training packages
learning assessment
implementing innovative
through approaches
learning and assessment
training packages
innovative approaches
implementing learning
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Implementing innovative approaches to learning and assessment through training packages

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Executive summary

Training packages are a key reform in the vocational education and training (VET) sector. They are key resources for the current structured training arrangements. They define endpoints for learning but not how to get there. Through design and intent, they encourage the development of new, flexible approaches to training and assessment. However, training packages are still in their relative infancy, with many issues pertaining to their implementation requiring attention.

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which new and flexible approaches to learning, training delivery and assessment have been facilitated by the implementation of training packages. The key objectives of the study were to:

✧ assess the extent to which training packages have influenced the implementation of new and more flexible approaches to learning, training delivery and assessment

✧ analyse specific instances where innovative approaches have been introduced to learning, training delivery and assessment practices as a result of the implementation of training packages

✧ evaluate strategies and processes which will assist registered training organisations to organise alternative training pathways through the use of training packages.

How was the research undertaken?

The study centred on six case studies spread across four Australian states/territories and selected on the basis of ten criteria. Four types of participants were interviewed at each case study site: personnel involved in the development of the innovative approaches; teachers/trainers involved in their day-to-day implementation; employer(s) who had had experience with them; and learners who were experiencing the innovative approaches.

What was the context of the study?

The study was framed within the context of change management in the VET sector. Training packages represent a form of educational change which aims to bring about significant reform to the way in which vocational education and training is delivered. It is a change which attempts to 'fix the system' by enabling multiple pathways (curricula) leading to the same nationally recognised qualifications. Training packages are also designed to change the ways teachers and trainers in registered training organisations work with industry.

The change relates to the design, implementation and delivery of vocational education and training but it also challenges the established relationships between training organisations and the industries they serve. At the heart of this reform lies a challenge to teachers' and trainers' attitudes, values and beliefs about their relationship to the industries they work with, and their conceptions of their roles and the part they play in acting as 'change agents' to realise policy outcomes mandated by government.

The review of the literature indicated that research on implementation of training packages is limited to date. Nevertheless, a number of researchers have reported concerns regarding current practice, while others have observed interesting developments and described some encouraging and innovative approaches.

The literature also revealed a significant lack of attention to the management of the change process. Training packages signalled yet another significant change for the VET sector and the tension between the policy–practice interface has largely been ignored. Attention needs to focus on transition from previous ways of working to ensure that training packages realise their full potential. The current literature does not demonstrate an appreciation of the complex nature of the change process, including the politics of change and the ways in which conflict and negotiation are integral to the process.

What did the case studies show about training package implementation and innovation?

The case studies illustrate how training packages were implemented in a variety of ways and acted, to varying degrees, as catalysts for the development of innovative approaches to learning and assessment. For three organisations, the advent of training packages resulted in fundamentally new ways of providing training and assessment services. The other three organisations illustrate the ongoing change process that has been occurring in public VET organisations since the early 1990s and how new approaches to learning and assessment have evolved from substantial re-organisations of the business processes within these institutions.

In each of the case studies examined, the implementation of training packages stimulated changes to learning and assessment. In summary these changes included:

✧ the establishment of practice firms or simulated work environments for learning and assessment

✧ links with a local rural community shire to achieve suitable real work environments for teaching and learning

✧ improved quality in delivery of training for rural and remote students through the use of video streaming with other modes of delivery

✧ creation of accredited training pathways to replace informal training activities

✧ training and assessment undertaken on the job in collaboration with industry partners

✧ TAFE staff working on the job with students

✧ assessment and learning facilitated and jointly supported by industry and TAFE staff

✧ learning and assessment integrated into everyday work practices.

Obviously the changes that occurred were 'innovative' within the particular contexts where they were implemented, and while they might be 'innovative' to some participants, they may not be to others.

The implementation of training packages also led to changed roles for registered training organisations, industry bodies and enterprises. The case studies illustrate the various ways workplaces can move from a minor role in training workers towards a more central one where they begin to work as (potentially) equal partners with training providers. Responsibilities and roles have been redefined in the light of agreements about the role each has in the training of workers. This move by workplaces towards a more central role in training activity was also accompanied by a significant shift in thinking about learning and assessment: significant because it compelled workplaces to consider the ways in which work practices and structures within their organisations could be more fully utilised to facilitate learning. This is in marked contrast to traditional approaches which have emphasised off-job sites as the lead players and classrooms as integral to the training effort. The case studies serve to depict the varying degrees of flexibility achieved.

Nevertheless, a number of challenges and issues relating to implementing new approaches to learning and assessment were evident across some of the case study sites. These challenges were relatively evenly divided across three main areas:

✧ utilising the availabile resources for effective implementation of these new approaches

✧ developing new relationships between enterprises and training providers

✧ adopting new behaviours on the part of enterprises, teachers and learners in the changed learning and assessment context.

What are the lessons for others implementing training packages?

Some of the lessons learnt from these six case studies should be of use to others implementing training packages. Factors and strategies that may promote innovation in learning and assessment in VET include the following:

✧ An understanding of the specific environment will promote innovation that is context-specific and appropriate for that environment. This includes an assessment of costs and benefits in terms of human, financial, physical resources available/needed as well as the business environment.

✧ Most innovations associated with the implementation of flexible approaches to learning and assessment require significant shifts in attitudes, values, beliefs, norms and behaviours.

✧ Innovation always builds on previous practice (even to the extent that it may supplant previous ways of operating). Linking innovation to previous practices is a key to facilitating the transition from one set of practices to another. Implicit in this concept is an acknowledgement of the shifts in power and the potential for conflict that can accompany such transitions.

✧ Strategies which enable enterprises/industry to be involved from the early stages of development on an equal basis with the training provider promote ownership and a sense that each has an equal stake in and responsibility for the innovation.

✧ Innovations may require students to develop strategies to cope with new demands relating to their learning. A sensitive assessment of the impact of the innovation on learners over time is an important part of the innovation process.

✧ Implementation needs to be underpinned by evaluation processes that provide feedback to ensure ongoing improvement to the innovation.

✧ A key group or person who will 'champion' and 'drive' the innovation development and implementation process is essential.

✧ Professional development in working through issues associated with implementing training packages is an integral component of the innovation process.

✧ Time is an important factor in the innovation process. Individuals need time to experiment, plan, discuss issues etc. Time is also needed to allow individuals to become familiar with the innovation and to absorb new values, beliefs and norms. Calls for constant change can destabilise the implementation process and lead to staff becoming 'change-weary'.

✧ Support from management and pressure are both needed to give the implementation process momentum. Support without some pressure will not lead to change; pressure alone will lead to resistance.

✧ Evidence of the implementation of new approaches to learning and assessment arise from individual teacher's/trainer's activities. In order to foster change, organisations need to think about the ways in which they can link all these individual efforts into a coherent 'web of innovation'.

✧ Support from the wider system is also needed, and changes made as necessary at policy and framework level, if the innovation and implementation processes are to be sustained over time.

This study provides an analysis of the extent to which alternative learning and assessment pathways have been stimulated and developed as a result of the implementation of training

packages at six case study sites. The study contributes knowledge about the factors which should be considered when implementing alternative learning pathways. Lessons learnt from a number of specific case studies might be used by other registered training organisations.

Introduction

Background, rationale and research questions

The National Training Framework has provided a new regulatory environment for vocational education and training (VET) in Australia (ANTA 1998, p.2). Training packages, along with new arrangements for national recognition within VET (via the Australian Quality Training Framework, formerly the Australian Recognition Framework), aim to provide industry and individual students with more flexible and relevant responses to their training needs.

Training packages are key resources for the sector's structured training arrangements. They define the learning outcomes to be delivered. Being relatively new, however, there are still many issues pertaining to the implementation of training packages and the literature is, at this stage, somewhat thin. What does exist is largely confined to descriptions of what they comprise (for example, ANTA 1997, 1998), their possible impact on curriculum development processes (for example, Sobski 1998), issues relating to quality (for example, Greening 1998) and strategies or programs to facilitate their implementation by registered training organisations (for example, Comyn 1998; Stojsavljevic cited in VOCED database). (The following chapter provides a detailed analysis of the extant literature.)

Training packages are designed to enable flexible delivery on the job in workplaces, or off the job in training institutions, or utilising a combination of both. All learning in a training package context should occur under conditions that simulate real workplace conditions as closely as possible. Also, one of the key anticipated outcomes from the implementation of training packages within VET is the development of multiple pathways to specific qualifications.

Alternative pathways to qualifications could include employment-based training, institution-based training, procedures to recognise prior learning or some combination of these pathways. Research undertaken under the auspices of the Western Australian Department of Training and Employment (ANTA 2000) has recently sought to explore the extent to which Australian Qualifications Framework level III qualifications, previously attained through traditional apprenticeships, might be supported via the use of a variety of learning pathways.

This current research was therefore specifically designed to focus on those registered training organisations which have developed flexible learning, delivery and assessment approaches to the implementation of training packages outside the traditional trade occupations covered in the Western Australian study.

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which new and flexible approaches to learning, training delivery and assessment have been facilitated by the implementation of training packages. The key objectives of the study were to:

✧ assess the extent to which training packages have influenced the implementation of new and more flexible approaches to learning, training delivery and assessment

✧ analyse specific instances where innovative approaches have been introduced to learning, training delivery and assessment practices as a result of the implementation of training packages

✦ evaluate strategies and processes which will assist registered training organisations to facilitate alternative pathways via the use of training packages.

The research questions that have been addressed in this project include:

To what extent have innovations in learning, training delivery and assessment been implemented, or are being prepared to be implemented, within the selected case studies?

✦ What is the nature of these new approaches?

✦ What are the models of flexibility (program design, delivery strategies, assessment) being achieved at each of the levels of implementation?

✦ What are the constraints for registered training organisations and workplaces in implementing alternative pathways?

✦ How acceptable are the alternative pathways to employers and other key stakeholders?

✦ What is the role of the registered training organisations where there are innovative approaches?

✦ What is the role of the workplace where there are innovative approaches?

✦ What strategies and interventions have been most successful in bringing about the implementation of these innovative approaches?

What are the implications of this research?

✦ How might these approaches be translated into other occupations/industries?

✦ What are the implications of the findings for employers, registered training organisations and training package developers?

These research questions were designed to provide a complementary data set to that arising from the Western Australian study. In particular, it was expected that the research would furnish employers, teachers and trainers with guidance in regard to:

✦ factors that need to be considered when designing more flexible learning, training and assessment

✦ a range of strategies and interventions that may enhance more flexible learning, training and assessment

✦ issues that need to be considered when translating lessons learnt from particular case studies into their own specific contexts.

The research process

Research methodology

Given that the purpose of this project was to explore new and flexible approaches to learning, training delivery and assessment which have been facilitated through the implementation of training packages, the case study methodology was selected as the most appropriate approach. A case study methodology is an approach to research which utilises semi-ethnographic methods to obtain and portray a 'rich' descriptive account of meanings and experiences of people in an identified social setting.

This approach has been variously defined by a number of authors; for example, Walker describes it as:

> … the examination of an instance in action. The study of particular incidents and events, and the selective collection of information on biography, personality, intentions and values, allows the case study worker to capture and portray those elements of a situation that give it meaning … very different studies have in common some commitment to the study and portrayal of the idiosyncratic and the particular as legitimate in themselves. (Walker 1980, p.33)

Stake (quoted in Spirer 1980, p.14) argues that a case study is 'a study of a bounded system, emphasizing the unity and wholeness of that system, but confining the attention to those aspects that are relevant to the research problem at that time'. This focussed dimension is also emphasised by Anderson, Ball, Murphy & Associates (1975) when they note that: 'Case study is an intensive, detailed analysis and description of a single organism, institution or phenomenon in the context of its environment'. In this sense, the case study is depicted as both particularistic and holistic (Spirer 1980; Funnell 1996):

✧ *Particularistic:* case studies focus on events in one particular setting. Thus the key difference between case studies and other methodologies is not method but focus. 'The case study focuses on the happenings of a single [entity], usually under natural conditions—so as to understand it, that bounded system, in its own habitat. What is being studied is the case ... It is a complex, dynamic system. We want to understand its own complexity.' (Stake in Spirer 1980, p.13). Funnell (1996, p.112) claims that the case study differs from ethnography in that it does not attempt to describe the total way of life of a group of people, but instead focusses, as the name implies, on a particular case.

✧ *Holistic:* the case study tries to capture the totality of the phenomenon. In doing so, it usually portrays the interplay of the different factors that are brought to bear on the entity and tries to present the views of the different groups involved. The intended result is a rich description and understanding of the entity, its complexity and its dynamic nature.

The so-called portrayal approach in case study research tends to stress the importance of the reporting stage of the collection, analysis and reporting process. Where the intention of the research is to help people to understand 'what it is like to be there' (such as, in this case, implementing training packages in a registered training organisation), then those people are seen to be the key audience for the research report, and therefore a research approach and reporting style is needed that will promote an understanding that is rich and holistic. Therefore, to provide this richness, a portrayal report needs to be prepared that paints the picture in context and retains 'the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events' (Burns 1994, p.313).

It is important to acknowledge that there are limitations to the case study method. The case study may appear simple to conduct at first glance. However, a major pitfall is that it can expand to include almost everything, and its boundaries can often not be clearly defined or ascribed. Another is that it is 'largely atheoretical' (Connole, Smith & Wiseman 1993, p.137). There are also the difficulties of matching information recorded and reported to readers' interests, and reporting can be lengthy in the attempt to capture necessary detail and complexity. Moreover, rich portrayal requires the collection of 'robust' data, which in turn dictates that the researcher possess skills sufficiently advanced to enable the identification of diverse sources of data, to employ appropriate methods to gather the data and then to report the case in an appropriate manner. And finally, there is the most common and most recognised issue of generalisability.

Spirer wrote in 1980 in the United States of America that 'the use of the case study in vocational education is just beginning' (p.17). In Australia, Funnell (1996, pp.27–32), in raising the appropriateness of different methods *vis-à-vis* research questions, includes as instances where the case study method is 'highly recommended' such research questions as:

✧ What examples of implementation of flexible delivery exist within the college and across the system?

✧ How responsive is your section/school to client/industry demand?

✧ How would adult and vocational courses be implemented within your section/school?

These types of questions are very similar to the present focus of this study (how training packages enable flexible delivery). Thus, from the perspectives of appropriately matching methods to research questions, richly portraying innovative approaches in discrete settings, understanding different actors' viewpoints and proffering suggestions about how others might proceed with similar approaches, the case study method appears a particularly suitable approach for this project.

The research design

The project was designed to comprise four stages:

Stage 1   Preparation for the research

Stage 2   Preparation for on-site data collection

Stage 3   Case study visits and data collection

Stage 4   Data analysis and preparation of the final report

Stage 1: Preparation for the research

The two research centres—the Centre for Research in Education, Equity and Work based in Adelaide, and the Centre for Undertaking Research in Vocation Education in Canberra—communicated by means of teleconferences and email. Through teleconferences, the researchers discussed the parameters of the project and reached shared frames of reference, and team decisions were effected in this way. A small project reference group was established to support the researchers in the management of the study (see appendix B). To provide information on the project, and to encourage exchange of ideas and debate around key issues of relevance to the project, a training package e-Forum was set up in the clubs section of the Yahoo (Australia) website http://au.yahoo.com/ or http://www.yahoo.com.au/ (see appendix B for the list of participants). A member's guide was also developed, an 11 page document (pdf file) that provided directions on how to find and participate in the discussion group. In total, 19 people were invited to participate in the forum. They were advised to invite others with an interest in training package implementation issues to join the discussion. It was not possible to determine how many people observed the discussion but did not post a message. Eight people posted messages and this resulted in a total of 39 interactions between participants within the forum. Major threads of discussion included:

✧ contextualisation of competencies within training packages

✧ quality assurance for training packages

✧ professional development of trainers

✧ assessment within training packages

✧ resourcing training package implementation.

Stage 2: Preparation for on-site data collection

A desktop audit was undertaken of industries where training packages (55 at that time) had been endorsed and were being implemented at the commencement of this project. The audit was to inform the selection of a shortlist of potential industries where there might be innovative examples of implementation. Following this shortlisting process, the researchers contacted a number of relevant industry training advisory bodies (see appendix B) that supported training in non-traditional vocational areas in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. A list of potential case studies was compiled on the basis of information generated by these telephone inquiries to the state and national industry training advisory bodies as well as from information provided by colleagues in technical and further education (TAFE) networks. All these contacts were asked to identify examples of training package implementation strategies they considered were both innovative and effective. This consultation process with industry training advisory bodies yielded approximately 20 potential case studies. The purpose of this phase of the research was to seek information on progress in implementation and recommendations from authoritative and up-to-date sources on case study sites featuring innovative approaches to the implementation of training packages.

A list of ten criteria for selecting case study sites was developed for this project. These criteria included the following:

1. The range of case studies selected must cover a diverse range of training packages.

2. Institutions included for case studies must be delivering training packages from non-traditional trade areas.

3. Delivery of training packages in regional and/or remote areas must be included in the range of case studies.

4. Case studies must include examples of collaborative approaches to training package delivery.

5. Case studies should include an example of VET-in-schools.

6. Fully on-job delivery should be represented in the case studies.

7. Case studies must have industry training advisory body and/or state training authority endorsement.

8. Training arrangements must be sufficiently established to allow adequate documentation.

9. Case studies should include an example of training package implementation at the whole-of-institute level.

10. Sites for inclusion as case studies must employ flexible approaches to learning, delivery and assessment.

From the shortlist of 20 potential case studies obtained from the desktop audit and consultations with industry training advisory bodies and TAFE networks, six sites were finally chosen using the pre-determined selection criteria. Table 1 shows the six case studies by state/territory, organisation and industry, together with details of key features and the researchers' judgements on which selection criteria they met.

The protocols/interviews (see appendix C) for the case study site visits were then developed. Information derived from the literature review and the recently completed study commissioned by the Australian National Training Authority (2000) examining alternative pathways to certificate III qualifications in trade occupations was used to inform this development process. Innovative approaches to learning and assessment were defined as including:

✧ new approaches to learning and assessment that are modifications to existing approaches

✧ approaches which spring from new qualifications (for example, development of certificate II courses, replacement of informal training with a recognised qualification).

For each instance of an innovative approach to learning and assessment (defined as a 'case'), interviews were to be conducted with four groups of people:

✧ personnel involved in the development of the innovative approach (that is, people who can provide a macro perspective: this may be an industry training advisory body representative, or personnel in registered training organisations)

✧ personnel involved in the day-to-day implementation of the innovative approach (teachers/trainers)

✧ employer(s) who have experience with the innovative approach

✧ learners experiencing the innovative approach.

Table 1: Case studies by state/territory, organisation, industry and key features

Training scenarios selected for case studies of innovative approaches to learning and assessment through the implementation of training packages

State/territory	Organisation	Training package	Interest factor/s (with selection criteria met indicated by numbers)
NSW	Hunter School of Performing Arts	Entertainment	Collaborative approach to training package implementation Example of innovative practice in VET-in-schools Strongly endorsed by state industry training advisory body as an innovative approach Meets selection criteria: 1,2,3,4,5, 7,8 & 10
Vic.	Colac Adult and Community Education	Community Services —Disabilities Stream	Community registered training organisation Action learning in workplace Mapping of professional development activities to training package, e.g. regional conference and staff meetings Winner of state industry training advisory body award for having an established learning culture Meets selection criteria: 1,2,3,7,8 & 10
Qld.	The Outlook	Outdoor recreation	External industry panel did assessment of staff Gap training was provided for missing competencies Now have service contracts to deliver training for community organisations Meets selection criteria: 1,2,4,6,7,8 & 10
Qld.	Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE	Horticulture	Remote area training Video conferencing with demonstrations Video streaming to internet Matrix of competencies Meets selection criteria: 1,3,7,8 & 10
ACT	Canberra Institute of Technology	All	Institute-wide approach to training package implementation Meets selection criteria: 1,7,8,9 & 10
SA	Regency TAFE	Children's Services	Remote area VET-in-schools Meets selection criteria: 1,2,3,4,5,7,8 & 10

The protocols were piloted in three waves of critique. First, drafts were circulated amongst the research team for feedback and subsequent modification. Second, they were distributed to specialist practitioners for critical comment. Third, the questions were trialled in practice with a few selected interviewees.

