the mode worked ‘well’ for them (58%) or ‘very well’ (40%), one individual considered that it had not worked very well for him at all.

Most commonly, respondents undertook the course in part-time mode (83%).

For the questions about the length of the course they had completed, respondents provided information about course durations in both hours and days, although a large percentage was either unsure about how long they had taken to complete the program or were unwilling to provide a response. Most commonly, courses undertaken ranged from between 50 and 199 hours in length and 11 and 50 days. There were, however, a number of people who had undertaken programs that were 20 hours or fewer in duration, while some had completed the qualification in more than 150 hours. Only two individuals indicated that they had taken five days or fewer to complete the program.

Of those who were employed as teachers or trainers, one-third were currently involved in training in a TAFE (technical and further education) institute. Smaller numbers were located in private training organisations (14%), enterprise registered training organisations (9%), ACE providers (5%) and one individual was engaged as a teacher delivering VET in Schools programs. Despite completing the certificate IV, a significant number of respondents (25%) indicated that they were not actively engaged as teachers or trainers at the time of completion of the survey. A further 12% provided no response to the question.

Perceptions and experiences of the TAA40104

The next series of questions in the online questionnaire asked respondents to rate various aspects of the certificate IV, with particular reference to their *confidence* to undertake the four major functions of plan, deliver, assess and evaluate training; the *opportunities* the course provided for learning the skills required of a teacher or trainer in the VET sector; the *understanding* gained about critical aspects of working as a trainer; and their sense of *preparedness* to undertake the role. Following are the results for each of these elements.

Confidence

Using the scale ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘disagree’, ‘strongly disagree’ or ‘not applicable’, respondents were asked the question: *In an environment of change and expectations of continuous improvement, I am confident that I can ... plan training, deliver training, assess training outcomes and evaluate training.*

Significantly, almost all respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they had the confidence to plan training (94%). A slightly lesser percentage (86%) agreed they felt sufficiently confident to deliver training and to evaluate training (82%). Agreement about confidence in the assessment of training outcomes was only slightly less at (79%), an outcome worthy of closer examination, given the concerns about assessment that have been consistently highlighted in VET research (National Quality Council 2009).

Opportunities to learn

In answering the question: *Undertaking the TAA04104 program gave me the opportunity to ...*, respondents were asked to again use the agree/disagree scale against 13 statements relating to critical aspects in VET teaching and learning.¹ Table A1 in the appendix sets out responses against critical aspects of learning.

The strongest agreement in relation to opportunities for learning were reported by respondents for identifying areas of practice that needed to be developed (94%), the linking of the theoretical and

¹ The statements were a modified version of those used in the study on beginning teacher self-efficacy and preparedness by Ingvarson, Beavis and Kleinhenz (2004) for the Australian Council for Educational Research.

practical components of training (92%) and in the analysis of and reflection on teaching practice (90%). The aspects of learning where it was perceived that there was less opportunity to learn were in observing new training practices (29% disagreement), developing and testing new training practices (29% disagreement) and practising training skills (21% disagreement). These three elements represent critical areas for development for new entrants to the sector, and as a consequence were investigated further in the interview phase of the study.

Developing a good understanding

To ascertain respondent opinions on whether the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment provided them with a good understanding of key elements in VET training, they were again asked to use the agree/disagree scale against seven statements to the question: *Undertaking the TAA40104 gave me a good understanding of ...* (table A2 in the appendix).

The strength of agreement with the ‘understanding’ statements was somewhat less than those provided by respondents in relation to the course offering them opportunities to learn. While just over half of the respondents strongly agreed that they had a good understanding of individual differences in trainees’ approaches to learning, they were more inclined to offer ‘agree’ and ‘disagree’ ratings against the other statements. Of particular interest were the ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ ratings for current developments in VET. When aggregated, close to 30% of people considered they did not gain a good understanding of what is undoubtedly a critical area for new teachers and trainers entering the sector.

Preparation

Using a similar approach, respondents were asked to provide a rating for each statement included under the question: *Undertaking the TAA40104 program prepared me to ...*

Responses to each of the statements were relatively even, with around 70–90% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the course prepared them to undertake the training activities identified in the list of statements. The most positively rated statement was that relating to communication of ideas and information. Disagreement was highest with the statements relating to the incorporation of employability skills with vocational skills in training programs and enhancing trainee confidence and self-esteem. In addition, about 20% considered the program had not prepared them to develop appropriate learning pathways for learners or develop questions to promote higher-order thinking in learners (23%).

In answering the preparation question, one respondent provided a ‘not applicable’ rating against the statements relating to the effective use of training packages and using a variety of technologies to support teaching practice. Two respondents provided similar responses to the statement on developing questions to promote higher-order thinking. These ‘not applicable’ responses account for the low percentages for the relevant statements, but also indicated that those responding to the survey might not be directly engaged in training that employed training packages and/or a range of technologies. Responses are detailed in table A3 in the appendix.

Trainers of certificate IV courses

Respondents were asked a number of questions with respect to the trainers and the training they had experienced. Specifically, they were asked to provide a rating for aspects of the question: *The trainers who delivered my TAA40104 program ...:*

- ✧ had recent experience training in the VET sector
- ✧ provided recognition for the learning experience I had prior to starting the program
- ✧ modelled evaluation and reflection on their own training practice.

The majority of respondents (97%) indicated they strongly agreed or agreed with the first of these statements, and 83% were similarly in agreement with the third statement. With regard to the provision of recognition, 70% agreed that recognition for previous experience was acknowledged by trainers prior to course commencement, although, interestingly, 17% of respondents indicated that it was not applicable to them. Without further detail, it is difficult to draw any conclusion as to why this perception might have arisen.

Views on course content

To gather consistent information about the perceptions of each of the four learning fields that make up the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, respondents were invited to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with a set of eight statements on content. The statements were:

- ✧ The content prepared me well to work as a trainer.
- ✧ The depth of the content was sufficient.
- ✧ The content was sufficiently practical.
- ✧ The level of difficulty was about right.
- ✧ The content was relevant to my needs.
- ✧ The content met my expectations.
- ✧ The amount of work was about right.
- ✧ Overall, I was satisfied with the [specific field name] content.

The following provides a brief summary of participant perceptions of the fields that make up the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

Learning environment

Although the level of agreement with most statements was generally strong for the units of competency included in this field (*Work effectively in vocational education and training*, *Foster and promote an inclusive learning culture*, and *Ensure a healthy and safe learning environment*), there were relatively high levels of disagreement in relation to the level of difficulty (23%), the content meeting respondent expectations (25%) and the amount of work involved being right (29%).

Learning design

Responses in the Learning Design field, which includes the units of competency, *Use training packages to meet client needs* and *Design and develop learning programs*, were consistent, with the statement about the amount of work being appropriate being accorded the highest level of disagreement (23%).