Following ethics approval for this research from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Australia, contact was made with the registered training organisations proposed for inclusion in the study and they all indicated their willingness to participate. Formal consent was to be sought prior to the commencement of interviews and participants were to be given the opportunity to verify their details prior to publication of the case studies.

Stage 3: Case study visits and data collection

Visits were made to each of the six sites, each visit taking approximately two days. The interviews were audio-taped and later transcribed. The individual case studies were then written up in a format agreed by the research team, and returned to key personnel at each site for verification. A total of 38 individuals were interviewed at the case study sites.

Stage 4: Data analysis and preparation of the final report

Once each individual case study had been completed, a cross-case analysis of all six was undertaken, synthesising key themes and issues that related to the objectives of this project. A draft

report was then compiled and submitted to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research for external review. Following feedback, the report was finalised and submitted for publication.

Structure of the report

As a result of the lack of a comprehensive literature on training package implementation, it was decided to maintain the literature review in the body of the report. However, the bulk of the descriptive writing in the individual case studies has been placed in appendix A. To provide some contextual background on the sites, brief overviews of each of the case studies have been included in the report itself. The reader who wishes to read all the detail relating to the individual case studies will also need to read appendix A. Following the context descriptions, a cross-case analysis is presented which cuts through the six sites in an attempt to highlight the innovations stimulated by the introduction of training packages, the roles played by the various parties and the challenges and issues that were faced in implementing these new approaches to learning and assessment. A summary rounds off the report by identifying lessons learnt from this study.

Survey of literature on training packages and their implementation

The advent in the early 1990s of what became known as the National Training Reform Agenda coincided with reform movements occurring in a number of overseas countries, including Scotland, England, New Zealand and the United States (Harris et al. 1995; Wheeler 1993, p.36). In all cases, the catalysts for the reform movements were similar and signalled the beginning of a changing relationship between education and industry as well as the linking of educational goals with processes of microeconomic reform (Billett et al. 1999, p.1; Strathdee 1994, pp.80–1). Since that time, successive waves of reforms, dominated by political and economic imperatives, have been implemented as a means of improving educational practices, particularly in terms of curricular approaches that would deliver the desired increases in the quality and quantity of vocational education and training (Simons 2001, p.27). These early reforms, and the implementation of a competency-based curriculum framework as a central feature of the newly emerging VET landscape, laid the foundations for the introduction of training packages.

In this section, a brief background to the early training reforms is provided, along with a summary of the key lessons learned from the implementation of competency-based training as a precursor to the introduction of training packages. The nature of training packages as a form of educational change is then examined, followed by a discussion relating to the early implementation of training packages and the potential they hold for supporting innovative approaches to learning and assessment.

The emergence of training packages

The training reforms that commenced in the early 1990s radically altered the relationship between education and industry within the broader macro reforms aimed at increasing Australia's global competitiveness. Initial concerns with the quality of trade training based on 'time serving', coupled with questions regarding the adequacy of the education and training system to cope with the effects of globalisation, provided the twin catalysts for the reforms.

This macro focus led to the development of policy frameworks that initially emphasised uniformity, systems and organisational structures. These perspectives necessarily paid little attention to the micro worlds of teachers and trainers and issues relating to teaching and learning. The reforms were dominated by political and economic imperatives aimed at increasing the quantum of vocational education and training on a national scale. Competency-based training was viewed politically as a means of improving educational practices. Close attention was paid to establishing state and federal systems to support the attainment of these goals.

The first phase of training reforms ended with the creation of the Australian National Training Authority in 1993. The emergence of this body signalled the consolidation of the pursuit of a unified, national VET system built around a core competency-based curriculum framework (Smith & Keating 1997, p.39). New decision-making bodies emerged, in particular the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs and the Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council. The first steps towards the development of an Australian Qualifications Framework further underscored the *national* and *integrated* characteristics of the

vocational education and training system. As these training reforms proceeded, two reviews were conducted. These reviews were highly significant in that they provided added impetus for further modification of the reform directions and served to bolster particular dimensions of the reform process. The first was the review of the national reform agenda conducted in 1993 by the Allen Consulting Group. The second, conducted by Taylor in 1995, focussed on a review of the Australian National Training Authority Agreement.

The Allen report noted that 'despite the investment of untold sums of money and time' (Allen Consulting Group 1994, p.36), the reform process was not proceeding with the required speed. Evidence also suggested that industry and providers were engaging in only a limited way with the reforms and were dissatisfied with the 'top down', bureaucratic nature of the reforms (Curtain 1994; Misko 1999, p.11). Elements of the reform process, such as the format of competency standards, were not meeting providers' or industry's needs for flexibility. More active measures were also needed to facilitate an open training market as a means to secure greater industry commitment to the training reforms (Harris et al. 1995, p.83).

Further impetus to the development of greater flexibility within VET came from publication of the Taylor report (1996). This report concluded that there was considerable dissatisfaction with the highly centralised approach to training reform that promoted uniformity over customisation and responsiveness. The complexity of the national system, especially the National Framework for the Recognition of Training was heavily criticised (Smith & Keating 1997, p.50). This report, combined with the aftermath of the Allen report and the election of the Liberal Coalition Government in 1996, heralded a new direction in reforms to the VET system.

The new government's policies significantly changed the industrial relations environment with its strong push towards enterprise bargaining. These policies underscored the importance of flexibility (Billett et al. 1999, p.25) and a strong preference for frameworks that supported decentralisation of decision-making away from large bureaucracies in favour of arrangements that improved the capacity for local decision-making as close as possible to the point of delivery. The result for the VET sector was a shift in emphasis from 'reforms' to a flexible 'framework' that promised greater flexibility, responsiveness and accountability (Misko 1999, p.11).

In July 1996, the federal government announced the establishment of the National Training Framework Committee to oversee the development of a new policy framework for the development of training packages. This committee replaced the Standards and Curriculum Council that had previously subsumed the responsibilities of the National Training Board in 1995. In November 1996, Ministers of Vocational Education and Training endorsed, in principle, the major features of a National Training Framework, designed to make Australia's national training and regulatory arrangements simpler and more flexible. Training packages were to be a major feature of that framework.

The Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council supported a stronger emphasis on the outcomes of training, with a shift away from centrally prescribed courses to more flexible training packages which specified competencies to be achieved. At the time, training packages were envisaged as flexible sets of national resources providing both a broad framework and a set of tools for training providers to assist in the development of specific training programs to meet client needs (ANTA 1996).

The development of training packages is led by industry. They are developed by national industry training advisory bodies and/or other industry-based bodies or enterprises to meet the identified training needs of specific industries or industry sectors. A condition for endorsement of individual training packages is that development must be based on extensive consultation and support within the industry area or enterprise. The first training package was endorsed in July 1997. Each training package comprises a mandatory (endorsed) component and a range of optional support materials

such as learning strategies, assessment materials and professional development materials. These are now termed training package support materials.

The three mandatory components are:

✧ competency standards providing a set of broadly based industry and/or enterprise competency units which define the full range of workplace requirements across those industry sectors covered by the training package

✧ assessment guidelines providing advice on specific industry assessment arrangements to underpin the assessment of competencies attained and to form the basis for the issuing of national qualifications

✧ national qualifications based on combinations of competency units which provide meaningful outcomes at an industry or enterprise level and endorsed by the National Training Quality Committee.

The policy and procedures underpinning development requires that training packages:

✧ enable qualifications to be awarded through the direct assessment of competencies rather than against the learning outcomes of a course

✧ encourage the development and delivery of training that suits individual needs

✧ promote learning in the work environment (on the job, work experience, work placement, work simulation or by a combination of methods), which leads to verifiable workplace outcomes (ANTA 1999).

Training packages are concerned with defining the outcomes of training rather than a prescription of the pathway of learning and assessment to arrive at those outcomes. They have needed to be flexible and to incorporate a broad range of delivery and assessment strategies to meet the needs of a broad audience of both large and small business, and of a range of individuals in a continuum, from those requiring the broadest training possible to enter an industry, to experienced people in the workforce seeking recognition and credentialling of skills already held—often enterprise-specific in nature—and yet providing national recognition and portability.

The flexibility inherent in training packages is expressed in:

✧ the flexibility and generic nature of a range of variables and evidence guides within units of competency which provide directions and support for customisation, and support the development of transferable skills through statements of underpinning knowledge and attributes

✧ the range of qualifications and the flexibility within package rules for each qualification (where this is applicable)

✧ the limited detail in and generic nature of the guidelines for delivery and assessment.

The flexibility inherent in training packages is recognised and deemed important by industry. The greater flexibility, increased learning pathways, increased delivery options and increased facilitation of recognition of prior learning has been seen as leading to a positive change in employer and employee attitudes towards training:

> Training Packages recognise that people learn in a myriad of ways and provide RTOs [registered training organisations] with the flexibility to tailor learning and assessment arrangements to the particular needs of individuals or enterprises while maintaining a nationally consistent quality framework based on the effective validation of competence.
> (Australian Retailers' Association, quoted in Senate Committee 2000, p.145)

Training packages bring together competency standards and the curriculum development process into one set of 'tools', as 'new formal reference points' for the VET system (Misko 1999, p.13). They represent the next steps in policy development to ensure the adequacy and standard of vocational education and training through strategies that are responsive to the needs of industry. They replaced previous requirements for the accreditation of national curricula by providing

industries with the means to develop a variety of flexible training pathways that lead to nationally recognised qualifications. As such, training packages build on the introduction of competency-based curriculum frameworks and are representative of the view that no less than significant further restructuring of vocational education and training was needed to achieve a VET system capable of delivering significant outcomes for all stakeholders. Thus, both training packages and competency-based training are representative of particular types of educational reform, and the study of the implementation of competency-based training offers some valuable lessons for those with an interest in implementing training packages to achieve significant educational change.

Implementing educational change in VET

The study of educational change assumes that it is possible to take some control of change and to 'direct it to realise alternative futures' (O'Neill 1995, p.1). Over time, four different approaches to catalysing change in educational institutions have emerged. These include approaches (Hord 1995, p.88) that aim to:

✧ fix the parts (that is, introduce small-scale change to curriculum, teaching practices, etc.)

✧ fix the people (change is facilitated through the training and development of teachers)

✧ fix the institution (the organisation, for example school or training provider, is the focus of change)

✧ fix the system (restructuring).

The development of training packages builds on earlier training reforms of the 1990s, which were significant for their shift in thinking about the ways to bring about meaningful educational change in the VET sector. These reforms were predicated on the assumption that system-wide changes were necessary to bring about the scale of change required to meet the goals of increasing both the adequacy and standard of vocational education and training.

The change process that was embarked upon in the early 1990s was a multi-dimensional phenomenon that required substantial shifts in the way in which vocational education and training was designed, implemented and assessed. Widespread pressure for change was brought to bear on the sector, and on TAFE in particular, through a raft of state and federal-level policies and structures underpinned by the tripartite will of industry, government and the various unions.

Much of this activity failed to take into account the lessons learnt from research on educational change (McBeath 1997). These studies, undertaken over a period of 40 years across a number of countries, including Australia, Britain and the United States, consistently show that the process of effecting change in educational settings is a complex and fraught undertaking, particularly when attempting to implement mandated change (Fullan & Stiegelbauer 1991; Fullan 1998). Initial studies examining the implementation of competency-based training adopted a 'fidelity' view of change and were largely concerned with the penetration of competency-based training practices (Thomson et al. 1990; Smith et al. 1995). These studies highlighted the significant variations that occurred in the implementation of competency-based training and underscored some of the difficulties in attempting to measure a complex educational change such as competency-based training in a purely quantitative way that strips away the 'human interface' from the change process and reduces it to the lowest common indicators. McBeath's (1995) study of the implementation of a new certificate course in horticulture highlighted the importance of dissemination and diffusion in assisting teachers to make meaning of the changes they were being asked to make to their practice.

Other studies examining progress towards the implementation of competency-based training in South Australia and Victoria also noted that neither administrative structures to support competency-based training, nor teacher familiarity with the key concepts associated with this

approach, guaranteed effective implementation (Department of Employment and Technical and Further Education South Australia 1993; Office of Technical and Further Education Victoria 1998). Issues relating to the provision of appropriate staff development, development of appropriate learning materials, problems with centrally developed curricula and adjustments to new assessment practices all had significant impact on what was observed to be 'patchy' implementation progress, particularly as outcomes were based on learning outcomes rather than standards (Office of Technical and Further Education Victoria 1998, p.1). The Victorian study also noted that the extent of change required by the teaching profession in implementing competency-based training was 'not recognised' and that some resistance had been the inevitable outcome. This resistance was further fuelled by approaches to professional development which were largely inadequate and often failed to differentiate between the needs of various groups of teachers in terms of their readiness and the different stages they passed through in adopting and implementing the innovation (Office of Technical and Further Education Victoria 1998, p.2). This failure to provide professional development targetted to the needs of teachers as they moved through the process of implementation was further reinforced by a South Australian study which used the 'stages of concern' dimension of the 'concerns-based adoption model' to ascertain the development needs of staff (Sandercock 1993).

These studies, along with the work of Harper (1997, 1998) and Lundberg (1996), reinforced the key message from earlier educational change studies that implementation cannot be viewed merely as an outcome. Smith et al. (1997, p.168), in examining the impact of competency-based training on teaching and learning, found that the extent of impact depended upon two key factors: the manner in which competency-based training was introduced by the organisation; and whether appropriate staff development was provided.

The findings of this study reinforced the earlier work of Smith et al. (1995) that noted variations in the ways in which teachers and trainers were implementing competency-based training and that competency-based training was being implemented at different rates in technical and further education (TAFE) and non-TAFE providers (Smith et al. 1997, p.36). This was largely attributed to non-TAFE providers being 'newer' and having 'less entrenched teaching traditions' (Smith et al. 1997, p.87). This is perhaps only a partial explanation, as it ignores the different types of change processes that needed to occur in the two types of settings. This is particularly salient in the light of literature cited earlier that suggested the advent of the training reforms challenged the philosophy and identity of the TAFE sector (Schofield 1994; Chappell, Gonczi & Hager 1994).

Assumptions about the rates of implementation of competency-based training often appear to start from the premises that teachers and institutions have had absolutely no involvement whatever with competency-based training prior to the training reforms and that prior teaching practices would have little or no effect on approaches to implementation. These assumptions have been seriously challenged by the outcomes of studies on competency-based training undertaken by Thomson et al. in 1990 and in the work of Billett et al. (1999). These studies clearly show that a number of TAFE teaching programs had taken considerable steps towards the implementation of competency-based approaches to training well before the national training reforms mandated its implementation. Further, these studies also illustrate that prior teaching and curriculum practices play a significant role in shaping responses to the mandated forms of competency-based training that were implemented across a wide range of settings. It is perhaps the case that TAFE teachers needed to undergo a number of different processes such as substituting, altering, adding, eliminating, or in some cases, reinforcing existing practices in implementing competency-based training (Havelock 1971). A study by Simons (2001) reinforced the importance of understanding educational change not as administrative compliance with particular characteristics of a competency-based curriculum framework, but rather as an evolving process of creating unique versions of the competency-based curriculum frameworks arising from the less-than-ideal conditions of the daily working worlds of teachers.

Not all studies viewed teacher resistance or slow rates of implementation (as measured against a standard definition) in a negative light. In addition to a range of factors that influenced approaches to adoption and implementation, teachers were found to actively 're-appropriate' key elements of competency-based training and use them to maintain their own efficacy (Mulcahy 1996; Simons 2001). Resistance was also reframed by Mulcahy (1998) as a site where teachers act as 'practical policy makers'. Because the National Training Reform Agenda was predicated upon the separation of policy formulation and policy implementation, teachers were able to exploit the gap between formulation and implementation to develop their 'version' of the training reforms (Mulcahy 1998).

In evaluating the contribution of competency-based training in two industry areas (metals and hospitality) across two states (Queensland and Victoria), Billett et al. (1999) noted that the imposition of a nationally unified curriculum framework had undermined teacher autonomy (Billet et al. 1999, p.164). The linking of curriculum, assessment and teaching practices to industry needs had impacted on teachers' practices in a number of ways. These impacts were not uniformly felt and had been shaped by antecedent conditions that existed prior to the training reforms. These conditions included existing teaching practices and individual beliefs about the role of teachers (Billett et al. 1999, p.10). The implementation of competency-based training had resulted in a number of changes to teaching practices, including:

✧ greater emphasis on the currency of teachers' knowledge

✧ use of a greater diversity of teaching methods, including delivery of training in the workplace

✧ placing greater emphasis on assessment

✧ decreased role for teachers' professional judgement in assessment and their relationships with students

✧ increased responsiveness to the needs of industry

✧ restrictions on relationships between teachers and students (Billett et al. 1999, p.11).

The implementation of training packages is taking place at a time when calls for change are ongoing. Constant demands are being placed on teachers and trainers to deal with change continuously. Chaos/complexity theory (Stacey 1996; Beeson & Davis 2000) underscores the notion that change unfolds in non-linear patterns and links between cause and effect are increasingly blurred. In acknowledging the inherently chaotic and complex nature of organisations, change theorists now posit that one of the ways in which change can be managed is through processes that allow groups and individuals to develop 'coherence' (Fullan 1993; Fullan 1998, p.222). 'Restructuring' as a process to bring about change is now being replaced with the notion of 'reculturation' or 'second order change'. These processes have at their core changing norms, habits, skills and beliefs in order that people act as change agents (Fullan 1993, p.41; Fullan 1999). Managers are called to act as 'transformational leaders', using processes that rework the business of organisations in response to the changing environment in which they operate (Schaafsma 1997, p.42). The continual processes of organisational and individual learning are at the core of managing change (Scott 1999). Concepts such as learning organisations and learning communities are being drawn from the business and management literature and adapted for use in educational establishments (Fullan 1993; McLaughlin 1998, p.76). Greater emphasis is being placed on the importance of collaboration and collegiality between teachers (Arthur 1994; Hand & Treagust 1995; Hargreaves 1997, p.2) and the value of situated learning (McLaughlin 1998) to enable teachers to respond to the demands that change now places on them.

Training packages represent a form of educational change that aims to bring about significant reform to the way in which vocational education and training is provided. It is a change which attempts to 'fix the system' by restructuring key components relating to the construction of developmental pathways (curricula) leading to nationally recognised qualifications and, concomitantly, the ways in which teachers and trainers in registered training organisations work with industry.

Implementation of training packages

The successful implementation of training packages requires registered training organisations to possess the expertise to interpret training packages and to develop appropriately detailed training plans to meet the training and assessment needs of clients. Training package support materials, previously called the non-endorsed component of training packages, were envisaged as assisting training organisations in this process. However, the development of the support materials has not kept pace with the release of endorsed components of training packages, an issue that sufficiently concerned the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education Reference Committee to provoke it to specifically recommend that 'support material be available when Training Packages are released' (Senate Committee 2000, p.151).

Both Sobski (1998) and van Leeuwen (2000) argue strongly for the continuing need for a strategic, structured learning plan, a curriculum, in the implementation of training packages. Curriculum is seen as giving assurance of quality in delivery (Sobski 1998). The Senate Committee in its report concluded that:

> National training packages are designed as a 'framework' which guides teacher/trainers in the delivery and assessment of training and that considerable further input is required from teachers/trainers to turn them into effective VET programs. Training Package implementation requires teacher/trainers to identify and document which qualifications they intend to offer, what learning strategies, teaching programs and assessment approaches they will use, what resources will be needed for delivery and assessment and how/where these will be obtained. To do this effectively, the teacher/trainer needs skills in such things as curriculum design, instructional design, identifying and developing learning strategies and teaching programs.
>
> (Senate Committee 2000, p.150)

Down (1998) was of the view that:

> … the separation of the curriculum regulatory framework from detailed curriculum delivery information provides a real opportunity for the development of institutional/enterprise-based curriculum approaches which meet the specific needs of client groups.   (Down 1998, p.5)

However, there is an assumption that training organisations:

> … will place a priority on allocating the necessary resources to ensure that their staff have the necessary skills and competence and that the organisational culture and climate is conducive to such an approach.   (Down 1998, p.5)

This requires an appropriate level of expertise which is perceived by many to be an issue. A recent Australian National Training Authority report (ANTA 2000) on alternative pathways to Australian Qualifications Framework certificate III qualifications under training packages concluded that a lack of available expertise was limiting the development of alternative pathways and innovation.

Evidence put to the Senate Committee also raised concerns over the ability of registered training organisations and individual teachers/trainees to interpret training packages appropriately in the absence of more support:

> … teachers/trainers without higher level professional qualifications may need more assistance than is currently provided in National Training Packages in order to carry out these tasks effectively, particularly in relation to identifying and/or developing learning strategies and teaching programs.   (Senate Committee 2000, p.150)

The value of professional development opportunities in supporting innovative approaches to teaching and learning and co-operative training and assessment arrangements between training organisations and industry under training packages is illustrated by several recent projects. These include *Framing the Future* projects (see, for example, Young 2000; Martin 2000), and the Western Australian Department of Training and Employment Professional Development Support Program (WA Department of Training and Employment 1999).

The flexibility of training packages allows for a range of pathways for training and assessment under National Training Framework arrangements. These include:

✧ *institutional pathways:* training and assessment arrangements are managed by a registered training organisation, or an organisation under its auspices, which enable a learner who is not in employment, or employment relevant to their learning, to achieve in part or in full a nationally recognised vocational qualification. Institutional pathways may involve some form of work placement that is managed directly or indirectly by the registered training organisation (see Boorman 2001)

✧ *fully on-the-job pathways:* these are structured training arrangements whereby competence is acquired through training totally delivered in the workplace

✧ *integrated on- and off-the-job pathways:* these involve training and assessment conducted under the traditional apprenticeship pathway. The off-the-job component is institution-based.

✧ *assessment only pathways:* these involve no formal training. Qualifications are awarded on the basis of recognition of current competence. Assessment may be undertaken on or off the job.

Although the research is limited so far, a number of authors have written on the implementation of training packages. Some have reported serious concerns regarding current practice, while others have observed interesting developments and described some encouraging and innovative approaches.

Issues and methodologies associated with implementation of institutional pathways have been addressed by a number of authors (Goleby 2000; Down 2001; Down & Stewart 2001; van Leeuwen 2000). All argue that the implementation of training packages must be educationally sound and that units of competency need to be presented into more appropriate delivery and assessment units. Unnecessary duplication should be avoided and a learning pathway that recognises many of the complexities embedded within training packages should be provided.

Boorman (2001) investigated the impact of training packages on institution-based training programs. He concluded that the implementation of training packages has exerted impacts on training programs, facilities and equipment and relationships with industry. He observed that the extent of change ranged from fine-tuning to wholesale changes to the way training was structured and delivered, and was determined by the nature of the training package and its relationship to the superseded curriculum. Boorman's case studies suggested that registered training organisations delivering Horticulture, Information Technology and Community Services Training Packages needed to make significant changes to their training programs, while those delivering the Administration, Beauty Therapy, Hospitality and Retail Training Packages did not need to make such radical changes. Issues relating to assessment of competency, the validity of simulation and work placements and the ability to assess management competencies, were seen by registered training organisations as significant issues.

Fully on-the-job pathways were a major area of focus for the Senate Committee. A volume of evidence presented to the committee, including the substantial work of Schofield (1999a, 1999b, 2000), focussed on the quality and risks associated with fully on-the-job training and assessment. There was convincing evidence that fully on-the-job training is particularly at risk of poor outcomes. Almost all submissions from all sides agreed that a mixture of on- and off-the-job training is desirable. The committee believed it was essential (Senate Committee 2000, p.194). The Senate Committee subsequently recommended that: 'no Commonwealth funds be made available for fully on-the-job apprenticeships or traineeships' (Senate Committee 2000, p.194) and subsequent legislative amendments in some states have removed user choice funding for on-the-job apprenticeships and traineeships at some levels.

An integrated on- and off-the-job pathway is the one that has traditionally been used for apprenticeships and, more recently, traineeships and under the new apprenticeship scheme. It is the pathway also recently employed at the diploma level through the information technology cadetship initiative (*Campus Review* 2000, p.6). Integrated on- and off-the-job pathways would appear to have strong support in industry. The greater flexibility and responsiveness of the new

apprenticeship scheme is particularly welcomed (Senate Committee 2000, p.172). Schofield (1999a, 1999b, 2000) reported a high degree of satisfaction from apprentices, trainees and employers in her Victorian study (93–96%) but lower levels of satisfaction in Queensland (80% from employers) and Tasmania (60% from employers). In the evidence put to the Senate Committee, criticism of new apprenticeships was not directed at the concept of integrated on- and off-the-job training, but largely at the lack of appropriate quality assurance arrangements and funding models. This was seen as allowing a component of registered training organisations and employers, either intentionally or as a result of financial pressures, to avoid their responsibilities in the provision of an appropriate level of training and assessment.

Both providers and employers are still working out their new roles in a system moving towards more flexible modes of delivery. Many are uncertain of their responsibilities in relation to on-the-job and off-the-job training, how best to deliver quality on-the-job and off-the-job training in the workplace and how workplace competence can be validly and reliably assessed (Schofield 2000, p.vi). Although Schofield (2000) has identified some of the shortcomings in quality, planning, employer commitment and trainer qualifications evident in the implementation of training packages in the Victorian VET system, she acknowledged that there are examples of very effective training package utilisation in industrial training.

Hawke and Cornford (1998) considered the (then) 'revolution' in VET and described training packages as the 'fundamental component' for the new Australian Qualifications Framework. They suggested that the packages could not be equated with curricula or syllabi because of their lack of any suggestions for teaching and learning as mandatory components. They saw this as a strength, as it freed teachers to engage with learners of varying backgrounds and abilities in innovative ways. However, even in the early stages of implementation, they conceded that:

> … already there is concern that modular courses … are contributing to the fragmentation of knowledge and lack of knowledge integration … the teaching of theory and problem solving are unlikely to be fostered under such an approach.   (Hawke & Cornford 1998, p.126)

These concerns of Hawke and Cornford seem to have been well founded. As the implementation of training packages gathered momentum, more researchers and commentators expressed their reservations. Hunter and Sanderson (2001) concluded that this modularisation and reduction of all training into small units of competency indicated that the conceptual foundation of training packages was provided by 'scientific management' and therein was basically flawed. 'The consequences of relying on an industrial model—and an outmoded one at that—to perform an educational function is potentially very damaging' (p.5). They refer to the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education Reference Committee's finding that '[t]he atomised and apparently menial tasks required of workers leads to the view that those holding vocational skills are unable to think intelligently or creatively' (p.4). Other authors, critical of the overall concept of training packages, emphasise the reductive effect they have on the learning process. They argue that teachers will simply teach to the competencies. Wheelahan and Carter (2001, p.310) contest that the predominantly summative role of assessment in training packages means that teaching and assessment 'are becoming increasingly divorced'. The danger they see in this is that assessment becomes 'tick and flick' and training becomes non-existent. Although evidence of such a development in the implementation of training packages is not well researched, Schofield (2000, p.63) reports that 'consultations with employers suggest that this may be a widespread practice, particularly in regional areas'.

Many stakeholders believe that the national training packages do not provide adequately for the achievement of broader, generic skills (for example, Senate Committee 2000, p.25). Other research has revealed concerns about the lack of specification of underpinning knowledge within training packages (Down & Figgis 2000). This concern is reported elsewhere by Down (2000b) who says generic and key competencies should be much more thoroughly identified and integrated within package qualifications. To address this integration of generic skills and key competencies, it could

be that an important part of the strategy required of trainers implementing training packages is that of encouraging:

> … the learner to try out what seems at the outset to be an impossibly large segment; but it is more efficient in the long run for the trainee to make many mistakes, trying to master a logically constituted unit than to concentrate on learning the parts as if each were to be performed separately.   (Sayles & Strauss, cited in Hunter & Sanderson 2001, p.5)

Unfortunately, such a learning environment, in which a trainee can make mistakes and develop skills with trial and error, is not as universally available to learners on the job as it might be in educational institutions. Smith (2000) voices the concern of many in VET that the shift to on-the-job training denies the worker the opportunity of mixing with other students at an off-the-job training venue where his/her experiences would far more likely be conducive to learning underpinning knowledge and to providing opportunities for broadening knowledge. Worse, she suggests, training packages 'are likely to depress skill levels [because] … where they are delivered and assessed on the job, there may be no teaching or training component whatsoever' (p.13). Smith considers that training packages are based on Taylorist job descriptions and leave little room for 'education' or the development of adaptability. When it comes to implementation, she concludes that training packages 'containing questionable and rigid competency standards, in a system with very little quality control, makes it just about impossible to expect that high quality training will be delivered' (Smith 2000, p.13).

Another alleged limiting factor of training packages is that they are primarily designed for those already in the workforce. Misko (2001) found the move to training packages is a disadvantage to those learners who are not in work or who have no previous experience of work. This is because demonstration of competencies frequently requires a work environment or knowledge of the workplace. This concern has been raised by other authors, but with the suggestion that the problem can be overcome. Ruiz et al. (2001) describe how they tackled the problem of providing pre-vocational students with the required industrial experience for certificate II and certificate IV training package-based courses in information technology. The solution required innovative approaches involving TAFE–industry co-operation and provided students with the valuable additional experience of being interviewed by a personnel placement organisation.

The allegation, made by Smith, that it is near impossible to expect high-quality training with the use of training packages is refuted by Lewis (2000). He reports that 'there are a growing number of companies fully committed to building up the skills of their employees and putting significant funds and efforts into doing so' (p.13). Further, he believes that 'Packages are actually a new and dynamic tool that any teacher can use to underpin quality services in the demanding and changing world of vocational education and training' (p.13). Scollay also refutes the conclusions made by Smith and holds that:

> Training Packages give training providers a valuable opportunity … to fully apply the skills of their teachers and trainers … The flexibility of Training Packages, properly supported, gives the teacher and trainer a broader, active role rather than a function as mere deliverers of courses.   (Scollay 2000, p.12)

She claims that:

> The concept of Training Packages was developed on the premise that VET teachers and trainers can recognise what learners know, what more they need to know and how they might learn best. The key to the successful application of Training Packages … is the ability of the teacher/trainer to develop customised learning strategies.   (Scollay 2000, p.12)

It is perhaps this premise and the other assumptions concerning the skills of teachers/trainers and the level of support available that are critical to the success or otherwise of the implementation of training packages. Some authors suggest that it is not the concept or even the quality of training packages *per se* that is good or bad for training. Rather, it is the quality of the *interpretation* of the package, the skills of the trainer and the abilities of the learners that are critical for success. Down (2000a) elaborates on this. She believes VET trainers are the forgotten heroes in the ongoing

revolution in industry training. She states that 'the role of the VET teachers and trainers is often invisible in glossy publications about vocational education and training' (p.13). She argues that:

> The implementation of Training Packages places considerable demand on the competence of teachers to analyse and synthesise information, express ideas in multiple formats, solve problems, manage contingencies, look outside the square, embrace new knowledge systems and to create conditions for effective learning in a variety of locations and modes.
>
> (Down 2000a, p.13)

A critical skill for both trainer and trainee is that of literacy. Trennery (2001) studied the implementation of training packages from the aspect of the literacy and numeracy skills involved. She concludes that:

> It is in the interpretation of the Training Package model that the delivery of quality training takes place ... trainers and trainees engage in a multiplicity of literate and numerate practices as they engage in the training process and these merit attention as a way to encourage good practice in industry training. (Trennery 2001, p.1)

She asserts that literacy and numeracy skills make possible the synchronisation of 'learning to work' and 'learning work'. The employment of innovative approaches to the implementation of training packages assumes a high level of communication, interpretation and collaboration skills on the part of both trainer and trainee.

TAFE Directors Australia (2001) confirms that 'Training Packages call upon the deliverer to develop approaches customised to the requirements of the learner' but warns that 'unless teaching staff are equipped with the requisite skills, they will not be able to resolve the issues and meet the challenges surrounding the delivery of Training Packages' (p.3). This body also proposes that:

> Training Packages should be seen as assessment packages not as learning pathways. TDA [TAFE Directors Australia] sees any additional complexity in the documentation of assessment guidelines as reducing the flexibility now developing for RTOs.
>
> (TAFE Directors Australia 2001, p.2).

This flexibility, which allows for closely fitting the training content to the needs of the trainee and/or the industry setting, is seen as one of the particular strengths of the training package approach. Organised on a competency-based training approach (that is, the specification of what will be assessed, not how it will be taught), it allows 'for regular review of necessary training outcomes while leaving the delivery strategies in the hands of training organisations' (Lewis 2001, p.4).

Lewis (2001) also concludes that, while the training package system encourages and facilitates 'tailor-made' training for local conditions and local needs, the freedom to 'mix and match' also allows for the sharing of resources. He suggests that:

> ... teachers and trainers should be open to using template delivery tools that are designed to be customised to suit their local needs and populated with a range of content obtained from myriad national and international resources. (Lewis 2001, p.4)

There is a growing body of evidence that the flexibility of training packages and the opportunity to tailor both content and delivery are important factors for companies enthusiastic to upgrade the skills of their workforce.

> In our industry, people can have worked in glass and aluminium all their lives and have nothing to show for it ... Now they have access to nationally recognised formal qualifications ... Our tradespeople train the trainees and training packages give us the capacity to tailor training exactly to our needs. (O'Brien 2000, p.7)

Some reports from employers would suggest that training packages are the panacea they have been waiting for: 'Training has really made a difference. Our key performance indicators, covering areas such as efficiencies, wastage and health and safety have significantly improved' (O'Brien 2000, p.6). Furthermore, that benefits are commonly observed to flow on to a broader range of people than simply those receiving the initial training:

Implementing innovative approaches to
learning and assessment through training packages

> Measuring the success of their package, Taylor's management can identify improved quality of production, increased understanding by staff of daily tasks and company direction and a new, more consultative approach to work that has also led to pride in the company's success and improved staff morale. (O'Brien 2000, p.7)

Where the implementation of training packages is accompanied by enthusiastic and skilled trainers, there is no doubt they have opened up training opportunities for many in the workforce that previously would not have had such a benefit. O'Brien, in describing the implementation of training packages in four Australian companies, reports on the innovations used by employers: 'Taylors was one of the first employers to really go in there and utilise the flexibility of it all, and use the workplace emphasis of the new package and the user choice element'. The benefits to staff and company are described:

> Training gives staff the opportunity to provide feedback to management, to improve communication and to encourage teamwork. Staff feel respected and valued for the job they do and self worth leads to a positive work environment and greater productivity … the staff at Taylors now are not only able but willing as well. (O'Brien 2000, pp.6–7)

However, while it is true that training packages free the trainer and trainee to explore flexible pathways to achieve outcomes that more accurately meet individual and corporate needs, training packages have shifted the focus towards industry's needs and workers' vocational outcomes in terms of nationally accredited qualifications. Down and Stewart (2001) stress the importance of placing equal value on the *learning journey* of the student and not focus only on vocational outcomes. These authors, describing the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology approach to implementing training packages, highlight the development of implementation plans which are individualised for students. Training staff 'unpack and repack Units of Competency into Learning Units (LUs) both to avoid unnecessary duplication and to provide a learning pathway which recognises many of the complexities embedded within Training Packages' (p.3).

Much of the reported successful implementation of training packages is at the certificate I–III levels. The picture changes somewhat at the higher levels. The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (2000) describes the 'rigid, uniform and standardised specifications' as found in some training packages unsuitable for qualifications at Australian Qualifications Framework level IV and above (p.13). The concerns of this organisation are confirmed in a study on assessment practices at diploma and advanced diploma levels (Foreman, Bone & Davis 2001) in which the authors report high levels of concern at the lack of professional skills, particularly in assessment, amongst trainers using training packages at these higher levels.

This has serious ramifications for one of the advantages claimed for training packages—namely, portability and credit transfer. This concern about the quality of and difficulty in knowing just what knowledge and skills students have covered in VET courses at Australian Qualifications Framework IV and V based on training packages, has made some universities reluctant to co-operate in articulation. Robinson and Misko (2001) found that some faculty members were not interested in looking at the question of credit transfer for VET diploma qualifications. Private sector providers of VET courses, particularly those offering training to overseas students, were most concerned. The Australian Council for Private Education and Training found that:

> … 61 per cent of private sector providers exporting VET indicated that training packages were unsuitable at AQF [Australian Qualifications Framework] level 5, largely due to the lack of underpinning knowledge and use of non-graded assessment, which inhibits recognition by universities.
> (Australian Council for Private Education and Training 2000, p.5)

In the shift to workplace training, a key factor in the concerns about the implementation of training packages appears to be the need for resources. Moy (2000) analyses the impact of training packages on small business and concludes that the move to training packages is best suited to large companies and there is an urgent need for support for small businesses. Lewis (2001) examines the sharing of resources as one answer to this need and suggests ways of encouraging

this in an environment of competition and private providers. Godfrey (2000) also describes the sharing of materials and resources in the implementation of training packages. Other authors have undertaken descriptive studies of implementation or published reports on workshops and projects aimed at supporting those required to implement training packages (Johnson 2000; Tuckey 2000; Stewart 2000; Young, Townsend & Webster 2000). All report a mixture of success and failure and most point to the need for more research to be undertaken and more effort put into improving the implementation of training packages.

Misko (2001) has summarised the conflicting views on training packages and has listed their advantages and disadvantages as follows:

✧ Qualifications are nationally portable.

✧ Individuals can carry around their units of competence and make them into qualifications whenever they want.

✧ Industries have a say in the competencies and qualifications in their sectors.

✧ Training packages provide a ready-made framework for training in workplaces.

✧ Training packages allow for flexibility in delivery and assessment.

But:

✧ Flexibility leads to variability in quality.

✧ Teachers and workplace supervisors need advanced skills in order to structure learning activities.

✧ Training packages were introduced too hastily.

✧ Assessment-only pathways may be suspect in quality.

✧ Underpinning knowledge is downplayed.

✧ Training packages may not be suitable for students who do not have workplace experience.

✧ Some universities do not accept training packages for articulation purposes.

The implementation process for training packages is still in its early stages and refinement to address emerging issues and concerns continues as the process unfolds over time. Through design and intent, they encourage the development of new, flexible approaches to training and assessment by:

✧ the trialling of new pathways for learning to meet the needs of all stakeholders

✧ communication and the sharing of knowledge and expertise

✧ collaboration through partnerships

✧ new and unique ways of combining existing knowledge, skills and technologies.

This review has shown that research on innovative pathways to the implementation of training packages is limited to date. The majority of the published literature consists of brief case studies (Australian National Training Authority website; National Centre for Vocational Education Research; *Australian Training Review;* and the national industry training advisory body for the arts—CREATE Australia) providing limited detail or analysis of factors contributing to successful implementation.

The implementation of training packages is a large-scale educational reform aimed at 'fixing the system'. The scale of the change not only includes targeting the way in which vocational education and training is designed, implemented and delivered, but it also seriously challenges established relationships between training organisations and the industries they serve. At the heart of this reform lies a challenge to teachers' and trainers' attitudes, values and beliefs about their relationship *vis-à-vis* the industries with which they work, and their conceptions of their roles and the part they have to play in acting as 'change agents' to realise the policy outcomes mandated by government.

Contexts of the case study organisations and their innovative approaches

In order to provide context for the cross-case analysis made in the next section, this chapter presents an overview of each of the six case study organisations and their innovative approaches. In each case study the focus is on three main aspects:

✧ the background to the institution and the program in which the innovative approach is to be found, training prior to the innovation and the driver(s) for change

✧ a succinct analysis of what exactly the innovation was and its impact on learning and assessment

✧ a diagrammatic representation of the implementation process, indicating the players and their inter-relationships.

More detailed analyses of each of the case studies and the perspectives of these various players on the respective innovative approaches are presented in appendix A.

Case study 1: Canberra Institute of Technology

Background

Canberra Institute of Technology is currently the major public registered training organisation servicing the vocational training needs of the Canberra region. This case study focusses on the institute-wide approach to big picture issues such as curriculum and professional development issues and processes, information dissemination strategies and information management adaptations.

Preparation for training package implementation commenced at the Canberra Institute of Technology during 1997. The training package implementation process came to fruition during 1999 with the implementation of 45 qualifications from 13 training packages. By the end of semester 1 2001, a total of 214 qualifications from 30 training packages had been implemented.