Delivery and facilitation

Responses in the Delivery and Facilitation field were generally positive. Of the three statements, *Plan and organise group-based delivery*, *Facilitate work-based learning* and *Facilitate individual learning*, only the statement relating to whether the amount of work required by these units was considered appropriate provoked notable disagreement, with 25% of respondents considering that too little time had been dedicated to this units of competency.

Assessment

The statements relating to preparation, relevance and satisfaction with the units of competency, *Plan and organise assessment*, *Assess competence*, *Develop assessment tools* and *Participate in assessment validation*, in the Assessment field received highly positive ratings. However, there was consistent disagreement around the sufficiency of the depth (21%), the level of difficulty (23%), the amount of work (21%)

and whether the content was sufficiently practical (21%) in this field. Despite the concerns with these statements, satisfaction with the Assessment field content was strong (85% agreement); thus, it could be assumed that the issue was more related to how the units were delivered.

An analysis of each the statements across the four learning fields revealed the following more-focused information about respondent perspectives on the content of the TAA40104. For example:

- ✧ With 92% agreement, the Delivery and Facilitation field was viewed most highly for *the content prepared me well to work as a trainer*.
- ✧ In all four fields, between 17% and 21% of respondents disagreed that *The depth of content was sufficient*.
- ✧ Learning Environment and Assessment were accorded the highest disagreement ratings for *The level of difficulty was about right*, with 23% and 24%, respectively.
- ✧ While the other three fields received 83% or more positive responses against the statement, *The content met my expectations*, only 75% of respondents indicated that the Learning Environment field had done so.
- ✧ For the statement, *The amount of work was about right*, the level of disagreement was consistently higher than for other statements across all fields, with 29% disagreeing that the amount of work was right in the Learning Environment units, 25% for Delivery and Facilitation, 23% for Learning Design and 21% for Assessment.
- ✧ Responses to the statement, *Overall, I was satisfied with the content*, were consistently high across all four fields.

Despite this overall sense of satisfaction, an examination of the responses for each of the eight statements across the four fields reveals that at least some of the respondents had reservations about various aspects of the program. For example:

- ✧ For the statement, *The content prepared me well to work as a trainer*, 50% or more of responses ranged between ‘agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’—56% for Learning Environment, 58% for Learning Design, 58% for Delivery and Facilitation and 64% for Assessment.
- ✧ For the statement, *The content was sufficiently practical*, findings were similar, with at least 50% of respondents indicating ‘agree’ through to ‘strongly disagree’ responses for each of the learning fields.
- ✧ The percentages of these responses accorded to *The content met my expectations* statement were highest of all, with 67% being recorded against the Learning Environment, 63% for Learning Design, 67% for Delivery and Facilitation and 64% for the Assessment units.

These findings not only provided an enhanced focus for the follow-up interviews with participants, they also highlighted a number of significant deficits requiring attention by those delivering the certificate IV program.

The responses of the 48 respondents against each of the four learning fields are presented in tables A4–A7 in the appendix.

Helpful aspects of the training program

When invited to briefly describe the main features of their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment program that were particularly helpful to them, three-quarters of the respondents provided some written comment. The majority of these responses, often quite expansive, highlighted the practical, hands-on nature of the training they had received. In responding to this question, a number of people made particular note that the trainers delivering the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment were ‘committed’, ‘motivating’ and ‘excellent’, demonstrating good practice and influencing how they themselves would respond to their own students in the future.

Others noted that the course had provided them with an understanding of training packages and in particular, good advice on how to create, use and assess learning programs targeted to specific client needs. Also, they outlined the value they had gained from being provided with practical, relevant and real examples, resources and training techniques, as well as ideas and strategies about student learning and effective session delivery. The following statements from two novice trainers and one relatively experienced trainer are representative of these comments:

... gave me a good understanding of how students learn, as they can be all different.

Planning, programming and assessing elements made my preparation for working in VET much easier.

As a person who has been conducting training for 12 years in the VET sector, the main areas that I derived benefit from was the explanation of certain terminologies. From this I also learned where to find resources that assisted with this type of thing as well.

Having the opportunity to work in groups and interacting with others in similar circumstances but diverse backgrounds was also consistently identified as a major benefit of the learning the respondents had undertaken. The opportunity for extensive group interaction was seen to be critical to the majority of these learners. Critical reflection, critique, confirmation and confidence were often mentioned as important outcomes of their experience with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, with two respondents providing succinct summaries of how they had benefited from the program reflecting the experiences of others. The first respondent suggested that ‘the whole training worked for me. I have had previous experience as a trainer so the whole package helped me to be better as a trainer and assessor’, while the other proposed that he ‘learnt a lot about myself as a trainer, what was good and what I could improve on’.

Commentary around what respondents found helpful in the the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment also revealed distinct differences in views between those who nominated themselves as novices in VET and those who acknowledged they had some experience in training. A number of respondents, for example, suggested that the program covered all aspects necessary to successfully accommodate learners with little knowledge of training and assessment or VET, but did little to enhance the skills and knowledge of those who did. This was reflected in a few comments that suggested ‘none of the program was helpful’ or something similar to the following:

The only areas I found useful were in the understanding of training packages, and adult learning principles. The majority of the content appeared to be aimed at students with very little life experience. I was 52 when I did the qualification and found 95% of it of no use at all. As a tradesman with 30 years working experience dealing with clients, other trades and apprentices [this] gave me most of the knowledge I needed.

This issue of experience, or the lack of experience, in some form of training and the influence that this has on people’s expectations of and outcomes from the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment was further highlighted in responses to the second open-ended survey question as well as during the interview phase of the study described in the next chapter.

Elements missing from the certificate IV

Respondents to the survey were also asked to describe any elements they felt should have been included in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment that would better prepare them to work as trainers. Of the 30 (53.6%) participants who responded to this question, seven commented either ‘none’ or ‘not sure’. The remaining 25 provided a range of responses which were clustered into clear areas. These were:

- ✧ more time and space in programs for practical application of the learning, particularly more time to practise both training and assessing

- ✧ more extensive information and training on teaching techniques—presentation skills, learning styles, different teaching approaches for different contexts and learners
- ✧ classroom management, including strategies for engaging adult learners and younger disengaged learners
- ✧ specific skills/knowledge on assessment tool development, record-keeping strategies, sourcing resources.

As can be seen by the following quotes, building in opportunity for all aspects of training and assessment to be tested was seen by respondents to be essential.

I was working in industry [not an RTO] when I began the assessment cluster of the course. I found myself floundering to be assessed as an assessor! Contextualising was a constant challenge as the course relied heavily on the workplace being ‘geared up’ for the use of training packages. Including more assessor and assessment support would have been useful.

I would also have benefited from giving one or two more demo lessons, but that is just a personal feeling ... there were plenty of opportunities really, but the feedback was so great it would have been lovely to have developed a bit more in that expert environment.

Aspects of delivery nominated by respondents as lacking related to communication skills and presentation skills. For example, one response was ‘I was somewhat disappointed that the course didn’t include a communication module to assist in delivery and confidence of participants prior to delivering to the class’.

In the area of classroom management, responses made suggestions like ‘perhaps some more behavior management tips’; ‘difficult training situation scenarios’; ‘difficult trainees’; ‘dealing with difficult classroom situations’; and ‘more about specific teaching practices for engaging adult learners not just generalised adult learning principles’.

As with the responses to the question on course benefits, comments were again made about the impact that individual learner experience had on overall learning in the the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. This concern was expressed in a variety of ways, one of which is demonstrated by the following:

The broad experience in the class made it very difficult with the presentation being very broad in content and level, which I believe gives the certificate less credibility ... Maybe the course needs to be delivered in core subjects in Cert 1, 3, 4 allowing the training to meet clear expectation of the skills of students.

This issue of acknowledging the skills and knowledge of the participants in the certificate IV was not an uncommon one being raised by both responses to the survey and during the in-depth interview six months down the track.

Down the track

The next phase of this study involved semi-structured telephone interviews with survey respondents willing to be contacted approximately six months after completion of the online questionnaire. Twenty-five of the original 56 respondents provided email and/or telephone contact details and, when followed up, 20 people agreed to participate in telephone interviews, which were conducted over a period of four weeks. Of the remaining respondents, three were no longer contactable on the numbers originally provided and two elected not to participate any further in the research.

Profile of the interviewees

The 13 males and seven females interviewed in this phase were drawn from metropolitan (12), regional (7) and remote (1) regions across Australia. The majority (95%) were over of 36 years of age.

Seventeen (85%) of those interviewed indicated that they were actively involved in training, five of them in a full-time capacity and the rest in part-time, contract or sessional teacher roles. Five others indicated they were engaged in only a minimal amount of training and that training was not a major part of their day-to-day work roles. While the training foci of the majority were nationally accredited VET programs, three of the interviewees were delivering non-accredited vocationally oriented units of training and one was conducting training in a non-VET area.

Interviewees were delivering training in a broad range of training organisations, a significant percentage of which were registered training organisations, or were involved in auspicating arrangements with registered training organisations. Five individuals were employed in public registered training organisations, five in enterprise registered training organisations, four in private training organisations and one in an ACE provider. Two were involved in training but were not in a registered training organisation.

Areas of teaching interest and expertise were identified by interviewees as including community services and health (4), information technology (3), business (3), construction (2), electro-technology, plumbing, turf management, fire services and education.

Impetus for undertaking the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment

As a stepping-off point to the interview, participants were asked to explain their main reason for undertaking the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment qualification. Not surprisingly, 11 (55%) responded that it was an organisational requirement and, in some instances, a condition of their ongoing employment with the training provider. For example, the part-time ACE trainer noted:

I was required by my employer to undertake the cert IV as I am delivering nationally recognised Units of Competency. Prior to the completion of the cert IV, I was doing training but had to be supervised and was unable to do the assessments. This irritated me to some extent, so I gave in and was happy to complete the qualification.

Three participants emphasised the importance of the qualification to their current and future business plans. For example, one participant indicated that his main reason for doing the qualification was that he was planning to expand his business by conducting training for other businesses in the area. With this goal in mind, he was currently pulling together the documentation needed to become a registered training organisation in his own right.

In a similar vein, another interviewee noted:

I have been an RTO since I was led up the garden path by consultants. That's why I did the certificate IV.

Another with the future in mind suggested:

I did intend to maybe teach some TAFE part-time—I have done one class. I am wondering whether I want to do what I am doing now forever [green-keeping]. I am looking to the future where I might be able to become a trainer down the track.

The remaining six (30%) suggested that they undertook the certificate IV because they were responsible for some training delivery and wanted to improve their presentation skills and/or to build their knowledge of how training can occur in the workplace.

Significantly, interviewees generally nominated a mix of motivations, including organisational drivers, strategic business imperatives and personal learning goals.

Views on the usefulness of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment

To provide some comparison with the data gathered through the online questionnaire, interview participants were asked to rate the usefulness of the four fields of learning that comprise the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Applying the scale 'very useful', 'useful' or 'not very useful', interviewees were also encouraged to provide an explanation for each of their responses.

While the variations were not large across the various fields, the Learning Environment was rated by the 20 interviewees as slightly less useful than the other fields, with a quarter suggesting the units within the field were 'not very useful'. The Assessment field was seen to be slightly more useful than the other three. These views were consistent with those previously given by these individuals in the online survey.

During the interviews, however, it was clear that there was a notable difference in views on the usefulness of the program between those who nominated themselves as completely new to training and those who indicated they had some experience of training and understanding of the VET sector behind them. Nine of the participants identified themselves as 'novices' with six months or less training experience, while the remainder commented that they had done some training either formally or informally previous to undertaking the course. No detail about the extent or type of experience was elicited from those who indicated some involvement in training; however, given that none had sought recognition of prior learning, it would seem unlikely that it was extensive. By contrast, the novices had been engaged in training only since they had completed the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

As can be seen in the following tables, the variation in view between these two groups was most marked in the 'not very useful' ratings.

Table 1 Perceptions of usefulness—less experienced group (n = 9)

Field	Ratings					
	Very useful		Useful		Not very useful	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
The Learning Environment	5	56	3	33	1	11
Learning Design	5	56	3	33	1	11
Delivery & Facilitation	5	56	4	44	0	0
Assessment	5	56	4	44	0	0

Note: Interviewees with 6 months or less training experience.

Table 2 Perceptions of usefulness—more experienced group (n = 11)

Field	Ratings					
	Very useful		Useful		Not very useful	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
The Learning Environment	3	27	3	27	5	45
Learning Design	5	45	3	27	3	27
Delivery & Facilitation	5	45	3	27	3	27
Assessment	6	55	4	36	1	9

Positive views on usefulness

Providing emphasis to statements about the usefulness or otherwise of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, some interviewees acknowledged that they had heard about other people who had undertaken what were termed ‘shonky’ programs that were deemed to be ‘suspect qualifications’. However, a number of interviewees were strong in their views about the courses they had completed. For example, a novice trainer suggested:

The qualification itself is very much underrated by a lot of people because it is not an easy course to actually participate in. I was shown how everything fits together ... that was important to my understanding of how things work. All four [fields] were equally important to me and they certainly have been very useful to me and I am using them all the time.

Negative views about usefulness

However, as has been identified in the data, many of the negative comments made in relation to the usefulness of the various parts of the course came from people who considered that they already possessed the information and skills that formed the content of competency clusters. For example, one person commented that, while he had considerable experience with aspects and the application of *Foster and promote inclusive practice*, others did not, and, as a consequence, ‘they tried to cram things into individual units and what we ended up with was a superficial ski over things’. The *Learning Environment* was variously described in parts, as ‘terribly tedious and mundane’ and ‘frustratingly bureaucratic stuff’, but acknowledged to be particularly important for those who were new to the VET sector and needed to learn ‘to navigate their way through it’.