Training package implementation issues were given a high priority in the institute strategic planning process during the late 1990s, resulting in an implementation strategy which adopted a co-ordinated approach to curriculum and professional development issues and laid a solid platform for more flexible and innovative delivery and assessment strategies to be implemented at the Canberra Institute of Technology.

Prior to the endorsement of the first set of training packages in 1997, training delivery at the institute was based on accredited courses. Some of these accredited courses were national and others were institute-developed courses. Courses were based on competency standards where these were available, otherwise they were based on advice from industry reference groups. When accredited curriculum formed the basis of delivery of training in the institute, programs were structured around modules that had been selected on the basis of their suitability for purpose while ensuring they were educationally sound blocks of learning.

The adoption of training packages at the Canberra Institute of Technology was mandated by the Territory Training Authority, through the Office of Training and Adult Education (now the Training and Adult Education Branch). Training providers in the Australian Capital Territory are allowed only six months after new training packages become available before they must be implemented as the basis of training provision.

The innovation and its impact on learning and assessment

The key to the innovation is the greatly increased flexibility in approach to delivery of training and assessment offered at the institute through the development of learning pathways that satisfy the requirements of nationally developed training packages and local employers, but also meet the broader educational needs of students. Learning pathway development has occurred concomitantly with a strategic approach to the management of the cultural change associated with training package implementation through the use of a broad communication strategy, the formation of workplace action learning groups and the adaptation of supporting information systems to allow for the diverse range of learning pathways. The needs of assessment processes rather than delivery processes have driven the innovative approach. The learning pathway approach allows individual departments to structure their training according to the needs of their learners and industry clients and has the flexibility to accommodate fully on-the-job delivery, fully on-campus delivery or a blended approach to training. Enrolment processes have become more flexible and as a consequence, enrolment is available on a year-round basis for apprentices and trainees.

The previous approach to delivery of training and assessment at the Canberra Institute of Technology offered far less flexibility and was based on locally developed curriculum. Change was not managed in a strategic way, so implementation of previous reforms such as competency-based training was conducted in a less consistent manner across the institute. The previous approach was driven by on-campus delivery strategies that offered very little opportunity for work-based learning. Enrolment was formerly only available at the commencement of each semester.

The implementation process

Figure 1:   The inter-relationship of the factors in the Canberra Institute of Technology training package implementation approach
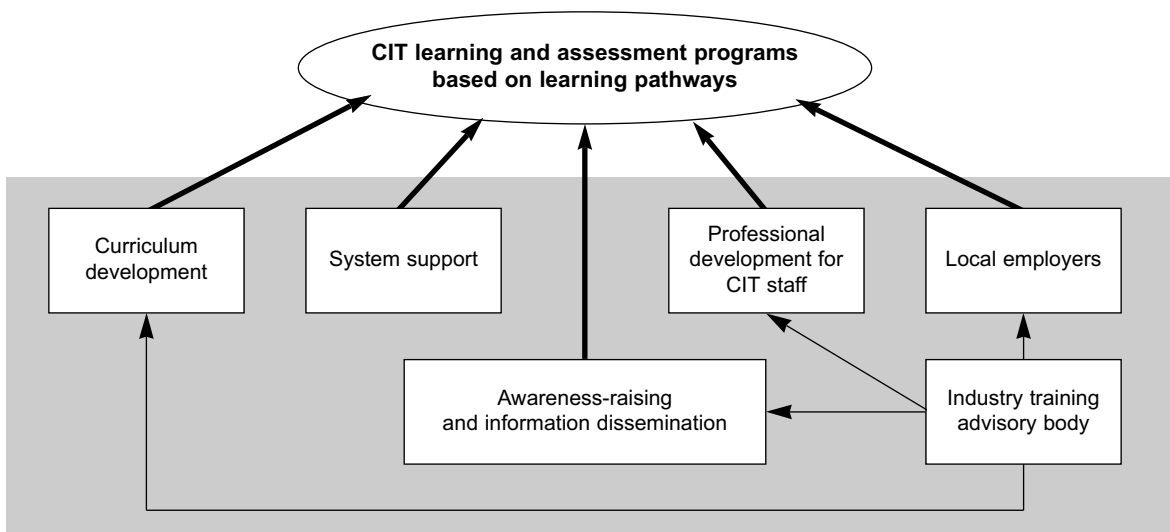
Liaison environment indicating that all areas engaged in extensive liaison with each other to develop the program

—— Facilitation or support

━━ Direct support of learning and assessment activities

Note: CIT = Canberra Institute of Technology

Case study 2: Hunter School of Performing Arts

Background

The Hunter School of Performing Arts, based in Newcastle, is a unique public school which complements the standard New South Wales high school curriculum with training in the performing arts with a focus on drama, dance, music and art. The school offers a comprehensive curriculum with a performing and related arts speciality for both primary and secondary students. Entry into the school is through audition.

This case study provides an example of how a diverse range of organisations can work together to develop a flexible and innovative training and assessment approach for training package implementation. The main focus is on the VET-in-schools program for the provision of qualifications in the Entertainment Training Package to students at Hunter School of Performing Arts. However, this training arrangement is the end product of a range of collaborative arrangements.

Prior to the introduction of the Entertainment Training Package, students at Hunter School of Performing Arts participated in school productions and undertook music production, lighting and costuming. But they did not receive any credentials for the skills developed, other than by receipt of results in traditional curriculum-based subject areas such as drama and music, which did not have a high degree of industry recognition.

The local TAFE and other training providers have been involved in the delivery of arts industry training in the Hunter region prior to the implementation of the Entertainment Training Package. TAFE training is available locally in some areas such as sound production, music industry skills and film and television production techniques, but at the time the school implemented the Entertainment Training Package, training in other areas such as performing arts and front-of-house skills had not been available locally.

According to the Director of the Civic Theatre Newcastle, which is the major local employer in the entertainment industry, prior to the implementation of training packages there was very little by way of practical formal qualifications in the entertainment industry in general.

The approach adopted results from the enthusiasm and commitment of staff at Hunter School of Performing Arts. They reviewed the Entertainment Training Package as soon as it was available in draft format and decided that it would suit the needs of the students at the school. Staff at the school have had extensive experience working in the performing arts industry and believed that they had the skills and experience required to deliver training under the Entertainment Training Package.

The school does have the facilities to stage their own performances. Nevertheless, it was decided that students needed access to additional facilities to fully meet the requirements of assessment under the Entertainment Training Package, so staff from the school investigated other options in the region. Fortunately, one of the staff members at the school was also on the management board at the Civic Theatre Newcastle and was instrumental in negotiating use of the theatre as a workplace.

The innovation and its impact on learning and assessment

The core of the innovation is the collaborative arrangement between industry and the Hunter School of Performing Arts to deliver the Entertainment Training Package. School programs offered in New South Wales are usually based on vocational areas centrally determined by the Department of Education and Training. The Entertainment Training Package is not part of the standard seven

vocational areas approved for delivery in VET-in-schools programs in the Hunter region, so the program represents a unique case. Training in the approved vocational areas is funded, whereas funding for courses outside these areas must be negotiated, and approval to run courses in non-identified vocational areas is only granted if a strong case is mounted. The delivery of the Entertainment Training Package was approved because it had such strong industry support and because the school could provide teachers with the specialist skills and knowledge required to facilitate the delivery and collaboration with industry that was required to provide the program. The Hunter School of Performing Arts has not previously used this type of partnership with industry to deliver a VET-in-schools program.

The other major strand of the innovation is the impact that the program has had on learning and assessment practices at the school and the resultant administrative and operational changes. The school has responded innovatively to the challenges of delivering a program based on industry competencies. The approaches to delivery and assessment used for school curriculum-based courses have been substantially modified to meet the demands of training package delivery.

The approach to the delivery of the Entertainment Training Package is unusual within the school because it is so strongly reliant on collaboration between the school and local industry. While some of the training is campus-based, most of the training occurs on job at the Civic Theatre Newcastle, unlike most other training at the school. An innovative assessment strategy is used whereby assessment of competence occurs during live performances at the local theatre. The nature and atmosphere of live performances provides a unique dimension to the assessment process for Hunter students. The school and theatre staff collaboratively conduct the assessment and the approach has enthusiastic industry endorsement, both from the local theatre and also from the state industry training advisory body. This approach to assessment differs markedly from the standard schools-based graded assessment model.

The innovative approach has also resulted in extra demands on parents to support the program. Students are required to attend training at night when performances are staged at the theatre. Parents have had to become involved in providing transport to and from performances which finish late in the evening and this has inevitably impacted on family life. The need for teaching staff to attend evening performances has also required staff to be very flexible in their approach to working hours, as this demand is not placed on teachers to the same extent in other parts of the school program.

The delivery and assessment of qualifications up to Certificate III in the Entertainment Training Package at Hunter School of Performing Arts in Newcastle, as part of the VET-in-schools program, is the first national training package (other than the seven framework vocational courses) to be offered as a pilot Higher School Certificate course in New South Wales.

The competency-based nature of the course has resulted in the need to develop a different approach to assessment. It is necessary for students to provide comprehensive evidence of relevant and substantial practical experience as part of the competency assessment process. The Department of Education and Training has provided support to the program by assisting in the development of logbooks to support the different method of assessment.

Assessment may not be a separate formal event. For most units, the competencies are assessed in the workplace at Civic Theatre Newcastle. Assessment methods include observation in a range of settings, role play in simulated workplace environments, discussions with trainers and the front-of-house manager at the theatre, and monitoring of actual work performance during live performances. When all the required elements have been met, the course supervisor or nominated industry expert signs off the whole unit of competence.

The program provides opportunities for integrated training. Hunter School of Performing Arts students play key roles in all school-produced entertainment events. Events at Civic Theatre

Newcastle also allow for real-life integrated training in a broad range of entertainment industry skills.

Before certificates are awarded to students, the assessments recorded in the logbooks are validated by the Department of Education and Training, Newcastle District Office which is the registered training organisation issuing the qualification. The department also plays a quality assurance role to check that the students are receiving quality training.

The implementation process

Figure 2: **The inter-relationship of the players in the delivery of the Entertainment Training Package at Hunter School of Performing Arts**

Liaison environment indicating that all areas engaged in extensive liaison with each other to develop the program

Facilitation or support

Direct support of learning and assessment activities

Note: ETP = Entertainment Training Package
HSPA = Hunter School of Performing Arts
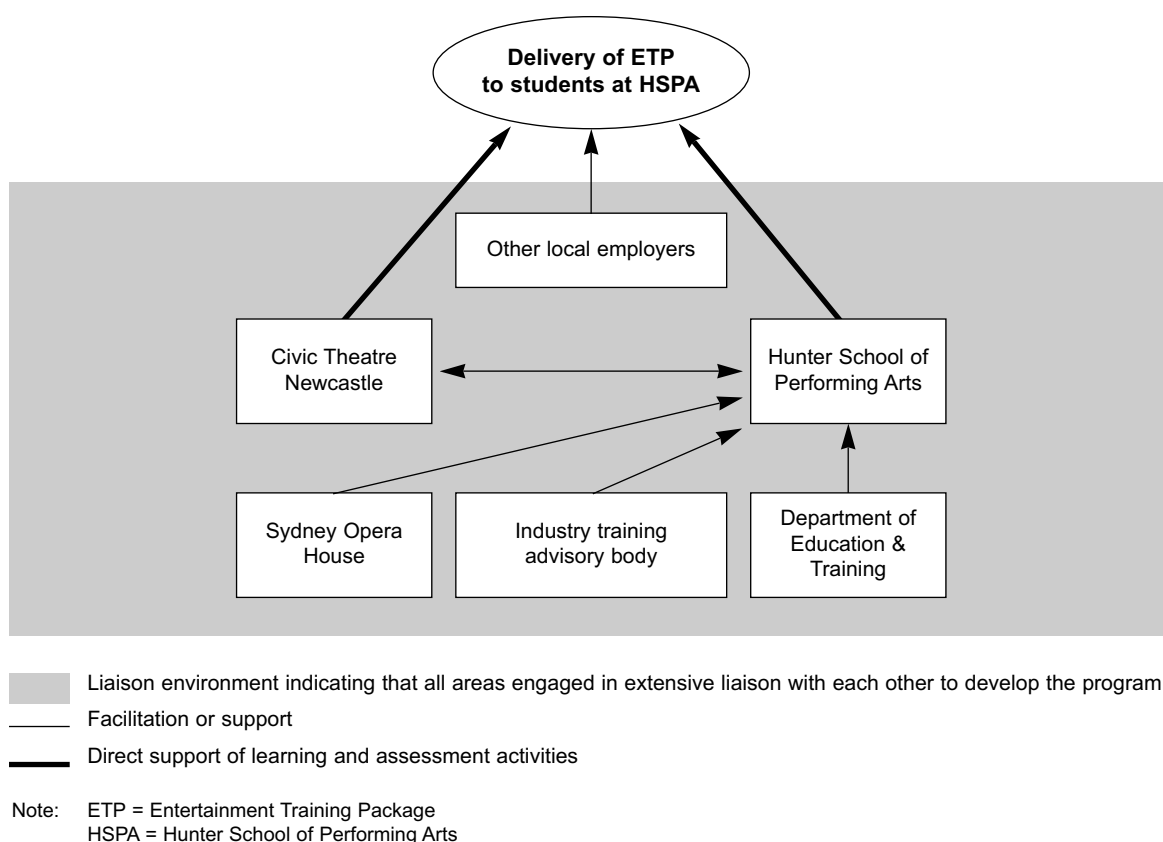
Case study 3: Regency Institute of TAFE

Background

The Children's Services Program based at Regency Institute of TAFE in South Australia has commenced delivery of the Community Services (Children's Services) Training Package. The institute has a history of innovation and a strong student-centred philosophy underpinning its approach to providing training for the children's services industry. The organisational culture within the program area is strongly supportive of the importance of meeting student needs via the use of a range of flexible delivery strategies. To this end, a number of different approaches have been used in the past to deliver training for the children's services industry at levels ranging from certificate III through to diploma levels. These approaches have included 'traditional' full-time and part-time courses delivered on campus incorporating the use of a work placement. Courses have also been provided in external mode for students located in rural and remote regions.

In addition to the introduction of the training package, a number of factors provided impetus for the development of the innovative approach that is the focus of this case study. These included:

✧ the organisational culture outlined above, which had been developed and sustained over a number of years

✧ the vision and motivation of key staff members

✧ the availability of funding through the *Framing the Future* initiative.

The innovation and its impact on learning and assessment

The requirements of the training package in relation to learning and assessment for children's services workers were deemed to be incompatible with existing practices, in relation to field placements within the certificate III and diploma programs for full-time, on-campus students. Under previous curriculum arrangements, the theoretical component of the course was taught on campus and combined with a placement in a childcare centre (either a block placement or one to two days per week over a semester). Staff would visit the centres during the placements and 'mark off field competencies' for the students. The theory components were assessed separately on campus.

This approach, which relied upon a relatively neat separation of theory and practice, was deemed not to be possible with the introduction of the training package. Within the training package, every unit of competency had an on-job component and it was not possible to maintain the theory–practice divide of previous curricula. Training packages also had a very practical, on-job focus which required greater integration of theory and practice. Although previous curricula required that students demonstrate their competency on the job, it was easier to separate out theory and practice and assess theory on campus. The staff decided that training packages required them to re-examine their methodologies and adopt a more comprehensive approach to on-job assessment and learning. They claimed: 'it was just more interwoven. The on-the-job part made it harder to segment the field or practical part out from the theory. To make sense, it had to all happen together.'

The innovation was based on practices observed elsewhere (in another state) by a staff member. This approach was based on the concept of a purpose-built childcare centre being used for the entire training program for children's services workers. Learning and assessment for trainees were integrated into the everyday work practices of the centre. At any one time, it was possible for 25 students to be located in the centre. The centre included facilities such as training rooms where students could withdraw from routine work for specific components of their training. This approach was taken as a starting point and adapted to suit local needs and resources.

Framing the Future funds were used to bring together childcare centre directors (employers) from the local area for a series of meetings with TAFE staff to brainstorm ways of meeting the assessment requirements of the new training package. Over a period of time the learning centre model was devised.

Within this model, specific childcare centres are designated as learning centres. These organisations commit to taking up to six students on a work placement. These placements require the student to attend the centre for two days each week throughout the term. Staff from TAFE (designated as 'facilitators') spend six hours per week (either one day or two half days) in the learning centres working with students to facilitate learning and assessment.

While the introduction of the training package was the key driver for the development of the innovation, a number of other factors also influenced its development. Previous evaluations of placements had suggested that there was some room for improvement. Placements had been viewed as being fragmented, since the field educator (TAFE staff member) was only able to be with each student for one hour per week. These arrangements also severely limited opportunities for TAFE staff to build relationships with industry.

The innovation was seen as a vehicle through which the organisation's commitment to working in partnership with industry could be realised. It also provided a mechanism through which multiple goals deemed important by the Australian National Training Authority could be achieved, including:

✧ increased flexibility

✧ the meeting of student needs

✧ partnerships with industry.

The learning centre model was viewed as an extension of efforts by the Children's Services Program to respond to these policy directions.

The implementation process

Figure 3: **The inter-relationship of the players in the implementation of the Community Services (Children's Services) Training Package by Regency Institute of TAFE**
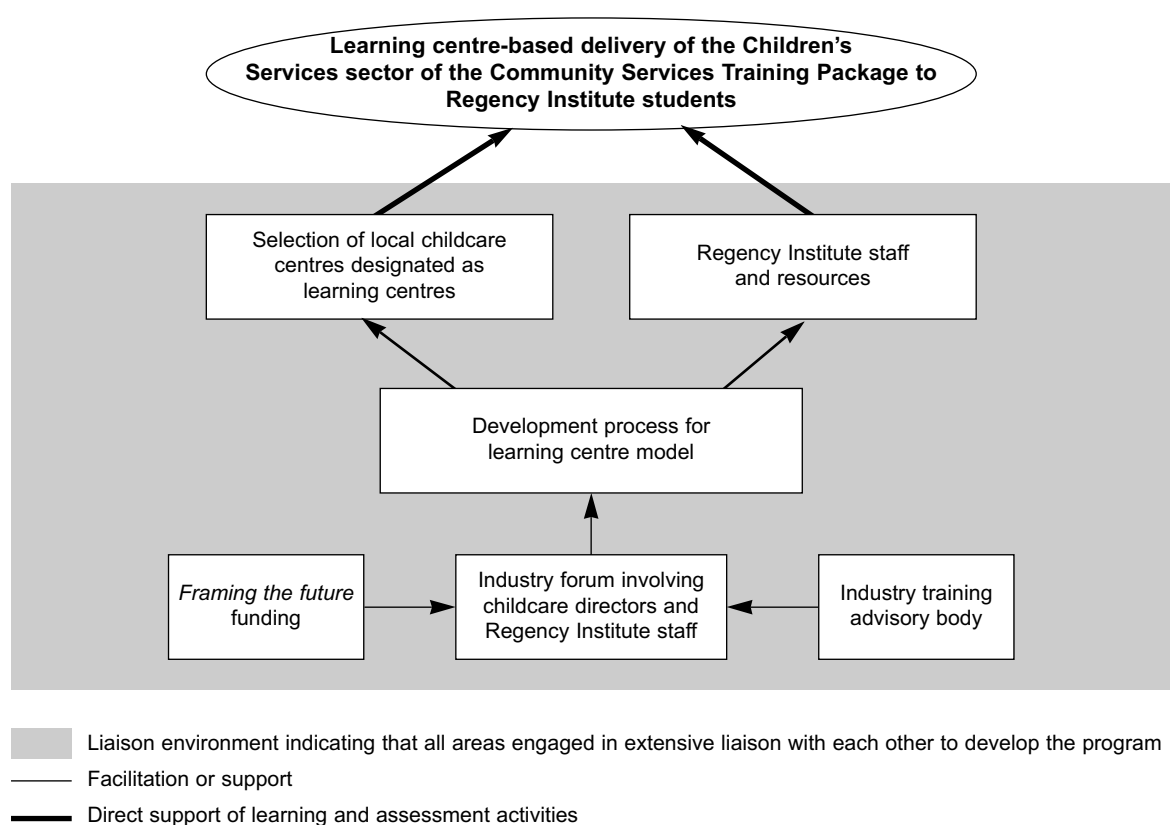
Case study 4: Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE

Background

The Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE is one of TAFE Queensland's 16 institutes, offering traditional, online and distance learning programs.