Perceived deficits in course content and coverage

Having identified the graduate interviewees’ perceptions of the usefulness of the various fields making up the certificate IV, they were then asked to reflect on what would have been useful to have learned more about during the course.

In a number of instances, individuals again noted that they had entered the program with some degree of previous training experience, which stood them in good stead. Thus, they considered the program sufficiently comprehensive and were unable to identify any possible additions in content

or coverage. Importantly, having prior experience often qualified an interviewee's evaluation of the completeness of the certificate IV program. A response that encapsulates the important role this previous experience played in shaping opinion was provided by a part-time teacher in a TAFE institute who suggested:

I think I got enough of what I needed from the program. I went in with a lot of experience from outside the course. I worked for a hairdressing supply company and ran in-salon hairdressing workshops and corporate training for groups of up to 25 people. I had strong facilitation skills before I started the course. For me it was just a process ... to get the certificate. If you had never done it before, it [the training provided] might have not been enough. There is never really enough in a simulated environment.

Perceived gaps in the training

In responding to the question: *What now do you think would have been useful to have learned more about?*, five (25%) interviewees suggested there were no gaps that they could identify in the training they had undertaken. The remaining 15 (75%), however, nominated a range of areas they would have preferred to have been more comprehensively covered in their certificate IV program. These deficits were grouped around four broad but clearly interrelated themes, namely:

- ✧ more opportunities to develop specific teaching techniques or strategies, to develop a greater understanding of how students learn and the psychology associated with learning, and to develop skills in learner feedback, learner engagement and class management (13 responses)
- ✧ more opportunities to practise across the whole program (10 responses)
- ✧ more opportunities to work with training packages, to unpack, repack, contextualise and develop training programs from the training packages to meet client needs
- ✧ more opportunities to develop assessment tools and to undertake assessment validation activities.

Having further opportunities to engage in a more practical way with the learning was consistently emphasised, with a number of interviewees wanting to 'getting my hands dirty', 'really getting into it' and 'do it rather than talk about it'.

Suggestions for change

To gather more detailed information about content and coverage, participants were asked, if given the opportunity, what changes they would make to improve the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. They were encouraged to give consideration to the course structure, its timing and sequencing, as well as the content and coverage.

Time and timing

The issue of time was raised by a number of interviewees, particularly in relation to requiring more time to test different teaching approaches and develop a range of training programs. A statement which is typical of many of the comments came from an interviewee not actively engaged in VET, but who was intending to seek casual employment in the near future. He offered the following suggestion for change:

It should have been spread over a little more time so that you had the chance to sandwich in maybe some more practical experience and just not quite as intense as five months was. I needed more time to try out some of the techniques. Most learning you learn really in doing. But, I understand the trade-off, because I was actually keen to get it over and done with.

Another suggested that having several sessions per week over an 18-week period would be more effective because ‘it is activity based and it is important to leverage off the activities ... you can reflect and make the most of learning and practising through the activities’.

Time was also seen as an issue for those who were working full-time and undertaking the course at the same time. Using as an example the unpacking and repackaging of training packages into contextualised learning programs, one participant stressed how difficult that was for inexperienced people in a short timeframe with limited time and ‘head space’ to comprehend the information. Interestingly, many of those who had done the course over nine to 12 months questioned how proper coverage could possibly be achieved where the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment was delivered in abbreviated timeframes.

For those without a VET background, I think it is quite a challenge ... Experience is something that comes after a period of time and ongoing practice. The practicality is for the four day people, is that this cannot happen.

Summarising the views of a number of those interviewed, another interviewee working as a part-time teacher for a TAFE institute and privately as a trainer proposed:

If they are going to give the certificate out to those people in a week or whatever, then it really devalues the effort and the time that the other people have put in when they have done it in a longer period ... I know people need it, and they need it yesterday. It is something they just require—the piece of paper. But if you are really talking about training people extensively and it is going to be worth something, I don’t think it should be offered in a short period of time.

Building teaching skills and knowledge

The most consistent observation from the interviews was that the majority of interviewees considered when they enrolled in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment they would be learning to ‘teach’ or ‘train’. Many were disappointed when they did not fully achieve this end.

Summing up this perception, one full-time trainer noted:

I think in ignorance going to do the course, I was looking at it from the perspective that it would probably be 60 per cent to 70 per cent teaching you to teach and the rest would be sourcing material. But in fact it was the opposite way around.

Another interviewee expressed considerable concern for people undertaking the certificate IV who had no education or training experience and who received minimal training in the course in what she termed ‘those underlying teacher skills in learner engagement’. There was general consensus that such ‘teacher skills’ needed greater emphasis in the program. Less breadth and more depth was the commonly held opinion of those who suggested that change was necessary.

Some interviewees suggested that extra units relating specifically to the ‘art’ of teaching were critical, particularly in the areas of learner motivation, dealing with de-motivated and difficult learners, meeting diverse learner needs, and strategies to address various styles and preferred ways of learning. In addition, it was suggested that important inclusions to the core course would be *Facilitate group-based learning* and *Address language, literacy and numeracy issues within learning and assessment practice* (both electives), as these units were acknowledged to be the key business of the majority of VET practitioners.

The critical importance of building more learning into the intricacies of the art of training was encapsulated by the following statement:

I think I would include something on how to improve your training skills. How do I make training interesting for people? Teaching techniques really, especially techniques to improve my communication and techniques to meet different clients’ needs and different training circumstances. How to make sure I am asking the right questions, how do I know they understand, and how do I get some passion in there? And how can I ensure that people are

engaging with the learning? I think there needs to be much more in the area of providing skills and techniques for quality training.

Commenting that the course had challenged him greatly, another interviewee suggested it had ‘highlighted his deficits’ in the area of delivery. On reflection, he suggested the need for a much greater emphasis on e-learning techniques and diverse delivery methods to broaden the ability of people to make different choices about the approaches that they might adopt in delivering their training. What he had been offered in his certificate IV program, he suggested, was a ‘distinctly one-dimensional approach’. Along similar lines, a part-time enterprise-based trainer was concerned that he had not gained sufficient information on, and practice in, assessing people with different learning styles and needs—an issue he was facing in his day-to-day training activities in the field. He noted, ‘while we did some of it, I did not realise how important it was in my own job’.

Appropriateness of qualification level and associated issues

Interestingly, four (20%) interviewees questioned whether the qualification was appropriately categorised as a certificate IV, given the extent and breadth of its coverage, and suggested that it should be a diploma-level qualification. Others considered that a range of qualifications would be useful and probably more appropriate, given the diversity of needs and experience that people had who were enrolling in the program. A full-time TAFE interviewee suggested an alternative approach might be to offer a preparatory program prior to the certificate IV, which would ‘allow a greater pool of people to teach ... people who not want to go any further, but who are very skilled at training in the workplace’. Further emphasis given to this type of thinking came from interviewees with quite different backgrounds and experience. For example:

From a casual trainer in a private registered training organisation:

I am not sure that the complexity of the Certificate IV is necessary for everybody. Many people are only training and coaching one to one, so they probably don’t need a lot of the information they get and all it does is confuse them.

From an enterprise trainer:

For the people who are going to be out actually having to write the material, the course would be more full-on, while [for] the people who are purely presenting material that was pre-written you could almost halve the time. I probably shouldn’t say halve it—it should be more streamlined. I suppose it is horses for courses. For people who want to be full-on trainers it needs to be longer. I am happy to be a presenter and assessor and have it shorter.

From a part-time trainer preparing to set himself up as a private provider:

I don’t think we have to change the qualification; we have got to change the thinking of people so that these people understand that training and assessment don’t always need a Certificate IV... a lower level qualification would do for some people—say three training units and one assessment unit is enough.

Diversity in experience and access to the training environments

A common theme emerging from just over half of the interviews was related to the issue of the differing levels of experience with training and the training sector of those undertaking the certificate IV. The majority of interviewees commented that the diversity in their groups sometimes impacted negatively upon the quality and focus of their learning. In explaining this issue, one participant suggested that content and approaches to delivery and assessment were ‘watered down to the minimum level’ and made ‘simplistic’ to account for those who had no experience in the field and, rather than challenging learners, material became so generic that it was almost ‘irrelevant’. The solution to this problem was seen by some to be ensuring that, as far as possible, learner cohorts contain people with reasonably similar skills and experience. There was acknowledgment, however, that this was not likely to be either possible or practical. Others were more concerned that many of

the less experienced participants found the course so challenging that they became disheartened and demotivated. Having no access to a training environment also made for difficulties.

For those who were working in the VET sector it was much easier to do effectively. I found it difficult because I was not in a VET workplace and I was not teaching at the time.

Inevitably, this issue impacted upon the class dynamics and learning environment for everybody. This was seen as being particularly true of those who were required by employers to complete the qualification for work purposes, some of whom were simply ‘not really keen’, or openly disgruntled.

Taking into consideration experience and understanding of the sector is really important. Some people struggled. Nothing made sense to some in the group who had come into training by accident.

Perceptions of preparedness and confidence

Sense of preparedness

To gather more in-depth information about the interviewees’ sense of preparedness, the following question was asked of them: *When you completed the qualification, how well prepared did you feel to do the tasks required of you as a teacher/trainer?* As a starting point, participants were asked to answer by using a rating scale of ‘very well prepared’, ‘prepared’ and ‘not well enough prepared’.

Using the same scale, interviewees were then asked to take into account the passage of time and reflect on their current sense of preparedness to undertake the tasks they were being required to undertake as a teacher/trainer. The following table provides a summary of both sets of responses in relation to preparedness.

Table 3 Preparedness—on completion and six months later (n = 20)

Rating	Responses			
	On completion		Six months after completion	
	No.	%	No.	%
Very well prepared	9	45	14	70
Prepared	9	45	3	15
Not well enough prepared	1	5	1	5
Nil response/negative response	1	5	2	10

It should be noted that one interviewee was not prepared to accord the course any relevance in relation to his preparedness, while another noted that, as she was no longer actively engaged in training, her sense of preparedness at the time of interview was not something she was able to determine.

Of those who rated themselves very well prepared on completion of the certificate IV, all but one had maintained that sense of preparedness over the months that followed. Moreover, five of those who considered themselves to be prepared on graduation had moved to feeling very well prepared with the increasing experience they had gained over the six months of working in the field. Another full-time trainer described moving from a sense of not being well prepared to being very well prepared—a shift in perception he considered was aided by greater experience in the field, additional training and development, and the ongoing support of knowledgeable colleagues.

In marked contrast, one interviewee who initially rated himself as very well prepared, reassessed himself to be not well prepared now that he understood just how much he did not know about teaching and learning in a VET environment.

Sense of confidence

Another factor identified in the literature as important for beginning teachers was confidence (Darling-Hammond 2006). When asked how confident they felt about undertaking the training tasks required of them when they first completed the certificate IV, half of the group interviewed rated themselves as 'very confident', and all but one responded that they were 'confident'. Again, the one individual who was not actively engaged in training suggested that she was unable to determine her level of confidence to undertake the tasks of a teacher or trainer.

As with perceptions of preparedness, there were also significant shifts in interviewees' sense of confidence in undertaking the roles required of them. The group who had rated themselves as very confident on completion of the qualification had managed to maintain that sense with the passage of time. More importantly, a further six individuals indicated that they moved from feeling confident to being very confident in the conduct of their training activities.

It should be noted that one individual with a particularly negative view of the usefulness of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment stressed that undertaking the program had had no impact whatsoever on either his sense of preparedness or his confidence as a teacher. No longer involved in vocational education and training this interviewee suggested:

The material I really had to learn about specific VET practice and procedures, I learned through colleagues. That was a more powerful learning process. Working in the organisation was also a better learning experience—learning by doing!

The impact of further development and support

Beginning teacher self-efficacy has also been linked in the literature to further engagement with learning and access to the ongoing support of experienced others. In this study, interviewees were asked to describe any additional professional development they had undertaken since completing the certificate IV and to outline the kind of professional support that was available to them.

Further learning

Six (30%) of those interviewed had undertaken no further training since graduating from the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Fourteen (70%) had gone on to further study, some of which was formal and accredited, and some which was classified specifically as 'on the job' learning. The types of accredited programs undertaken as an extension of the certificate IV were the Diploma of Training and Assessment, the Diploma of Vocational Education and Training Practice and a Master of Education. Others were enhancing their vocational domain with qualifications including a Certificate III in Business, Certificate IV in Real Estate, a Diploma of Project Management and a degree in mechanical engineering. Ten respondents described their learning as 'in house', which covered such things as flexible learning, e-technology in learning, validation and moderation, and problem-based learning.

Of those who had continued on with some form of learning, six indicated that it had been self-initiated, four indicated that the training had been initiated by someone within the organisation and the other four indicated suggested that it was mutually agreed between the organisation and themselves as part of their performance management process.

Professional support

Fifteen (75%) interviewees had some form of professional support in their training environment. This support was identified as peer support (4), a community of practice (3), an industry network (3), a mentor (2), a training authority source (2) and a direct supervisor.

In every case, access to this support in whatever form was seen to be critical to the interviewees' confidence and ongoing capacity to develop further as teachers and trainers. For example, a new teacher with extensive experience in the construction industry noted:

Being involved in the network or the Community of Practice is mainly just tapping into all the experience of the other teachers ... you can pick up a lot from other tradesmen [some of whom have] over 30 years—I am hoping to do the same again.

Another interviewee who was a member of a community of practice commented:

We discuss issues and reach consensus about what to do and that gives us a bit more confidence in our training. The sense of confidence works in a number of ways. There is a sense of confidence in the fact that we actually know what we can do. Or there is a sense of confidence in the fact that you are talking to a group of people who also don't know what they should be doing. It is not always that you sort the issues out; you just become clearer on the issues and clear on the sense that people don't have the same understanding of it. The certificate IV would not have provided me with sufficient [knowledge] to battle through these issues, I would not be so confident without that support.