The institute has been offering the national Training Package in Horticulture at the Horticulture Campus of its Toowoomba College since the introduction of the training package in 1998. This built on a sound and well-established tradition of horticulture training delivery on this site. From a beginning with only one teacher and no premises some ten years ago, this program has developed to the point where today it is delivering approximately 100 000 student contact hours per year.

About 30–40% of Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE's activity is in pre-employment programs; trainees and school-based apprentices make up 10–15% of activity; workshops and part-time delivery comprise 30–40% of activity; and the remainder is made up of self-paced, industry-based flexible training.

The success of the training package delivery in this context rests upon a history of responsiveness to industry and student needs, and a continual effort to ensure that programs meet those needs as closely as possible. With that background, the present challenges of contextualising training are not seen as insurmountable, nor even particularly as challenging, but as standard professional practice.

The program developer and the trainers all identify the difficulties and the extent of the effort required to implement a reformed training agenda, but without suggesting that it ought to be otherwise. They are philosophical about constant change in their professional lives and see working with it as part of making their program credible. Some of the changes which accompanied the training package were very welcome in their professional assessment:

> Previously there would be a set of standards for a particular task and … it didn't matter what you were doing in the workplace, whereas now, if the context changes, then the standards can change to some extent as well.

The program developer is the department's principal teacher, who has been involved in the delivery of horticulture programs for over 10 years. He is therefore well placed to reflect upon the factors which have impacted on training in his discipline. Naturally, some of those factors are global rather than local:

> I think when we were first offering part-time training in the early 90s people were kind of conditioned to the idea that they would come along and they'd more or less move through as a group over a number of years and that [they'd be satisfied with] what was on offer …

> I don't think [people are prepared any longer] to move through and do material unless it's absolutely relevant to what they want and they can see the relevance. Probably the amount of time available is less too.

In addition to the clients' changed perspectives on how available an educational institution's offerings ought to be, and how responsive it needs to be to those clients' needs, the program developer also identified that students who are employed in the industry now expect their academic program to recognise and accredit the expertise that they have developed in the workplace. These students can be fast-tracked through a program if they are working with a registered training organisation responsive to their needs and which can tailor a program to suit them.

Another factor prompting a shift in direction was the change in the financing of training within the so-called purchaser–provider model. This shift saw funding going directly to user choice and the trainee market (and thence, on to the provider) rather than going directly to the providers of training themselves. Thus the provision of training began to be driven by different client groups. The program developer estimates that probably half of his department's user choice market in the beginning came from clients in Western Queensland, which meant that they had to start meeting the needs of that remote client group. Their use of video conferencing to access that market had begun well before the introduction of the national training package.

The program developer concluded that the training package was an integral part of these changes—at once a contributory factor and a response to them. At the same time the structure of the horticulture training changed, the marketplace also changed and the institute's delivery strategy had to change in response.

The innovation and its impact on learning and assessment

The Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE began video conferencing in 1995, connecting to remote sites in southern and south-western Queensland. The program developer says that although

this is described as flexible technology, it is 'probably the most inflexible one of all because you need to be at a certain place at a certain time'. In other words, there are the same attendance requirements for both students and trainers as there are with conventional classroom delivery. This inflexibility is compounded by the constraints which the medium imposes on the trainers, who must condense their teaching material to fit the time and space limits of the videoconference sessions. Technology breakdowns and difficulty in getting tuition in the use of the conferencing equipment were also issues for students in remote locations. Lastly, because the sessions are so condensed, if students miss a session they really miss a significant component of the program.

Thus the institute welcomed the chance to offer a more sophisticated version of video conferencing—video streaming—when that opportunity became available via the internet. For the program developer, this was also the chance to do something more innovative than the online offerings he had seen, most of which he had thought were fairly uninspiring for students.

That opportunity eventuated because TAFE Queensland decided to facilitate and subsidise the provision of online services centrally to all of the 16 institutes in its network. It did this by selecting a commercial internet service provider to supply off-campus (and remote) dial-up modem access for students and staff to the internet, TAFE Queensland's own network, and various on-campus facilities as set up by individual TAFEs. The institute makes use of this facility to offer video streaming and video conferencing to their remote students—a service that would otherwise be very costly for remote students to access.

Video streaming is a new technology that combines video conferencing simultaneously with the internet so students can see, hear and interact with teachers and other students via a standard computer. Video streaming is available in live or stored modes. Live streaming allows students to link to real-time training delivery, and to interact with their teacher via a text chat box. Live streaming lessons are recorded and then placed on the internet for students to access at any time. This is known as stored mode.

Once students have enrolled in a video streamed course, they are issued with a password and toll-free access to a statewide help desk. It is their responsibility to ensure that they have access to the appropriate computer hardware and software.

When students log in, they see the image of their teacher in the top left-hand corner of their computer screen, while the teaching notes are displayed down the right-hand side. These might typically take the form of a Powerpoint presentation. During live streaming, students can also key in questions or comments in the text box in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen.

A vital component of this program, and one of the keys to its success, is the way in which the institute complements the video streaming with other modes of delivery in order to more fully meet the training and learning needs of their distance students. As well as the site visits which the staff make to all their students, they try to deliver one session per course from each distance location (for example, Roma, Charleville, Chinchilla or Dalby) in order that students feel more included in the program. Students can access the trainers by telephone or email, but the strongest relationships are built when the students come to Toowoomba for a week's intensive workshop, four of which are offered each year. During that time the students undertake a great deal of practical work (the sort of things a horticulture program can't cover by video conferencing or via the internet), see examples of industry application that they would not see in their own community, and network with the other students.

It is important to note how truly remote many of these distance students are. They live in remote communities, whose nearest TAFE has no horticulture faculty, and therefore there is no additional support of the kind that many distance students can access, such as face-to-face tutorial support. The Horticulture and Environment team recognises how important the human contact that they make with their students is to their chances of successfully completing a program of learning and

assessment. Most of the students are enrolled in certificates II and III, with some of the workplace-based students enrolled in certificate IV or the diploma.

The training package also challenges the assessors to accommodate the different workplace contexts in which their students find themselves, by acknowledging that standards can change to some extent as context demands, rather than being seen as immutable. While the trainers see this as another aspect of meeting their clients' needs, it is also undeniably more demanding in terms of designing learning and assessment activities.

Along with the training package has come more stringent auditing, and the team has responded by ensuring that their documentation meets these requirements. Clearly explaining the evidence required for the assessment of competencies is helpful not only for learners, but also for their employers. The program developer describes this as a 'significant benefit'. However, he also cautions that in extensive focussing on assessment, the focus on learning can be lost. He believes that, during training, it is important that 'everyone knows exactly what's required and what the end point is, and [can then] say okay, that's fine, let's follow the path of learning and get there'.

He believed it was important that pre-employment students continued to undertake work placements in industry, rather than using the campus as the workplace (which was an option, since, although their operation is only small, they do supply some local nurseries) and that the experience in industry results in more competent students and more positive links with local industry.

The implementation process

Figure 4: **The inter-relationship of the players in the development and delivery of the Horticulture Training Package at Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE**
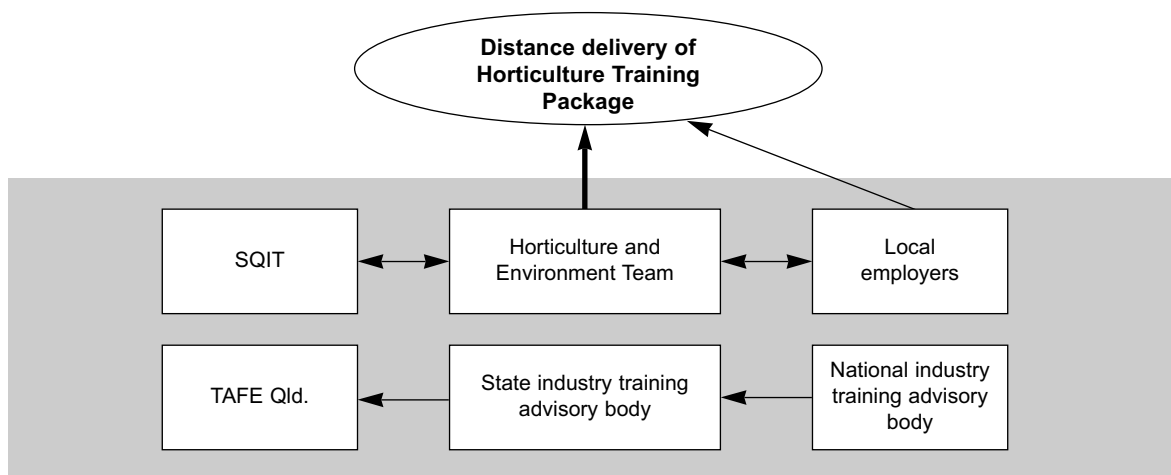
Liaison environment indicating that all areas engaged in extensive liaison with each other to develop the program

——— Facilitation or support

▬▬ Direct support of learning and assessment activities

Note: SQIT = Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE

Case study 5: The Outlook Training and Resource Centre

Background

The Outlook Training and Resource Centre is a direct service provider, operated by the Queensland Department of Families, Youth and Community Care, and is situated in Boonah in south-east Queensland. It has been operating as an adventure-based learning centre since 1979, offering various levels of wilderness-based programs for 'at-risk' young people. It does this primarily by training, resourcing and supporting community and youth workers to assist them in working with disadvantaged groups. In addition to the conventional wilderness components of their program (such as canoeing, rafting, abseiling and rock climbing), they offer problem-solving activities.

What makes The Outlook Centre unusual amongst its peers is that it now offers registered training and professional development for workers in 80–100 community services agencies, centred around the Certificate IV in Program Development and Facilitation—a program which they have developed by combining elements from the Outdoor Recreation Training Package and the Community Services National Training Package.

The Outlook offers its clients (community and youth workers from various organisations) two options when they seek to use its facilities:

✧ Outlook staff will design and run a program that meets specific needs.

✧ Clients can run their own program using The Outlook's facilities.

In the second instance, clients must be appropriately qualified to run such a program, having as a minimum, level III of the Outdoor Recreation Training Package. The Outlook offers this training, and thus some their clients also become their students.

Previously much of the training in the outdoor recreation industry was conducted primarily by volunteer-based industry organisations. Indeed, volunteerism was fundamental to their philosophy. The training may have been very well conducted, but it was often not accredited. To practitioners in those organisations, the shift to training packages is something they may not have understood the necessity for, and may have resisted.

At the time that The Outlook's pilot program was proposed, the national curriculum in outdoor recreation had been neither implemented nor accredited in Queensland. The Outlook had developed its own courses, although these were not strictly limited to outdoor recreation, tending to focus on leadership training, program design and facilitation, and less on activity-specific skills.

Throughout the state, a whole range of training was on offer, some of it accredited. Much of it, however, did not fit within the national training framework. Numerous programs were offered in house and were of good quality, but they were pitched only at particular client groups. What these organisations and associations were doing aligned to the competencies, but had not been developed through a formalised process. It was people from these organisations who contributed to the development of the competency standards within the training package.

The sponsors of The Outlook's pilot program at the time of the introduction of the national training package identified many factors contributing to the decision taken by The Outlook and many similar organisations to formalise their outdoor recreation training programs.

Today, organisations involved in delivering outdoor recreation training must be able to prove that their staff are adequately skilled for insurance purposes, since the fear of litigation has the potential to stifle most of their activities. Thus, risk management can be seen as a factor. Sponsors concluded

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that 'the advent of commercial providers who charge for, and are accountable for, their training and its quality, has changed the training landscape in this industry'.

The state industry training advisory body describes this as a revolution in the outdoor recreation industry, that involves its becoming, and thinking of itself as, a service industry:

> We're not producing products, we're producing opportunities … and they involve the environment, which might be in the bush or it might be [on] a sporting field or whatever … [It] involves the consumer, but it also absolutely involves the … recreation guide, the sports official, the coach … And to a large extent they control the quality of that experience.

However, the challenge for providers of outdoor recreation is that where people will happily pay to play indoor sport in a suburban sporting complex, they still expect to undertake activities like bushwalking free of charge:

> I think … organisations that want to make a business profit [from] outdoor recreation … need to realise that they need to offer service which is [comparable] with those that are entertainment rivals.

Quality assurance also drives many processes in contemporary organisations, and outdoor recreation is no exception. One of the sponsors describes The Outlook's position thus:

> The Outlook has always tried to be seen as a quality organisation and a leader, also I think they just wanted to … know that they came up to speed. It's part of the philosophy of The Outlook that they'd only do something if they can do it well.

The Outlook wanted to have their staff's skills assessed and validated by industry experts external to their own organisation.

However, quality provision is also one of the planks of training reform, and as such, its influence can be expected to have an impact throughout the industry:

> I think this is where the benefit will be felt in this industry in the longer term … there'll be a realisation that … if you provide a higher quality of service, the people may well be prepared to pay for it … at a rate which is appropriate.

The innovation and its impact on learning and assessment

Coincidentally with the advent of training packages, The Outlook had arrived at the point in its training history where it was interested in moving on from the curriculum-based training it had traditionally offered its clients to offering recognised, accredited programs. The Outdoor Recreation Training Package offered the means by which to do this. The Outlook's history as a provider of highly professional outdoor recreation training, contextualised to the professional needs of specific clients, meant that they had a sizable number of repeat clients who were keen to pursue further training with the organisation. Many of those clients had completed significant amounts of training, and yet none of it was accredited. The Outlook wanted to be able to issue its graduates with nationally recognised qualifications, and to encourage those who had completed some training to pursue further education in order to complete a qualification that was both quality-assured and portable. In other words, they wanted to facilitate learning pathways for their existing and future clients.

The innovation in this instance consisted of the approach that The Outlook took to upskilling its own trainers and assessors in preparation for the desired move into the delivery of nationally recognised qualifications. The availability of the training package can be seen as the catalyst that prompted the activity which followed. Before they could offer such training it would be necessary to ensure that their own trainers and assessors met the requirements to have the necessary content, facilitation and assessment competencies, and that their understanding of current industry practice was supplemented by appropriate field experience and professional development. The Outlook's forward planning determined that a four-stage process would facilitate the necessary changes.

The first stage entailed working in conjunction with Recreation Training Queensland, the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation, industry experts and a group of invited trainers from other organisations. Recreation Training Queensland and the federation sponsored the piloting of this process with the intention of documenting it as a case study for promotion within the outdoor recreation industry. The process involved assessing the competencies of ten Outlook staff and 15 registered instructors from organisations which use The Outlook's facilities, recognising their current competencies, and upgrading their credentials by using an assessment panel to assess against certain units from the training package.

Very early on, the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation and Recreation Training Queensland realised that the people who would be involved in the pilot program would need some initial professional development that would involve looking at the nature of training packages and how they can be used. So the first stage of the project involved running a number of information sessions that covered such basics as competency standards and assessment. Further, the industry training advisory body then conducted assessor training for the industry experts who had been invited to assist in the assessment. They saw this as an investment, not just in this project, but in the development of an industry-wide assessor network.

This innovative and collaborative approach to preparing staff for training package delivery was a highly effective means of preparing for the subsequent learning and assessment activities with their clients. It was, in effect, a trial run that focussed very closely on such details as recognition of current competencies, recognition of prior learning, evidence guides, guidelines for assessors, assessment plans and records. Participation in this pilot project resulted in higher levels of understanding of the training package and its application, particularly enabling trainers and assessors to work together towards understanding the competency standards.

The Outlook has confirmed its training involvement with industry by providing a recognition of prior learning assessment service to others in the industry, redeveloping existing non-accredited training modules by aligning them with the new training package units of competency, and developing new training resources. A key realisation for Outlook staff has been that the development of their own learning resources and assessment tools has been central to their comprehension of the training package. The program developer is convinced that the necessity of creating a 'paper trail' has encouraged more professional approaches to assessment among the trainers. However, their preferred methods of training and assessment (experiential learning and repeated observation) have long been fundamental to The Outlook's practice, and have stood them in good stead in the move to competency-based assessment. Likewise, a strong tradition of working as a team has meant that The Outlook's trainers are accustomed to solving problems as a group and reflecting on ways to improve practice, both of which activities are central to the ongoing work of training package implementation.

Because The Outlook's preparation for training package implementation was sponsored and then documented as a pilot study, it has been well promoted in outdoor recreation circles throughout the country.

The national industry training advisory body hopes that, via the presentation of case studies at national workshops and the National Outdoor Recreation Conference, others in the industry will be inspired to follow the lead of such organisations as The Outlook. For example, Outward Bound has developed a database of staff skills and is currently aligning its existing training to the training package units of competency. The organisation is encouraging not only current staff but also ex-staff to have their skills recognised through the recognition of prior learning process, topping up where necessary with further training.

The Outlook has produced leaflets and other printed materials that it uses to promote the program to potential clients. Newsletters are distributed to their clients, and whenever previous clients return to The Outlook, they are given a briefing on what changes The Outlook has implemented in the interim.

The implementation process

Figure 5:   **The inter-relationship of the players in the development and delivery of the Outdoor Recreation Training Package at The Outlook**

	Liaison environment indicating that all areas engaged in extensive liaison with each other to develop the program

————— Facilitation or support

▬▬▬▬ Direct support of learning and assessment activities

Note: QORF = Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation
        RTQ = Recreation Training Queensland
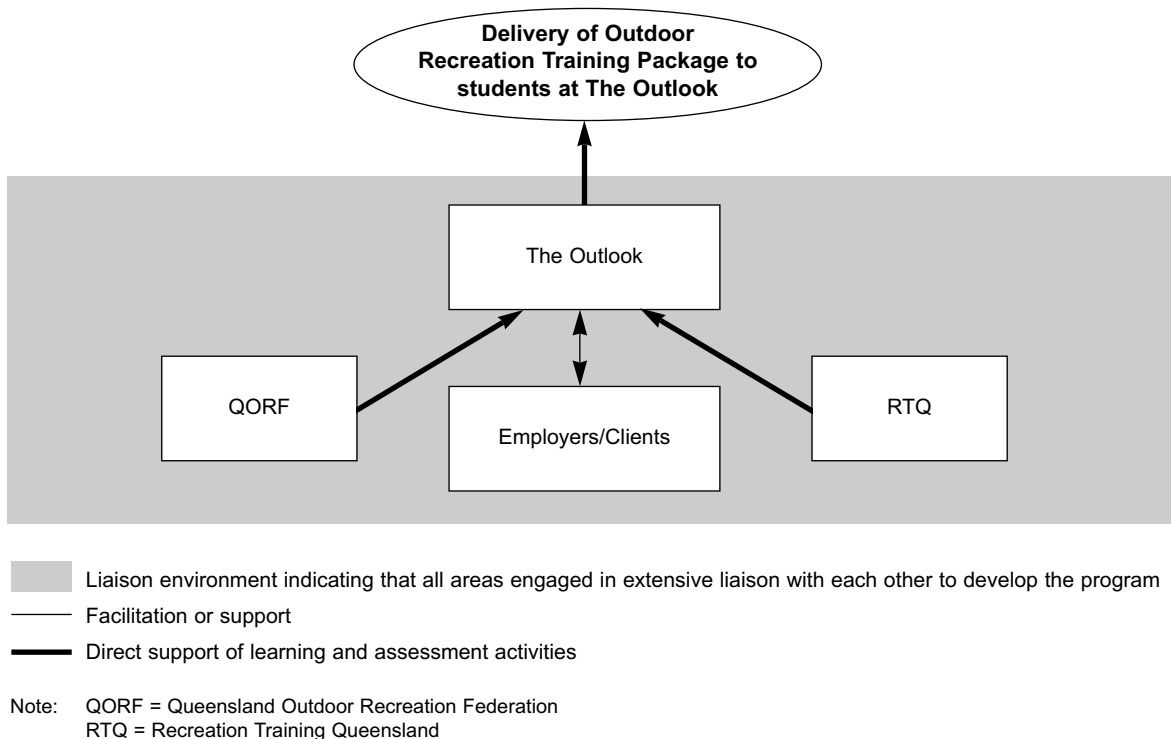
Case study 6: Colac Adult and Community Education

Background

Colac Adult and Community Education Incorporated is involved in the delivery of the Disability Work sector of the Community Services Training Package. This organisation has a history of continually seeking to diversify the types of programs it offers, particularly in the area of disability services. As a regional provider of training services in Victoria, the organisation is keenly aware of the need to respond to a range of local needs. Colac Adult and Community Education has always provided a wide range of courses and has expanded the scope of its registration as a registered training organisation on a number of occasions in order to deliver more courses. Colac is a training provider and is not involved directly in the provision of disability services.