The emphasis interviewees placed on the importance of further learning and professional support was considerable. The less experienced teachers and trainers, in particular, cited these additional developmental activities as critical to their survival and growth as VET practitioners. Receiving support from experienced others as well as having opportunities to try out their newly learned skills and to build on the initial knowledge gained in the certificate IV meant they felt better prepared and confident in their own abilities to undertake the tasks being set for them as teachers and trainers.

Informing policy and practice

If the expectations and experiences with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment described by the participants in this study reflect those of the broader population of new entrants to the VET workforce, what might the implications of these findings be for policy and practice in the sector? To test the research outcomes and provide insights into how the study might inform the preparation of new teachers and trainers, a focus group was undertaken which consisted of representatives from interested stakeholders; namely, Innovation and Business Skills Australia, the industry skills council responsible for the Training and Assessment Training Package; state and territory training authorities, which are responsible for monitoring the quality of training outcomes and supporting jurisdictionally based professional development; and public, private and enterprise training organisations, both delivering the certificate IV and employing graduates from the program. (A list of focus group participants is included in the support document.)

Participants were asked to reflect on what the new graduates had said generally about their experience with the certificate IV and, more specifically, on the expectations of skills and knowledge gained through the qualification. In addition, they were asked to consider aspects missing from the content identified by the new graduates and to discuss the implications for the quality of delivery and program outcomes, given the diversity of learner experience and lack of access to authentic training environments. Any suggested changes to delivery approach, timing and sequencing of the program were also opened up for discussion.

All members of the group agreed that, if taught well, the certificate IV could provide the essential skills required of a new entrant to the sector, especially if additional training and support were available to them after completion. There was, however, some concern expressed that the qualification was often delivered at a lower level, resulting in 'a lack of congruence between the level of competency development and the level of assessment that candidates were undergoing'. Although ostensibly competency-based, many programs were actually time-based and little space was provided for practice or for building the body of evidence required for candidates to be validly assessed as competent. Furthermore, without any restrictions on who was permitted to offer the qualification, many delivering it had little experience and had only the certificate IV themselves.

Setting in place a broad concept of competence for VET teachers and trainers was also seen to be problematic. It was suggested:

There can be no one picture of competence painted because there are differences in job roles and requirements for people working across the VET sector. The starting point is a couple of skill sets for people doing a small amount of training occasionally in industry right through to the extensive roles undertaken by advanced practitioners.

A similar view was advanced when it was noted that there was a considerable difference between undertaking a small amount of training in a familiar industry setting and holding together a higher-level program over several semesters. In the first instance, it was agreed that the certificate IV should suffice. In the second, there was an obvious need to further develop the skills and knowledge to a level required by that role. At issue was what actually constituted entry level for those training in the sector.

What do we mean by ‘entry level’ when we are talking about this? We use the term as if we all understand what it means. Clearly entry level can be different for people at differing levels, in different vocations and roles. What it means for one person in a particular situation does not mean the same for someone somewhere else.

Focus group members agreed that it was unreasonable to expect the one qualification to fit the needs of all practitioners in every training situation. Greater depth and breadth could be achieved through higher-level qualifications and skill sets in areas specific to job roles and training needs. Professional development, supervision, mentoring and performance management were confirmed as strategies critical to the ongoing development of new entrants to the sector. The major concern was that not all training organisations had the knowledgeable personnel to undertake this support role. ‘We are relying on RTOs to do the right thing by their staff and a lot of RTOs do, others do not have the resources or the ability to set those things in place.’

In relation to the perceived deficits in the certificate IV, participants agreed that there was insufficient skill development associated with competency-based assessment and that anything involving the development of assessment tools was too difficult and should not be expected of novice practitioners when more experienced practitioners also struggled in this area. It was recognised that many new entrants were provided with assessment materials; however, it was considered important that they have at least the capacity to evaluate those resources and modify them where required to suit the needs of their learners.

Teaching techniques, classroom management and the separation of the various elements of training packages, all identified by interviewees as requiring further coverage, were also acknowledged within the focus group as a concern in the broader sector. These were areas where people were unlikely to learn things immediately, but where they would need continued formal learning and learning through experience in the workplace. The obvious solution was to build in more opportunity to experiment with these activities during the program, although, given the organisational and funding constraints that were generally attached to delivery of the qualification, these would need to be picked up in ongoing professional development after the completion of the certificate IV.

When evaluating the suggested alternative strategies for delivery, all agreed that a practicum would assist novices to try out teaching techniques and learn through critical reflection and constructive feedback from experienced others. Again, it was concluded that funding would in all probability preclude such an approach in the certificate IV. Such a strategy would be more appropriately built into the novices’ day-to-day work after completion of the qualification.

Discussions around delivery approaches elicited a number of differing viewpoints, but one consistent theme related to the perceived lack of flexibility in the structuring of the program. Participants suggested this inflexibility caused those delivering the program to have difficulties in tailoring approaches to suit the diverse needs of the individuals—a factor emphasised by a significant number of the interviewees. While acknowledging that the process of personalising training was not an easy task for the experienced trainer, it was noted that this task was ‘certainly not one to be carried out by somebody who has only gained the qualification in recent times themselves’.

While much criticism has been directed at the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, focus group members agreed that the qualification had performed a very useful function for many people working in training. It had provided them with all the knowledge and skills they needed to take on a particular role and their level of satisfaction with the qualification was high. For others, as one participant suggested, ‘it had opened their eyes to what else was possible and allowed them to make decisions about whether this was the direction they want to go in’.

At the same time, participants were concerned that some individuals in the study undertook the program because they thought it might be a good idea and came without a clear vocational background or access to authentic workplaces in which to practise skills. Classes comprised of people with a genuine need to complete the qualification and the appropriate level of vocational expertise to become a teacher or trainer in company and those who might simply be testing out the

possibilities would undoubtedly make the teaching and assessment process problematic for those delivering the training. Of greater concern was how those without vocational experience in the field and only minimal authentic training experience gained from undertaking the qualification might possibly be deemed competent trainers and assessors.

Conclusions

The Certificate IV in Training and Assessment programs undertaken by the new practitioners in this study provided them with some if not all of the essential skills to step off into the VET sector with a reasonable sense of preparedness and confidence in their own abilities. On initial completion the majority believed that they had gone some way to developing the firm foundation required for effective delivery of training and assessment in the VET environments in which they were operating. They also felt sufficiently prepared and confident to rate themselves as capable of planning, delivering and evaluating training.

At the same time, the majority of participants in both the survey and the interview emphasised that they had entered the program expecting to learn much more about *how to teach* and were disappointed when this was not the case. This finding brings into question how the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is promoted and explained to those intending to enrol and highlights the need to ensure that the 'entry level' status of the program is emphasised.

Preparation in the important training skills: of dealing with learner diversity; effective classroom management strategies; competency-based assessment; and the manipulation of the various elements of training packages to tailor programs to meet particular client needs were perceived by participants to be either poorly covered or even neglected in the certificate IV programs they had undertaken. Given the critical nature of these aspects in the VET practitioners' teaching repertoire, this finding is alarming and emphasises the importance of continuing to build practitioner skills in the time beyond completion of the qualification.

For participants with minimal experience or understanding of VET, the Learning Environment field was perceived to be very useful; however, for those with some understanding of training and the sector, these units were seen to be problematic. This suggests that these units would be better utilised as a bridging or orientation program for the inexperienced wishing to familiarise themselves with VET prior to undertaking the certificate IV. They remain important, but consideration needs to be given to how delivery of these units can be made more interesting and connected to the experience of those engaged in the program.

Despite these issues and gaps in their training, after six months of experience in the field, the confidence levels of a number of the certificate IV graduates interviewed had either been maintained at a similar level or further improved. In the passage of time since finishing the certificate IV, some participants had gone on to enrol in further study or had undertaken professional development and informal workplace-focused development activities. Others, however, had not availed themselves of further professional development in the six months, so were relying solely on what they had learned from the program.

Invariably, those who had undertaken such activities acknowledged that they had much to learn and needed to continue to develop and hone their teaching and assessment skills. More importantly, most were operating through the tutelage and support of mentors, supervisors and experienced peers or were involved in communities of practice. For some with minimal training experience, the additional developmental activities and the support of experienced colleagues were perceived to be absolutely critical to their survival as VET practitioners. The importance of ongoing support in training organisations, therefore, should not be understated and supportive mechanisms which

provide the incentive for such activities as mentoring or internships for new graduates of the certificate IV would ensure continued growth in both individual confidence and technical expertise.

This research confirms that the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, when taught well, can provide some if not all of the essential skills required of new practitioners, particularly if they undertake the program with some understanding of VET or familiarity with training. Further, with appropriate recognition and integration of the experiences that individuals bring with them into the learning and assessment process, there is considerable potential for the qualification to achieve the goals set for it within the sector.

There are, however, key messages from this research for registered training organisations delivering the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. As identified by the participants in this study, greater emphasis needs to be given in the program to developing the basic knowledge and skills required to motivate, manage, teach and assess learners with diverse needs, with some degree of confidence, if not expertise. Those undertaking the program need to gain an understanding of how people learn and to develop methods of training which are appropriate to the context and relevant to their needs. They also need to be given the opportunity to observe new training practices and to try them out and receive useful feedback on areas for improvement. Critical to this approach is the provision of time, space and program flexibility to practise and reflect on new training practices in an environment that supports such activities.

While the certificate IV is deemed entry-level training, it is evident that it cannot possibly meet the initial preparation requirements of all beginning trainers and assessors wishing to engage in vocational education and training. As participants noted in this study, there is a need to develop differentiated qualifications which have the capacity to directly address the diverse experiences and job roles of VET practitioners in the sector and to back these up with continuing professional development tailored to meet the specific needs of individual practitioners.

Finally, given the ongoing disquiet about the certificate IV, it is also important to ensure that those delivering this linchpin qualification have not only the skills but the essential experience required to deliver the program in a manner that allows sufficient time for the appropriate acquisition of skills and builds the confidence and sense of efficacy needed by new entrants to this complex field.

Epilogue

This project was funded under the National VET Research and Evaluation program in 2008, prior to the review of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and the development of the revised version of the Certificate IV in Training and Education (TAE40110). The research was a longitudinal study and the analysis of data and write-up of this report occurred at the same time as the new qualification was being finalised and endorsed by the National Quality Council.

In April 2008, Innovation and Business Skills Australia sought comment on the suitability of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment as the basic training qualification for VET trainers and assessors. In response to the number of criticisms made about the qualification by teacher educators, researchers and many in the broader training community, Innovation and Business Skills Australia proposed a series of changes to improve the qualification. These were set out in the 2009 consultation paper, *Review of Certificate IV (TAA40104) Training and Assessment* with a revised model for consideration. This paper highlighted the qualification's key flaws as:

- ✧ not including any competencies that directly relate to the major task of 'deliver'; instead the program focused on preparation and planning issues
- ✧ the inclusion of the three units in the Learning Environment whose role, function and value were seen to be difficult to determine.

The new qualification, endorsed in May 2010, contains a number of changes which reflect feedback from stakeholders and those engaged in the delivery of Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. The modifications impact upon both the structure of the certificate and the design of its units. The most significant change relates to the removal of the Learning Environment units from the suite of competencies and the dispersal of the Learning Environment skills, knowledge, elements and range statements throughout the other units that make up the Certificate IV in Training and Education. In addition, the units of competency relating to planning and facilitating group-based delivery have been combined into one unit, as have those relating to facilitating individual learning and work-based learning. And while there has been some enhancement of the assessment-related competencies, the unit directed at the planning of assessment activities and processes only includes the development of simple assessment tools. The unit of competency *Develop assessment tools* (TAAASS403B) has been removed from the certificate IV on the grounds that the level of difficulty and depth required in this unit is beyond entry-level training. *Develop assessment tools* has been further developed and is to be added to the soon-to-be-revised diploma in the TAE10 Training and Education Training Package.

To complete the Certificate IV in Training and Education, the number of units of competency required has now been reduced from 14 to ten, a reduction of approximately one-third of the original Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

These changes to the certificate go some way to addressing the concerns of participants in this study, as some attempt has been made to cover critical aspects such as individual differences and learning needs, along with diversity and inclusive practice. In relation to assessment, while the units have largely been rewritten, the changes are minor and are unlikely to go very far towards meeting the needs expressed by the new graduates participating in this research.

Individuals in this study who had some experience of training registered considerable concern about the value of the units in the Learning field and these views were mirrored by those informing the Innovation and Business Skills Australia review of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. However, it was also evident that the units proved invaluable to those who were novices to training and VET. As a consequence, it would seem imperative that this coverage remains in the program. In an examination of the new documentation, it is unclear just how or where these elements are covered in other units. Hence, the coverage of what is important material for some will be reliant upon a training provider having the knowledge and experience to identify what is required and then to integrate this satisfactorily in the learning attached to other units. This then is a critical point. As with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104) and the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ98) before it, the major factor impacting upon the effectiveness of this new qualification is whether it is well taught. Delivery which is high in quality, which addresses the areas of concern identified by participants in this study, and is backed up by continuing professional development will ensure that new entrants to the VET sector have a firm foundation upon which to build.

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Support document details

Additional information relating to this research is available in *Practitioner expectations and experiences with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104): support document*. It can be accessed from NCVET's website <<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2312.html>>. This document contains:

- ✧ Overview
- ✧ Methodology
- ✧ Online survey instrument
- ✧ Interview schedule
- ✧ Focus group discussion paper
- ✧ Focus group questions
- ✧ Focus group participants
- ✧ Additional tables

Appendix

The following tables detail the responses to the questions asking respondents to rate various aspects of the certificate IV, with particular reference to the *opportunities to learn* the skills required of a teacher or trainer in the VET sector; the *understanding* gained about critical aspects of working as a trainer; and their sense of *preparedness* to undertake the role.