The foundations of the innovation can be traced back to 1993 when Colac was largely an adult and community education provider. The organisation developed a strategic plan that sought to re-orient the organisation so that it could take advantage of the emerging trends, particularly in relation to the development of the training market. The drivers for the innovation were a combination of the recognition of the inadequacy of current training approaches to meet the specific needs of workers in the disability sector and the industry-wide push for workers to attain nationally recognised qualifications.

The innovation and its impact on learning and assessment

The innovation was essentially a 'modification' of Colac Adult and Community Education's emerging commitment to provide a wide range of services in the disability sector in a responsive and flexible manner. As a result of this, the organisation also looked to training for their staff to support the expansion of the organisation into the delivery of training in the disability services area. An initial search yielded few suitable programs. Follow-up research with organisations working in the region confirmed the lack of training and professional development for staff.

Prior to the introduction of the Community Services Training Package, all training for workers in the disability services sector was largely institution-based. It was designed for people currently working in the field and was usually provided in an on-campus mode outside working hours. These courses were problematic because many staff had difficulties 'fitting in' with the institution-based training arrangements as these did not cater for the needs of those with families, those doing shift work or those working in rural and remote areas. A range of short courses and workshops on special issues that staff employed in the disability services area could undertake was also available. Very few of these resulted in a statement of attainment or any formal recognition. Staff development provided by the state government departments was offered infrequently and usually based in Melbourne. Attendance involved considerable cost and required staff to be away from their work and families.

After this initial research, Colac Adult and Community Education established networks with other disability organisations in the region and held discussions in relation to the professional development needs of staff and how they might best be met. The organisation also approached the State Community Services and Health Industry Training Advisory Board to gain information about the industry standards and the sorts of qualifications required for workers in the disability sector.

Concurrent with Colac Adult and Community Education's search for suitable professional development for staff, the Community Services and Health Industry Training Advisory Board began to promote the importance of training and the attainment of qualifications for workers in the disability sector. Recent moves by state and federal governments to provide funding for disability services added pressure to have well-qualified staff. This reversed previous practices where staff employed in the sector were working without attaining any formal qualifications or recognition of the professional development undertaken as part of their job. These factors combined to motivate Colac Adult and Community Education to look for ways of meeting their staff development needs and to offer similar services to other organisations.

The advent of the training package re-introduced the concepts of competency-based training and competency-based assessment. These frameworks allowed for the recognition of current skills and knowledge outside previous course structures. The training package provided the organisation with the mechanism by which it could establish systems to assess the competency of people within the workplace, determine any need for training and collate customised training to meet the identified needs. Through this mechanism, it became possible to implement workplace-based training and assessment of competency. It also facilitated a process whereby learning and training became part of the workplace operation, making 'visible' the competencies that staff had developed through their work.

The training package also acted as a framework under which the various professional development activities undertaken by staff could be assessed and brought together to create a 'personalised training pathway' to a nationally recognised qualification.

The innovation was conceptualised in a number of ways. It was fundamentally concerned with developing and implementing a system of work-based training to support staff to attain a nationally recognised qualification. On a broader level, the innovation aimed to develop partnerships between Colac Adult and Community Education and other organisations where the former used its

status as a registered training organisation to support the development of a self-sustaining learning culture.

The implementation of a work-based training pathway using the training package required a pre-assessment of the nature of the work currently being undertaken by the disability workers in an organisation. Each individual worker was asked to list the tasks performed and a one-to-one interview was held with each person. The purpose of this interview was to confirm the details of the job description, to expand on the details and to identify any gaps in competency. Recognition of prior learning and recognition of current competency processes were used to identify existing levels of competence and were mapped across the requirements for qualifications contained in the training package. Once the learning needs of each individual had been determined, a training plan to meet those needs was developed. The training plan attempted to take a holistic approach to training by identifying tasks or projects within the organisation that would allow the individual to build up competency in a number of areas simultaneously. For example, job rotations were organised, staff were rostered to take turns chairing meetings or supported to prepare a presentation for a conference.

The aim was to embed learning in the actual workplace functions and to integrate organisational support for learning into the workplace structures and processes. The product was the establishment of a learning culture within the organisation. Learning was integrated into organisational development, supported through a continuous cycle of planning, with staff becoming more skilled and using these new skills to work in different areas of the organisation. The innovation at its core is concerned with the establishment of a learning culture within an organisation where the multiskilling of its staff is encouraged.

While the innovation largely focussed on providing training as part of the usual work processes within an organisation, it also required that workers sometimes remove themselves from the normal work routine for training. In these instances, Colac would conduct workshops on site or locate workshops provided by other organisations for staff to attend.

Assessment of competency was undertaken holistically and facilitated by the use of a competency record book. As staff achieved a particular competency, it was checked and signed off by a workplace assessor. Assessment strategies also included the use of portfolios and recognition of competency achieved through attendance at workshops. Assessment of competency was also 'doubled-checked' by staff within each organisation (where Colac Adult and Community Education were completing the assessments) to ensure the quality and validity of evidence. Efforts were made to ensure that competence was demonstrated 'on a regular basis'.

The implementation process

Figure 6: **The inter-relationship of the factors in the delivery of the Community Services (Disability Services) Training Package at Colac Adult and Community Education**

Delivery of disability services training from the Community Services Training Package to Colac ACE students

Employers

Industry training advisory body

Colac ACE

Framing the future funding for information dissemination to industry

Alliance of disability service providers

Liaison environment indicating that all areas engaged in extensive liaison with each other to develop the program

——— Facilitation or support

——— Direct support of learning and assessment activities

Cross-case analysis

The individual case studies in this report illustrate how training packages were implemented in a variety of ways and acted, to varying degrees, as catalysts for the development of innovative approaches to learning and assessment. For three organisations (Hunter School of Performing Arts, Colac Adult and Community Education and The Outlook Training and Resource Centre), the advent of training packages facilitated new ways of providing training and assessment services. In the cases of Canberra Institute of Technology, Regency Institute of TAFE and Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, the case studies are illustrative of the ongoing change process that has been occurring in public VET organisations since the early 1990s and how new approaches to learning and assessment have evolved from fundamental re-organisations of the business processes of these institutions.

A summary of the innovations from each case site and their impact on the development of assessment and learning pathways is presented in table 2.

Table 2:   Summary of sites, their innovations and the changes to assessment and delivery practices

Site	Nature of the innovation	Changes to assessment and delivery practices
Canberra Institute of Technology	Institution-wide framework to support the implementation of training packages • awareness-raising and information-sharing • professional development for staff • action learning groups to develop new ways to deliver and assess • virtual forum	• varied according to each department (e.g. practice firms, link with a local rural community shire) • development of learning resources to support flexible delivery • enhanced role of work-based learning • modification of student information management system to accommodate diverse approach to delivery and assessment
Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE	Video streaming to enhance provision of flexible delivery strategy for the Horticulture Training Package	• improved quality in delivery of training for rural and remote students
The Outlook Training and Resource Centre	Introduction of accredited training for the outdoor recreation industry	• shift from curriculum-based programs • creation of an accredited training pathway
Hunter School of Performing Arts	Collaborative arrangements to deliver the Entertainment Training Package as part of a VET-in-schools program	• training and assessment undertaken on job in collaboration with industry partner
Regency Institute of TAFE Children's Services Program	Implementation of a learning centre model within selected number of childcare centres	• students integrated into everyday work practices of childcare centres • TAFE staff working on job with students • assessment and learning facilitated and jointly supported by childcare and TAFE staff
Colac Adult and Community Education	Implementation of model of on-job training and assessment for disability services workers	• learning and assessment integrated into everyday work practices

The nature of the innovative approaches to learning, training delivery and assessment

All of the six case study sites were implementing approaches that were innovative in the context of how each organisation had operated in the past.

The Colac case study provides an example of the development of an *alternative to institution-based training* for disability workers and the ways in which training packages can be used to craft learning pathways within organisations that meet the needs of both workers and the organisation. In this case, the training package provided a framework by which training could be organised and the current competence of workers recognised. The learning and assessment pathways were, where possible, integrated into the daily work practices within organisations and tailored to the unique needs of each learner.

For Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, the innovation of video streaming combined with other ways of supporting student learning represented an *improvement on previous methods of training delivery.* This improvement aimed to provide greater flexibility for students in terms of when they are able to access information to support their learning. In many respects, the introduction of video streaming was largely unrelated to the task of implementing training packages. The innovation, however, did allow the teaching team from the institute to sustain their commitment to flexibility and responsiveness to learner and industry needs across the implementation of the training package.

The case study focussing on the Hunter School of the Performing Arts is an example of the *provision of a new training pathway* within the entertainment industry. In addition, it provides insights into the ways in which a strategic partnership with industry enabled the development of new ways of thinking about learning and assessment processes via the use of work-based learning and on-the-job assessment of competencies. The competency-based nature of the learning and assessment pathways also presented a significant departure from previous practices for the school.

Similarly, the innovation at The Outlook Training and Resource Centre also represented the *creation of a new training pathway* for their clients, necessitating significant changes to the ways the organisation conducted training in order to achieve their goal of providing nationally accredited training. The innovation required a shift from curriculum-based programs in industry areas where, prior to training packages, there had been little nationally accredited training available.

The case study from the Canberra Institute of Technology illustrates how the development of a variety of different approaches to training and assessment was facilitated within different program areas by the creation and implementation of an institution-wide strategic plan to underpin the implementation of training packages. In this instance, the organisation was concerned to ensure that implementation was educationally sound. (See Goleby 2000; Down 2001; Down & Stewart 2001; van Leeuwen 2000.) This was ensured, in part, by the adoption of an institution-wide approach to change (see Hord 1995, p.88). Management saw this need for reworking existing processes as an opportunity to exercise transformational leadership (see Schaafsma 1997).

Regency TAFE, the Canberra Institute of Technology and Colac Adult and Community Education provided examples of innovations to training delivery and assessment that grew out of previous practice, but their introductions were a direct response to the demands of training packages. Training packages, with their focus on workplace competencies, required the development of holistic assessment practices which focussed on activities within workplaces (or simulated workplace environments in the case of some departments at the Canberra Institute of Technology) as the primary sites for assessment.

This theme of training packages driving the need for integrated forms of assessment based in the 'real world' practices of the workplace was a key feature around which these organisations

structured their approaches to learning and developed new ways of conceptualising and carrying out the assessment functions for their industry areas. The recognition of the need for integrated and holistic approaches to assessment was also apparent in the Hunter case study, particularly through the development of practices that departed considerably from previous school-based approaches to assessment.

The role of registered training organisations and industry bodies

In each of the case studies, registered training organisations undertook a number of roles in relation to the implementation of the innovative learning and assessment practices.

The Outlook Training and Resource Centre acted as a *pilot site* to showcase the implementation of accredited training for an industry that had traditionally relied on non-accredited training conducted largely by volunteers. The step to providing accredited training was supported by Recreation Training Queensland, the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation, industry experts and invited trainers from other organisations. The role of The Outlook was to work collaboratively with each of these groups in order to establish the required infrastructure (appropriately qualified trainers, learning pathways based on training package requirements, development of skills in assessment practices) to showcase how accredited training might be conceptualised and implemented for an industry with little history of such activity. As such, The Outlook was established as a *role model* for other training organisations within the recreation industry and as a *conduit* to enable other training organisations to follow their lead in the provision of accredited training. The selection of The Outlook as a pilot site was based upon specific criteria, including an extensive history as a provider of high-quality outdoor recreation training that had been well received by its clients. The organisation had previous experience in the design of curricula for its clients and had a reputation for innovation and quality. These antecedent conditions provided The Outlook with the base-line capability to deal with the initial demands of implementing a training package. In addition, the organisation was accustomed to working flexibly with clients and had a strong client-centred ethos. These two characteristics accorded with the rationale for the introduction of training packages into the VET sector. This is an organisation which, as Down (1998, p.5) suggests, is using the advent of training packages as 'a real opportunity for the development of institutional/enterprise-based curriculum approaches which meet the specific needs of client groups'.

The Outlook also worked with a number of trainers from other organisations. Other registered training organisations provided expertise and acted as *mentors* for the adoption process within The Outlook. This sharing of expertise across training organisations was supported and encouraged by key bodies within the industry, illustrating the key role that industry lead bodies (such as the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation and Recreation Training Queensland) can play in facilitating the sharing of expertise and contributing to the overall growth in the quantum of training available to their industry.

The Hunter School of Performing Arts also acted as a *pilot site* for the introduction of a course outside the approved vocational framework and as a *role model* and *key focal point* for developing the necessary collaborative arrangements to achieve the implementation of a training package within the school sector. For instance, the state industry training advisory body for the Arts, Arts Training NSW, worked closely with Hunter to facilitate the innovative approach, while the local theatre provided a live workplace in which to conduct the training. Achievement of its goals required Hunter to form close linkages with a number of organisations. These organisations were instrumental in providing access and support to a number of critical components required to build a successful course for students, including:

✧ training to ensure that the school was able to attain status as a registered training organisation and staff were qualified to deliver the training package

✧ industry sites where students could undertake work placements for their course

✧ the necessary political strength to enable the school to receive permission to embark on the implementation of a new vocational program within the school

The result for Hunter was certainly an instance of what Lewis (2001) describes as a 'tailor-made' response to local training needs.

The case studies of The Outlook Training and Resource Centre and the Hunter School of Performing Arts illustrate that introducing training packages where no recognised VET training pathway had previously existed may well be beyond the scope of any one organisation acting on its own. In short, training packages have acted as catalysts for bringing together previously separate organisations in order to effect successful implementation of new forms and pathways of training. The implementation of training packages is necessarily a collaborative venture that requires training organisations to form strong partnerships. The Outlook and Hunter required the support of groups of organisations (enterprises, industry training advisory bodies, departments within government bureaucracies) in order to marshall the most appropriate resources to achieve the desired outcomes. In particular, they required access to resources to build the capacity of their staff to play an active role in meeting the demands of the training packages. They also required political support to promote their work and to help them to overcome bureaucratic and attitudinal barriers that might otherwise have prevented them achieving their goals. The Outlook Training and Resource Centre and the Hunter School of Performing Arts were both able to partner with organisations that have the capacity to act simultaneously as catalysts for change as well as conduits through which knowledge, skills and support (both moral and physical) could be channelled. The organisations which facilitated the implementation process were notable for their industry-wide perspective, their responsiveness and their apparent knowledge of the processes required to support innovation.

Colac Adult and Community Education undertook a significantly different role in its work to implement innovative learning and assessment pathways within the disability sector. In many respects, it acted as a *lead organisation,* identifying gaps in existing training provision and then seeking to develop ways to close these gaps. In this instance, Colac acted as a *focal point* for the development of innovative practices and offered itself as the first implementation site where the new practices were trialled and modified before being offered to other organisations. Colac acted as a *catalyst* for changing the ways in which training and assessment were conceptualised for the learners and organisations with whom they worked and which were consistent with the policy directions underpinning the introduction of training packages. Colac's vision, initially concerned with its own requirements, ultimately turned its attention to other disability service organisations. This change of direction appeared to result from its strong networks within the disabilities sector and strong connections to the industry training advisory body, enabling Colac Adult and Community Education to keep abreast of issues relating to training within their sector. Colac Adult and Community Education was thus able to position itself as a key player in an industry-wide drive to increase the qualification levels of workers. Unlike those sites identified by Schofield (2000) as having shortcomings in their approach to training package implementation, Colac is an example of a site that has effectively addressed an identified need to recognise employees' current competence.

The Children's Services Program at Regency Institute of TAFE illustrates well the critical role that registered training organisations can play in encouraging industry to play an active role in the training of their workers. Although largely driven by the requirements of the Community Services Training Package, staff within this program area were successful in developing a learning and assessment pathway with industry as an equal partner. The registered training organisation in this

instance *initiated* the innovation and played a *leading role* in bringing together enterprises interested in participating in the training process and then acting as a *conduit* for the formation of a process whereby they collaborated with industry on the development of the innovation. Thus Regency exemplifies the pro-active approach to ensuring industry experience for learners that Ruiz et al. (2001) proposed in their study. Regency provided many of the resources, particularly in relation to staffing, to support the implementation process. Although outside assistance in the form of funding from *Framing the Future* was forthcoming, the impetus and direction for the innovation was largely driven by staff within the program area with no apparent input from other organisations such as industry training advisory bodies. The registered training organisation in this instance introduced a new way of thinking about learning and assessment to a group of industry representatives and then worked with them to shape the concept into a workable learning and assessment strategy that met the needs of both the industry and the registered training organisation.

The implementation of innovative learning pathways using video streaming by Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE illustrates the role of registered training organisations as *initiators and promoters* of new learning technologies and the critical role that parent organisations (in this case, TAFE Queensland) can play in providing the infrastructure needed for such an initiative. Once again, outside organisations appeared to have played little or no role in the development of this initiative. In one respect, the introduction of this new learning technology did little to ameliorate concerns that various stakeholders held in relation to key aspects of learning and assessment (for example, the industry training advisory body's desire to expand the use of recognition of prior learning and recognition of current competencies processes or the employer's concerns about the use of logbooks as part of the assessment process). It is clear, however, that the innovation reported in this case study did bring significant benefits for the training provider in terms of its capacity to *enhance the accessibility* of training to clients who otherwise would not be able to participate. Staff at the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE illustrate Scollay's (2000) claim that it is 'the ability of the teacher/trainer to develop customised learning strategies' that underpins successful training package implementation.

The case study of Canberra Institute of Technology illustrates how large registered training organisations can re-engineer their internal structures and policies to facilitate the development of innovative learning and assessment pathways across a range of program areas (see Hord 1995). The focus was on the role of management and the need for system-wide change to support the implementation of training packages. This was achieved by the organisation implementing systemic change to key components (curriculum development, professional development and information management) to support the innovations developed by teachers in response to the needs of the specific industries with which they worked. The registered training organisation in this instance acted as an *enabling umbrella* for work undertaken in the individual program areas in a manner that did not proscribe particular ways of working, but nonetheless established the broad educative framework to inform teachers' work.

The organisation also acted as a *change agent* by addressing both the administrative/technical aspects as well as the affective dimensions of the change process through engagement with its staff in ways that enabled them to explore the meaning of change for them in their day-to-day work situations. In addition, Canberra Institute of Technology also acted as a *disseminator of information* to outside organisations which might be affected by the significant changes occurring within the institute.

The role of workplaces

The role of workplaces in the implementation processes varied considerably and was shaped by the nature of the innovation and the proximity of industry to the implementation process. In the cases of Canberra Institute of Technology, Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE and The Outlook

Training and Resource Centre, the role of workplaces was minimal, since the innovations were largely modifying their practices to implement training packages and accredited training. While workplaces were the beneficiaries of these changes, their direct involvement in the planning of the new learning and assessment processes was marginal.

In the case of Canberra Institute of Technology, however, workplaces could be involved in the process of innovation if they chose to participate in the breakfast forums presented by the institute, but otherwise there was no direct role for them to play in the process. Nevertheless, the implementation process established within Canberra Institute of Technology did enable a number of its departments to work in different ways with enterprises. For example, the Tourism Studies Department was implementing the core module, 'Assess tourism opportunities for local communities'. To enable students to complete their learning and assessment for this module through a consultancy activity for the shire council, they entered into a partnership with a local rural community shire. In this instance, learning and assessment practices were integrated with an authentic work task, involving the use of off-campus flexible delivery of training in which the enterprise played a key role in the assessment of students' work.

In contrast, the innovations introduced by Colac Adult and Community Education, Hunter School of the Performing Arts and the Children's Services Program at Regency Institute of TAFE required that workplaces be intimately involved in the implementation process and these case studies furnish insights into the various roles that workplaces can potentially play in partnership with registered training organisations.