Table A1 Opportunities to learn: critical aspects² (n = 48)

Aspects of learning	Responses (%)							
	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
Gain a comprehensive understanding of the content knowledge I needed as a trainer	56.3	(27)	25.0	(12)	12.5	(6)	6.3	(3)
Make clear links between theoretical and practical aspects of training	54.2	(26)	37.5	(18)	4.2	(2)	4.2	(2)
Develop a sound understanding of how trainees learn	52.1	(25)	31.3	(15)	10.4	(5)	6.4	(3)
Learn how to present content in ways that build on trainees' existing understanding	46.8	(22)	40.4	(19)	4.2	(2)	8.3	(4)
Learn methods of training specific to the context	44.7	(21)	42.6	(20)	6.4	(3)	6.4	(3)
Observe new training practices	39.6	(19)	31.3	(15)	20.8	(10)	8.3	(4)
Analyse and reflect on my training practice	54.2	(26)	35.4	(17)	6.3	(3)	4.2	(2)
Identify areas of my practice that I needed to develop	52.1	(25)	41.7	(20)	0.0	(0)	6.3	(3)
Develop and test new training practices	37.5	(18)	33.3	(16)	20.8	(10)	8.3	(4)
Practise my training skills	46.8	(22)	31.9	(15)	10.6	(5)	10.6	(5)
Receive useful feedback about by training practice	45.8	(22)	37.5	(18)	6.3	(3)	10.4	(5)
Plan and prepare units of work	50.0	(24)	35.4	(17)	6.3	(3)	8.3	(4)
Assess trainee work according to Training Package requirements	45.8	(22)	43.8	(21)	4.2	(2)	6.3	(3)

Table A2 Understanding of aspects of VET (n = 8)

Aspects of learning	Responses (%)							
	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
How to assess trainees' existing knowledge and experience	39.6	(19)	47.9	(23)	6.3	(3)	6.3	(3)
Individual differences in trainees' approaches to learning	54.2	(26)	33.3	(16)	6.3	(3)	6.3	(3)
Current developments in vocational education and training	29.2	(14)	41.7	(20)	22.9	(11)	6.3	(3)
The role of adult learning principles in training practice	39.6	(19)	52.1	(25)	0.0	(0)	8.3	(4)
Where to locate resources to support my training practice	35.4	(17)	50.0	(24)	10.4	(5)	4.2	(2)
The integration of employability skills with vocational skills in my teaching practice	35.4	(17)	47.9	(23)	10.4	(5)	6.3	(3)
Training package requirements	47.9	(23)	43.8	(21)	4.2	(2)	4.2	(2)

² Eight respondents chose not to provide data from this point onwards in the online survey and the percentages reported in the tables following are calculated for valid responses only.

Table A3 Preparation to undertake role (n = 48)

Aspects of learning	Responses (%)							
	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
Design programs relevant to my trainees' needs	39.6	(19)	50.0	(24)	4.2	(2)	6.2	(3)
Communicate ideas and information clearly to my trainees	39.6	(19)	52.1	(25)	2.0	(1)	6.3	(3)
Use training packages effectively	41.7	(20)	43.8	(21)	8.3	(4)	4.2	(2)
Develop appropriate learning pathways for my trainees	29.2	(14)	52.1	(25)	10.4	(5)	8.3	(4)
Develop questions to promote higher-order thinking	35.4	(15)	41.7	(20)	14.6	(7)	8.3	(4)
Use a variety of technologies to support my teaching practice	41.7	(20)	39.6	(19)	8.3	(4)	10.4	(5)
Incorporate employability skills in the programs I teach	35.4	(17)	37.4	(18)	18.8	(9)	8.3	(4)
Enhance trainees' confidence and self-esteem	41.7	(20)	33.2	(16)	18.8	(9)	6.3	(3)
Use strategies to motivate trainees	39.6	(19)	43.8	(21)	10.4	(5)	6.3	(3)
Develop assessment tasks that enhance learning	41.7	(20)	47.8	(23)	4.2	(2)	6.3	(3)
Identify opportunities for training flexibly	43.8	(21)	43.8	(21)	6.3	(3)	6.3	(3)

Table A4 Views on Learning Environment field

Aspects of learning	Responses (%)			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The content prepared me well to work as a trainer	41.7	43.8	8.3	4.2
The depth of the content was sufficient	43.8	39.6	8.3	8.3
The content was sufficiently practical	39.6	41.7	12.5	6.3
The level of difficulty was about right	37.5	29.2	18.8	4.6
The content was relevant to my needs	37.5	45.8	10.4	6.3
The content met my expectations	33.3	41.7	16.7	8.3
The amount of work was about right	33.3	37.5	22.9	6.3
Overall, I was satisfied with the Learning Environment field content	39.6	41.7	14.6	4.2

Table A5 Views on Learning Design field

Aspects of learning	Responses (%)			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The content prepared me well to work as a trainer	41.7	47.9	6.3	4.2
The depth of the content was sufficient	37.5	43.8	12.5	6.3
The content was sufficiently practical	41.7	43.8	8.3	4.2
The level of difficulty was about right	37.5	41.7	12.5	6.3
The content was relevant to my needs	41.7	43.8	8.3	6.3
The content met my expectations	37.5	45.8	10.4	6.3
The amount of work was about right	39.6	37.5	16.7	6.3
Overall, I was satisfied with the Learning Design field content	43.8	41.7	10.4	4.2

Table A6 Views on Delivery and Facilitation field

Aspects of learning	Responses (%)			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The content prepared me well to work as a trainer	41.7	50.0	6.3	2.1
The depth of the content was sufficient	45.8	37.5	14.6	2.1
The content was sufficiently practical	41.7	43.8	12.5	2.1
The level of difficulty was about right	33.3	50.0	12.5	2.1
The content was relevant to my needs	41.7	47.9	6.3	4.2
The content met my expectations	33.3	50.0	14.6	2.1
The amount of work was about right	35.4	39.6	20.8	4.2
Overall, I was satisfied with the Delivery and Facilitation field content	45.8	39.6	10.4	4.2

Table A7 Views on Assessment field

Aspects of learning	Responses (%)			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The content prepared me well to work as a trainer	36.2	51.1	8.5	4.3
The depth of the content was sufficient	38.3	40.4	17.0	4.3
The content was sufficiently practical	38.3	40.4	17.0	4.3
The level of difficulty was about right	34.0	44.7	14.9	8.3
The content was relevant to my needs	36.2	53.2	6.4	4.3
The content met my expectations	36.2	46.8	12.8	4.3
The amount of work was about right	36.2	42.6	14.9	6.4
Overall, I was satisfied with the Assessment field content	44.7	40.4	8.5	6.4



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