The Civic Theatre Newcastle formed a close working partnership with the Hunter School of Performing Arts. The theatre became the primary site for training and assessment. Staff from the theatre were made available to discuss training and assessment practices with teachers from the school. The theatre staff also took considerable responsibility for monitoring the work of students.

The theatre made a considerable commitment to the implementation of the training package through a formalised agreement with the City Council and to ensuring that their staff were trained and qualified to assess students. Within the workplace, employees also had to be willing and prepared to shape workplace practices to accommodate the learning needs of the students.

The workplaces involved with Colac Adult and Community Education were initially positioned as purchasers of services from the organisation. Purchase of these services required the workplaces to co-operate in unique ways, with the end result that each workplace had the ability to manage its own training requirements.

This significant shift was largely due to the willingness of workplaces to allow their work structures and practices to be evaluated to determine their potential as 'sites of learning' for the workers. These work practices and structures then formed the key building blocks in the development of training plans for staff. For example, work rosters and job rotations were used as a mechanism to provide workers with the type of work that would support their learning. A commitment to the training plans also required workplaces to accommodate the occasional need for workers to learn away from their normal worksites. The demand on their resources made by the shift to workplace training (see Moy 2000) does not appear to have been an impediment to these businesses' participation.

Workplaces involved with Colac Adult and Community Education were also challenged to undergo a 'reculturation' (see Fullan 1993, 1999) in relation to their thinking about what was valued as learning and ways in which competence might be assessed. As a result of the innovative processes developed by Colac Adult and Community Education, training was no longer solely associated with learning in off-site environments or on site with a training provider. Learning, work and assessment became, and were perceived as, inextricably linked.

The workplaces involved with Regency Institute of TAFE in the introduction of the learning centre model undertook considerable responsibility in relation to training. Childcare centres collaborated in the design, implementation and evaluation of the model as equal partners with the training provider. Staff within the centres were required to develop qualitatively different types of relationships with students and the institute staff. They were also required to take on modified roles in terms of the ways in which they facilitated learning for students and the input they provided into assessment processes. The childcare centres also had to consider the accommodation required for more students than in the past and the impact this was likely to have on parents and the children in their care.

The case studies at Hunter, Colac and Regency Institute of TAFE depict the various ways in which workplaces can move from the periphery of training workers towards a more central role where they come to work as (potentially) equal partners with training providers. Responsibilities and roles are reworked in the light of agreements about the role each will have in the training of workers. This movement from the periphery to the centre of training activity was also accompanied by a significant shift in thinking about learning and assessment—significant because it forced workplaces to consider the ways in which work practices and structures within their organisations could be more fully utilised to facilitate learning in contrast to traditional approaches which have emphasised off-job sites as the lead players and classrooms as integral to the training effort.

Models of flexibility achieved in the case study sites

Within each of the case study sites, varying degrees of flexibility were achieved. In the cases of The Outlook and Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, the degree of flexibility actually achieved through the innovations was difficult to gauge since these sites were engaged in enhancing existing practices or undertaking activities not previously attempted.

The case study from Canberra Institute of Technology was aimed at engendering the potential for flexibility across all programs offered by the institution through a re-engineering of key structures within the organisation. The examples contained in the case study illustrate how different departments chose to respond to the challenge of implementing training packages and therefore demonstrate the flexibilities that can be achieved in terms of different delivery modes and approaches to assessment (for example, integration of authentic workplace experiences through undertaking 'live' projects within the Tourism program, the development of the practice firm in the Business Services and Technology program and varying mixes of on- and off-the-job training in other areas).

Arguably the greatest flexibility to learning and assessment processes was achieved by Colac Adult and Community Education in their implementation of learning and assessment processes which were integrated into the work practices and structures of the workplaces with which they worked. In addition to supporting workplaces to have qualified staff, the innovation developed by Colac was intended to support the development of learning cultures within organisations (see Fullan 1993; McLaughlin 1998) and therefore required a great deal of flexibility to enable the learning and assessment to be integrated into work practices and processes within a particular worksite.

The Hunter School of Performing Arts provided an example where considerable flexibility in learning and assessment practices was achieved by shifting these processes from the classroom into the workplace. Similarly, the example of Regency Institute's work with childcare centres is indicative of the flexibility that can be gained from more holistic and integrated thinking relating to the tasks of learning and assessment where competencies, rather than learning outcomes, are the critical outcomes.

Challenges and issues in implementing innovative approaches to learning and assessment

A number of challenges related to implementing new approaches to learning and assessment can be gleaned from the analyses of the case studies. These challenges were relatively evenly divided across three main areas:

Challenges associated with availability of resources

✧ the ability to provide a wide range of relevant resources to staff who are working to implement training in workplaces (Colac)

✧ financial resources limiting how flexible an organisation can be in meeting specific workplace needs, and the ways in which funding is provided for training (Colac)

✧ the difficulties in obtaining and maintaining funding when an innovation involves the provision of training in a vocational area not one of those identified by the state education and training department for provision within a region (Hunter)

✧ despite the provision of such enabling technology as video streaming and internet access by the parent organisation, an ongoing need for learners and teachers to meet the costly challenges of travel over huge distances in order to engage in invaluable face-to-face contact (Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE)

✧ a disincentive to cross-border training provision with state-based funding provision (even where it makes geographic sense to provide it and where requests are made to a particular training provider on the basis of their reputation [Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE]).

Challenges associated with relationships between enterprises and training providers

✧ the ability of staff to adjust to new roles and new ways of working with enterprises (Regency)

✧ quality of relationships between staff in the workplace and staff from the training provider (Regency)

✧ partnering with other enterprise-based training providers in order to conduct peer assessment and undertake program development (Outlook)

✧ positive organisational relationships often dependent upon particular personal relationships (that is, where industry admires the drive and enthusiasm of a certain trainer, they may be very supportive of that trainer's initiatives).

Challenges associated with shifting to behaviours that are evidence of new beliefs, values and norms

✧ efficacy of new approaches to provide underpinning knowledge and a set of educationally sound learning experiences for students (Canberra)

✧ acceptance by enterprises and teachers of new approaches (Canberra)

✧ ability of students to cope with the demands of new approaches to learning and assessment (Regency)

✧ perceptions of workers about what is 'real' in terms of learning and assessment—learning and assessment associated with 'sitting in a classroom' (Colac)

✧ lack of clarity associated with the issue of moderation to ensure that assessment is commensurate with the level of qualification being sought across workplaces (Colac)

✧ extra demands placed on parents and teachers to accommodate the demands of learning which often occurs within workplaces and outside of regular school hours (Hunter)

✧ learning to appreciate the value of accredited training in an industry that has previously regarded non-accredited training as sufficient (Outlook).

In addition to these challenges, respondents from each site were also asked to consider a number of issues identified from previous research on training package implementation (see ANTA 2000) as being significant to any implementation process.

Implementing changes to accepted practices of learning and assessment require registered training organisations to inform industry of the changes and promote the innovations as a viable way of meeting industry training needs. Depending on the nature of the innovation, various strategies were employed.

In the cases of Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE and Canberra Institute of Technology where the innovations concentrated on internal processes to enhance or develop new learning and assessment processes, active steps were taken to disseminate information to industry about these changes through the use of newsletters and conducting breakfast forums. Building industry confidence required these organisations to keep industry fully informed of the changes and any potential impacts this might have for industry members.

Where registered training organisations were working closely with industry in the design and implementation of innovations intended to build the confidence of industry, more extensive periods of association with industry was adopted. Hunter School of Performing Arts and Regency Institute of TAFE engaged industry in all stages of the development of the innovation and provided opportunities for industry to partner the institutions. This approach enhanced the value of the contribution that each could make to the intended outcomes. The efforts in the case of Regency Institute of TAFE to equalise the power relationships between the TAFE institute and the enterprises they were engaged with is of particular note. In this instance, the staff at Regency realistically assessed the power relationship between themselves and their enterprise partners as being unequal (they, as a registered training organisation, knew more about the new policy directions and the strategies required to deliver the intended outcomes of these policies) and took active steps to diminish the potential negative impacts of this imbalance through strategies such as the engagement of an external consultant to support the development of the innovation. In this manner, both the registered training provider and the enterprises were able to participate in ways which 'gave permission' for all parties to critique the proposed innovation and to have equal opportunity to shape the outcome of the innovation process.

Building confidence of industry was enhanced by training organisations considering carefully the ways in which the current innovation could be linked with, or was related to, previous learning and assessment practices within the industry. This action implicitly acknowledged the importance of building on existing practices as a starting point for the change process. Enterprises within the childcare industry were already familiar with the concept of student placements. The model for developing learning centres built on this established and accepted practice.

All of the training organisations included in the case studies were able to capitalise on their well-established reputations with their industries as a means of building support for their innovative practices. Sponsorship by key industry bodies (The Outlook Training and Resource Centre) and attention to issues relating to the qualifications and expertise of staff (Colac Adult and Community Education) were also seen as crucial elements in boosting the confidence of industry. Furthermore, Colac Adult and Community Education demonstrated an appreciation of the key features of their innovation (particularly in relation to assessment) which had the potential to actively impact most on industry acceptance, promoting the validity and rigour of their new approaches to assessment to industry.

Where the innovative learning and assessment practices were providing an alternative pathway to achieving existing qualifications (for example Colac and Regency), training organisations needed to ensure that equity was maintained between these alternatives. This issue, however, had received little if any attention from the training providers. Staff interviewed from Colac Adult and Community Education believed that this issue would be addressed through the adoption of a moderation system to be developed and implemented in the near future. Since Colac was concerned with tailoring of learning and assessment pathways for each organisation they worked with, this issue of equity amongst alternatives was a particularly pressing one.

Monitoring quality was a key issue for all training organisations involved in each of the case studies. Processes to establish continuous evaluation processes (The Outlook, Regency and Hunter) were key strategies. In addition, Regency had implemented the use of common assessment tools and regular meetings of staff working across sites to ensure quality was monitored across multiple implementation sites. Through the development of its centralised processes relating to curriculum development, staff development and reporting systems, individual programs at Canberra Institute of Technology were able to respond flexibly to the demands of training packages within an overall quality framework.

Across most case study sites the capacity to innovate was enhanced through the ability of staff to acquire additional resources from outside sources. The Outlook was provided with a range of resources via the mentoring arrangements with industry bodies. Additional funds were sourced from state education and training authorities (Hunter School of Performing Arts, Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE) and through the *Framing the future* initiative (Regency).

Conclusions and lessons

Training packages are still in their relative infancy, with many issues pertaining to their implementation requiring attention. This study therefore aimed to investigate the extent to which new and flexible approaches to learning, training delivery and assessment have been facilitated by the implementation of training packages. Specifically, the key objectives of the study were to:

✦ assess the extent to which training packages have influenced the implementation of new and more flexible approaches to learning, training delivery and assessment

✦ analyse specific instances where innovative approaches have been introduced to learning, training delivery and assessment practices as a result of the implementation of training packages

✦ evaluate strategies and processes which will assist registered training organisations to facilitate alternative pathways via the use of training packages.

The study was based on six case studies spread across four Australian states/territories. The case study methodology is an approach to research which utilises semi-ethnographic research methods to obtain and portray a 'rich' descriptive account of meanings and experiences of people in an identified social setting. Where the intention of the research is to help people to understand 'what it is like to be there' (such as implementing training packages in a registered training organisation), then those people are seen to be the key audience for the research report. Therefore a research approach and reporting style that will promote a rich and holistic understanding is important. The portrayal report should describe the context so that 'the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events' (Burns 1994, p.313) are retained.

One common issue raised about case studies, however, is generalisability:

> The case study has no handy measures of generalizability. The issue in the end is related to what the user is trying to learn from the case study. The differences in sites do not necessarily make the case study irrelevant in all but the site studied. Rather, the case study should provide enough detail and description about the uniqueness of the case study site so that the user can determine the differences and similarities between the case study site and his/her own site.
>
> (Spirer 1980, p.16)

To that end, therefore, this report has attempted to portray 'thick' descriptions of innovative approaches in discrete settings and provide an understanding of different actors' viewpoints on those innovative approaches in their own organisations. The differences and similarities between the case study sites and their own sites are left to the readers of this report to determine. The key points and lessons from these six case studies which may assist readers in their judgement-making processes follow.

Towards a model for developing innovative learning and assessment strategies using training packages

Training packages are an example of large-scale reform that has resulted in fundamentally different relationships being realised between registered training organisations and the industries they serve. With their emphasis on competencies and demonstrated competence in the workplace, training packages offer the potential for new and more flexible approaches to learning and assessment. By

replacing nationally accredited curricula with competency standards and assessment frameworks (underpinned by a variety of support materials), registered training organisations have been provided with the tools to develop new learning and assessment pathways more responsive to the needs of industry and more closely linked to the localised contexts in which enterprises operate.

These case studies illustrate how a variety of different organisations were able to develop a range of innovative practices, including: providing alternatives to institution-based training; improving existing training delivery mechanisms to enhance flexibility and access for students; and creating new learning and assessment pathways.

The case studies show how training packages were implemented in a variety of ways and acted, to varying degrees, as catalysts for the development of innovative approaches to learning and assessment. For three organisations, training packages opened up profoundly new ways of providing training and assessment services. The case studies of the other organisations illustrate the ongoing change process that has been occurring in public VET organisations since the early 1990s and how new approaches to learning and assessment have grown out of fundamental re-organisations of these institutions.

In each of these case studies, the implementation of training packages stimulated changes to learning and assessment. The implementation of training packages also led to changed roles for registered training organisations, industry bodies and enterprises. The case studies illustrate the various ways in which workplaces can move from the periphery of training workers towards a more central role where they come to work as (potentially) equal partners with training providers. Responsibilities and roles are reworked in the light of agreements about the contributions each will make to the training of workers. This movement from the periphery to the centre of training activity was also accompanied by a significant shift in thinking about learning and assessment, particularly significant because it forced workplaces to consider the ways in which work practices and structures within their organisations could be more fully utilised to facilitate learning. The case studies serve to depict the varying degrees of flexibility that were achieved.

This study illustrates how teachers and trainers work at the local level to realise innovation and change to learning and assessment pathways. In these case studies, a range of staff from across registered training organisations (often in partnership with enterprises and other key industry bodies) assumed positions as creators of new assessment and learning pathways. Each organisation had developed sophisticated responses to the demands and opportunities afforded them by training packages.

It is not enough for organisations to 'manage' the change process. The concept of 'management' suggested an order and logic about the process rarely found in the everyday actions of teachers and trainers charged with making innovations a reality. Organisations described in the case studies had found ways of supporting their staff to innovate. Teachers and trainers were able to articulate shifts in thinking, acting, beliefs and norms that underpinned the innovations they had developed and implemented. They were able to 'move' with the emerging demands of the innovation as it evolved from conception through development and implementation.

Therefore, teachers' and trainers' work in implementing new approaches to learning and assessment are essentially the 'outputs' of the innovation process. The case studies analysed in this report provide some significant examples of how different ways of working emerged from actions to effect changes in the ways learning and assessment might be implemented. A model representing the processes that enabled teachers and trainers to develop innovative learning and assessment strategies using training packages is presented in figure 7. The series of interconnecting boxes in the figure represent the enabling processes, without which the impetus for innovation would be lost. Management or the collaborative efforts of groups of people sensitive to the emerging needs and policy directions within the VET sector usually, but not always, initiate these enabling processes. The model acknowledges the central role that policy directions play in

PRESSURE AND SUPPORT FOR CHANGE ──────────────────▶

| ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENT TO BUILD CONTEXT-SPECIFIC INNOVATION |
| ⇕ |
| SENSITIVE ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT OF INNOVATION ON ALL PARTIES (INCLUDING VALUES AND NORMS) |
| ⇕ |
| ENGAGEMENT OF ALL PARTIES AFFECTED BY THE INNOVATION |
| ⇕ |
| KEY PERSON/GROUP TO 'CHAMPION' AND DRIVE CHANGE PROCESS |

POLICY DIRECTIONS/MANDATE FOR CHANGE

| ASSESSMENT OF TECHNICAL, FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR IMPLEMENTATION |
| ⇕ |
| ASSESSMENT OF INNOVATION AND LINKS TO EXISTING PRACTICES |
| ⇕ |
| SYSTEM AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT |
| ⇕ |
| APPROPRIATE AND TIMELY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT |

INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS/ TRAINERS WORKING WITH NEW LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

INNOVATION

◀──────── CONTINUOUS MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESSES WHICH FEED BACK TO INFORM DEVELOPMENT ────────▶
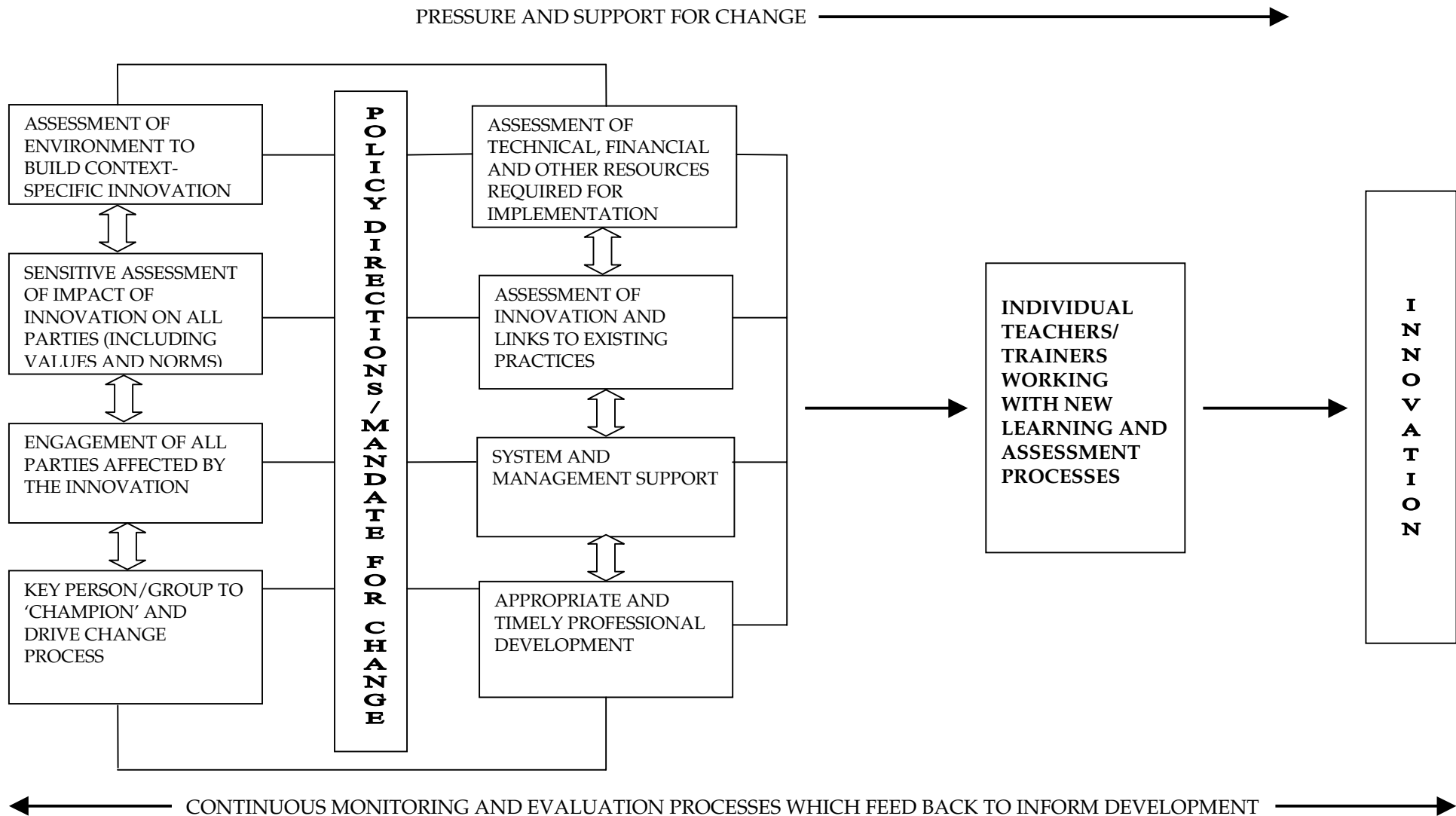
Figure 7: A model of the processes in developing innovative learning and assessment strategies using training packages

innovation within the VET sector where educational change, more often than not, is mandated 'from above'. The interconnectedness of the enabling elements attempts to capture the dynamics in the series of interrelated processes used to form an 'innovation web'—the point of connection between the various influencing and influenced components of the process. The model attempts to acknowledge the fluid context in which registered training organisations operate and the need for continual evaluation and for both pressures and support needed to catalyse and make innovative practices a reality in the working lives of teachers. The model also confirms the importance of the affective dimension in the change process and the need to attend to the beliefs, values and norms that are often challenged when new ways of working are emerging over time. The importance of connecting innovation with previous practices is also highlighted.

The model is predicated upon the belief that teachers and trainers should be positioned to act as creators rather than as receivers of innovations—a role realised when teachers and trainers have the opportunity to work in spaces supportive of their autonomy and which afford them the power to make change in order that they can realise alternative outcomes for themselves and the enterprises in which they work. Innovation arises organically out of a system where management provides the strands within the web to link actions of teachers across time and location. In other words, management acts as an integrating force by providing the organisational systems and functions to support teachers to work innovatively.

Some questions to be considered when designing innovative approaches to learning and assessment

From analysis of these case studies, the researchers have identified some critical questions that need to be asked *and* answered when considering the introduction of innovative approaches to learning and assessment through training package implementation. These questions include:

✧ Will the innovative approaches work? Are they feasible, practical? Has the approach been piloted?

✧ What will they cost? Can the organisation afford it? Can the learners afford it?

✧ What level of support (human, financial, infrastructure) is available? Positive outcomes cannot be sustained in the absence of ongoing funding. Professional development, infrastructure upgrades and training and assessment resource development all require financial support.

✧ How will the learning needs of the learners be met?

✧ How may the existing skills of current teachers/trainers best be used in the new approach? There are many different types of teacher/trainer, just as there are many different types of learner.

✧ Have the teachers/trainers had previous experience that will help equip them to take on this new approach? For example, teachers/trainers who have had previous experience with competency-based training and assessment have commented that this has assisted them with the uptake of training packages. If not, what professional development can be made available for them?

✧ Are learning outcomes for learners better than under the previous approaches?

✧ Can the registered training organisation assure quality of delivery and assessment across different settings?

✧ Have potential risk factors been identified?

✧ Will this approach receive the support of industry and of local and national industry training advisory bodies?

✧ How will the approach be evaluated once it is implemented?

✧ How committed is the organisation to making changes to the innovation in response to feedback?

Lessons learnt from the case study sites

The six case studies examined in this report provide examples of the ways in which training packages, both directly and indirectly, have fostered new ways for registered training organisations to do business. A number of lessons can be derived from these case study experiences to guide those wishing to design innovative approaches to learning and assessment. These are presented in summary form below, with examples from each of the case studies to illustrate the factors in action.

A sensitive reading of the environment will promote innovation that is context-specific and most amenable to adoption. This includes an assessment of costs and benefits in terms of human, financial, physical resources available/needed as well as the business environment.

Staff from the Regency Institute of TAFE and Colac Adult and Community Education were able to develop innovative approaches to learning and assessment that were amenable to the environments in which the organisations were operating. Each organisation undertook a detailed analysis of the context and was cognisant of the potentially inhibiting and enabling factors. These training organisations were also sensitive to industry needs and were able to determine with relative accuracy the best way to innovate in order to build on existing practices and to reduce any resistance they might encounter. Staff from Regency and Colac also emphasised the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the context as a means of acting pro-actively, rather than reactively, to any issues that might arise during the innovation process.

Most innovations associated with the implementation of flexible approaches to learning and assessment required significant shifts in attitudes, values, beliefs and norms. Attention to these affective dimensions of the change process, in addition to the financial, technical and other requirements associated with the innovation, is an important component of the implementation process.

Almost all case studies illustrate that reforms such as training packages challenge the ways in which people think about learning and assessment processes. Staff from both enterprises and training organisations needed to come to terms with new ideas about how learning might be facilitated and how assessment of this learning might be undertaken. Students, staff and parents involved in the introduction of the VET-in-schools program at Hunter School of Performing Arts all had to come to terms with learning in the workplace and the ramifications of making this shift. The implementation of work-based learning by Colac offered significant challenges to workers in the disability field who were used to equating training with classrooms and tests. Teachers working in the childcare program at Regency Institute of TAFE had to change significantly their ideas about relationships with their industry, including the ways in which they interacted with industry-based staff in training students. The concerns of all parties involved in these case studies were taken into account throughout the implementation process using a range of strategies, including regular meetings (Regency), extended efforts to explain the implications and impact of the innovation (Regency, Colac) and ensuring that time was dedicated to attending to concerns and issues as they arose. The provision of opportunities for staff to explore creatively and discuss the likely impacts of the implementation of training packages and the creation of an environment in which shifts in attitudes could evolve were at the core of the Canberra Institute change management strategy.

Innovation always builds on previous practice (even to the extent that it may supplant previous ways of operating). Linking innovation to previous practices is a key to facilitating the transition from one set of practices to another. Implicit in this concept is an acknowledgement of the shifts in power and the potential for conflict that can accompany such transitions.

Across all case study sites, registered training organisations started the process of innovation by building on existing practices that were familiar to industry and to the staff who would be involved in implementing the new approaches. At Regency Institute of TAFE the development of the learning centre model was based on well-established practices associated with work placements in industry. Similarly, the extension of flexible delivery to encompass video streaming at Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE and the innovations developed across the various program areas in Canberra Institute of Technology built upon well-established practices already familiar to industry. The development of accredited training at The Outlook and the innovation practices developed by Colac were facilitated in part by these organisations being recognised within their industries as quality training providers. New initiatives incorporating the use of training packages built upon these relationships and established ways of providing training to learners.

The implementation processes described in the case studies illustrate the ways in which various parties, including industry, negotiated their roles within the new approaches to learning and assessment. The experiences of Regency Institute of TAFE, Hunter School of Performing Arts and Colac Adult and Community Education illustrate the shifts in power that occurred as these training organisations worked with industry to realise alternative ways of delivering accredited training. In all of these cases, the training providers were challenged to share power with their industry partners in ways that required all parties to take on new responsibilities and to work in ways that were considerably different, but not totally unrelated, to previous practices.

Strategies which enable enterprises/industry to be involved from the early stages of development on an equal basis with the training provider promote ownership and a sense that each has an equal stake in and responsibility for the innovation (in contrast to a situation where enterprises/industry is approached in a last step in the innovation process when the ultimate shape and outcomes are already determined).

This factor is best exemplified by the actions of staff within the Regency Institute of TAFE Children's Services Program where they made a deliberate decision to work with industry in ways which created opportunities for industry to engage in the shaping of the innovation from the outset. The role of a teacher on the management board of the Civic Theatre provided a valuable starting point for Hunter School of Performing Arts to involve the theatre in the provision of their VET-in-schools program. Colac Adult and Community Education held discussions with other service providers very early in the development of their innovation to ascertain views on the perceived challenges and needs of the organisations in relation to providing accredited training for their staff.

Professional development is an integral component of the innovation process.

All the case studies are notable for their emphasis on the provision of professional development for staff involved in the innovation process. This professional development included a wide range of activities. Some were offered at the early stages of the implementation process (for example, opportunities for staff to obtain a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, staff training to operate the video conferencing facility), while other case studies (for example, Canberra Institute of Technology and Regency Institute of TAFE) provided models of professional development that supported teachers and trainers over the implementation period. At The Outlook Training and Resource Centre, the training and development plans of staff were integrated into the organisational plan to ensure that these plans were linked with the growth and expansion of the innovation over time.

Innovations may require students to develop strategies to cope with new demands relating to their learning. A sensitive assessment of the impact of the innovation on learners over time is an important part of the innovation process.

The implementation of work-based learning pathways by Colac Adult and Community Education presented a number of challenges for the workers involved in this new way of gaining

qualifications. They had to come to terms with different ways of thinking about learning that did not include the traditional classroom and time-serving methods. Similarly, staff within Children's Services at Regency Institute were alerted to some of the issues concerning integration of students with staff at childcare centres. In both these instances, the innovations placed new (or different) demands on students, and teachers and trainers needed to be sensitive to these demands and develop appropriate interventions to facilitate the desired outcomes. Learners at the Hunter School of Performing Arts were required to accept the shift from training occurring in a classroom environment to training occurring in the workplace. This change provided challenges such as the need to develop employability skills (for instance, punctuality, suitability of personal presentation and customer service skills) which are generally not required of classroom-based learners to the same extent. Learners also had to adapt to training being delivered by a diverse range of trainers, including technicians at the theatre, and out of school hours, as well as to ungraded assessments based purely on their demonstration of competence.

Implementation needs to be underpinned by evaluation processes that are committed to using learning/feedback from early implementation experiences to ensure the ongoing improvement of the innovation.

Staff involved with all of the innovations demonstrated a receptiveness to receiving feedback on the progress of their implementation processes. A range of strategies were used including:

✧ 'internal moderation systems' and management reviews (Colac Adult and Community Education)

✧ regular feedback after each training program (The Outlook Training and Resource Centre)

✧ designated period of time to 'pilot' the innovation with accompanying formalised feedback processes from all parties involved in the implementation process (Regency Institute of TAFE Children's Services Program, departments within Canberra Institute of Technology)

✧ implementation of formal quality assurance processes and regular discussions between all parties involved in the delivery of training and assessment (Hunter School of Performing Arts)

A key group or person who will 'champion' and 'drive' the innovation development and implementation process is essential.

The case study at Canberra Institute offers excellent illustration of the importance of identifying key people within an organisational structure who are necessary to drive the innovation process. Senior faculty staff, the Curriculum Coordinators' Network, the Assessment Coordinators' Network and the establishment of a Training Package Implementation Task Force within the Curriculum and Accreditation Services Department provided the institution with a network of persons whose role it was to drive the implementation process.

At the more localised level, individuals played a key role in the implementation process. Within the Children's Services Program at Regency Institute, one staff member was designated to drive the change process. This key person was able to devote time to managing the change process and was available to deal with issues as they were raised. This also provided enterprises involved in the learning centres with an identified contact point during the implementation process to deal with any of their concerns and questions in a timely and responsive manner. At Colac the senior manager had been the main driver for that institution's innovation and had assembled a motivated team focussed on ensuring that the new approach was effectively implemented. In the Hunter School it was the teachers who saw the training opportunity presented by the introduction of the Entertainment Training Package and who successfully championed the cause within a broader system which had been unsupportive of its introduction because it fell outside the training profile of the region.

System and management support are essential if the innovation development and implementation processes are to be sustained over time.

All organisations involved in the case studies were able to obtain system and/or management support for their initiatives. The degree to which management was engaged in the innovation process depended, to some extent, on the size of the organisation. Clearly, however, management played a role in providing opportunity and support for new initiatives to be fostered and tried. The case study undertaken at the Canberra Institute of TAFE illustrates the extensive management and system support that was mustered in support of their departments working to implement flexible and responsive approaches to learning and assessment.

Time is an important factor in the innovation process. Individuals need time to experiment, plan, discuss issues and so on. Time is also needed to allow individuals to become familiar with the innovation and to absorb new values, beliefs and norms. Calls for constant change can destabilise implementation processes and lead to staff becoming change-weary.

All the case studies are notable for the importance placed on the amount of time made available to support the innovation process. The learning centre model in the Regency Institute case study was only piloted after a six-month preparation period. Similarly, department-level implementation of training packages at Canberra Institute was preceded by an extensive period of awareness-raising and a one-day forum to prepare staff for their work as training packages came online. Some trainers, such as those at the Hunter School, were prepared to drive the innovative process through to implementation at great personal cost by giving their own time to plan, develop and implement the process, even though they were not receiving institutional support.

While timeframes for the implementation process varied in each of the case studies and were clearly linked to key characteristics of the innovation (such as their extent and complexity), all sites showed a keen awareness of the importance of planning and preparation for all staff involved in the innovation prior to its implementation.

Support and pressure are both needed to give the implementation process momentum. Support without some pressure will not lead to change; pressure alone will lead to resistance.

The case studies provide ample evidence of the support being provided for the implementation process. Staff development, forums and resources were all mentioned as essential to support teachers and trainers to implement change. In addition, however, pressure was also applied to ensure that teachers and trainers would be involved in the change process. The illustration of the teacher who did not appear to fit into the learning centre she/he had been assigned to provides an example where pressure (in the form of counselling and shifting the teacher to another childcare centre) was exerted in support of the change process. Colac's moves to provide internet-based resources for its staff is another instance where a subtle change to established practices provided 'pressure' for staff to act in different ways in support of the change process. Support provided to Hunter staff by Arts Training NSW inspired them to take on the challenge of pioneering the introduction of a program which lay outside the approved seven vocational areas for the region.

Evidence of the implementation of new approaches to learning and assessment arise from individual teachers'/trainers' activities. In order to foster change, organisations need to think about the ways in which they can link all these individual efforts into a coherent 'web of innovation'.

While management systems clearly framed and supported the development and implementation of the innovative practices described in these case studies, significant change was ultimately realised in the work of teachers and trainers employed within each of the organisations. They were asked to change their practices in order that the flexible approaches to assessment and learning could be realised in practice. The Canberra Institute approach provided an organisational framework to link the efforts of individuals within a coherent, re-engineered training system. This approach contrasted with that taken at most sites, particularly the large institutional providers, where the efforts of individuals occurred largely in isolation and were not so evidently part of a coherent system.

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Appendices

Appendix A:
The case studies in detail

The six case studies:

1. Canberra Institute of Technology, ACT

2. Hunter School of Performing Arts, NSW

3. Regency Institute of TAFE, SA

4. Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, Qld.

5. The Outlook Training and Resource Centre, Qld.

6. Colac Adult and Community Education, Vic.

The backgrounds, the innovations and their impacts on learning and assessment, and the diagrammatic representations of the implementation processes are presented in the third section of the report. To obtain a complete picture of each of these case studies, the reader needs to read *both* that third section *and* appendix A.

Case study 1:
Canberra Institute of Technology

The implementation process

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) developed a comprehensive plan to underpin the implementation of training packages. The plan comprised four main processes: awareness-raising and information-sharing; professional development for departmental staff; curriculum processes; and system support. This 'top-down' approach has provided a clear framework for training package implementation across the institute; however, the departments delivering the training have developed the actual implementation strategies and this has resulted in a very diverse range of training and assessment models being used across the institute.

Process 1: Awareness-raising and information-sharing

Awareness-raising and information-sharing was facilitated, in part, by breakfast forums. These forums were well attended by a broad range of people. Eight breakfast forums in total were held. About half the people attending were institute staff, with the remainder being other training providers, Office of Training and Adult Education and industry representatives. The format for the breakfast forums generally involved a keynote address covering broad issues, followed by workshops to consider more detailed issues.

Information about the impact of training packages in the institute was also disseminated via briefings to senior faculty staff at faculty management meetings. The briefings precipitated discussion about strategic planning issues and ways to prepare departmental staff for the significant amount of change required to achieve successful implementation of training packages.

Briefing sessions for all levels of departmental staff were also conducted within faculties. These sessions provided a forum for staff at the departmental level to discuss the impact of training packages and to explore fundamental issues such as delivery and assessment strategies.

The Curriculum Coordinators' Network was a useful vehicle for institute-wide information dissemination. The network comprised representatives from every faculty within the institute. Members discussed topics including: learning pathways and training packages; servicing issues; academic record management systems and processes; trade certification; library resourcing and organisational learning.

The Assessment Coordinators' Group also played a major role in working through the impact that training package implementation would have on assessment processes, formulating responses and policy and then disseminating the information to all institute staff.

The Curriculum and Accreditation Services Department set up a training package Implementation Task Force. The output from the task force included information sessions for management, technical, administrative and teaching staff from all areas of the organisation. The work of the task force culminated in the facilitation of a training package implementation forum (a full day). This forum was immensely valuable as a vehicle for the institute to engage with industry in the process of working through major operational issues relating to training package implementation and resulted in both the Canberra Institute of Technology and industry representatives having a better

understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the implementation process. This allowed staff to approach training package implementation during 2000 with greater confidence that they understood firstly, the impact that training packages would have on the training process, and secondly, how delivery and assessment would be affected by the shift to training package-based training.

A second forum (a half-day) was convened to explore complex issues such as collaborative delivery models; literacy issues; workplace and general assessment issues, and evidence gathering to support the assessment of competence for on-job learners.

 Student information also comprised part of the training package implementation strategy. Existing students were briefed by teachers about the impact of training packages and the transition arrangements for students moving from existing programs to training package-based programs.

An additional *Framing the Future* project extended the professional development activity at the institute by focussing on a range of implementation issues such as library resourcing, servicing, record keeping, administrative/technical staff involvement and management of staff.

Process 2: Professional development for departmental staff

Action learning groups

The main focus of this process was to give departmental staff the opportunity to think through issues involved in training package implementation in their particular areas and to formulate strategies and changes to existing delivery and assessment processes to bring them into line with the requirements of training packages.

Reasons for the selection of the action learning group model of professional development included the following.

✧ The older model for professional development involved centrally developed programs and was not seen as an appropriate approach to prepare staff for the institute-wide training package implementation process.

✧ The action learning group approach to professional development was perceived to be suited to meeting the variety of professional development needs of the departmental staff and it was anticipated that staff would regard it as relevant. Consequently, more staff would participate in this type of professional development than they would have done under the old model.

✧ The action learning group approach allowed departmental teams to be given release time to focus on real and immediate training package implementation issues that the departments were facing.

The action learning group process commenced with the action learning group program manager visiting each department and presenting an information session to staff as well as providing them with an information kit. Part of the aim of these sessions was to assist departmental staff to accept that there was a real need for the institute to change the way it operated. These sessions also provided an opportunity for staff to outline the nature of the intended project to the program manager.

Different action learning group models were developed according to staff, departmental and faculty needs. Individual areas varied widely according to how much experience they had of the use of competency standards, the strength of their links to industry and whether they had experience with off-campus training. The focus of the action learning groups was tailored accordingly.

Fifteen action learning groups were set up in 1999 and a further nine in 2000, across a broad range of discipline areas including metals and engineering, general construction, administration, printing and graphic arts, financial services, community services, tourism, hospitality, information

technology, horticulture, veterinary nursing, automotive, beauty therapy, electrical, electronics, laboratory science, library, museum, retail management, and the sport and fitness.

Action learning groups contributed to the training package implementation process by the generation of interest in, and strategies for development of, innovative delivery models, teaching and learning resources, and assessment strategies. Action learning groups assisted in the establishment of more effective communication processes within and across departments. They also facilitated the development of staff in relation to knowledge of national and international trends in VET.

Participation in action learning groups benefitted individual staff by assisting in their progression from general awareness of training packages, to investigation and critical appraisal of innovative approaches to complex implementation problems. Action learning groups supported the establishment of an iterative process for identifying specific issues and addressing more complex challenges relating to delivery, assessment, resources, recording, and reporting results. Group participants had a heightened awareness of the range of applications of institute information management systems and benefitted from the consideration of a wider range of staff development needs such as working in teams and managing change. Participation in groups also assisted in the development of skills in areas such as written communication, interpersonal communication, time management, project management, information technology, instructional design and presentation skills.

In contrast, staff from areas that did not have the opportunity to participate in an action learning group, such as the Commercial Cookery area, have commented that they had very little prior notice that training package-based training was about to commence and felt they were not given adequate support and resources to develop new programs.

The 'Training Packages 2000' link on the Canberra Institute of Technology's website (http://www.cit.act.edu.au) provides information about the year 2000 implementation program. This website was developed as part of the Year 2000 professional development program for training package implementation at the institute.

Virtual forum

The institute conducted an online virtual forum focussing on training package implementation issues during 2000. One of the main aims of the forum was to publicise the work being done by the action learning groups.

Workplace assessor training

One of the anticipated major impacts of the implementation of training packages was the expectation that departmental staff would need to engage in work-based training and workplace assessment. In response to this, teaching and support staff were given the opportunity to develop workplace assessor skills during 1999. The institute provided funding for staff to participate in a training course leading to the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training.

Process 3: Curriculum processes

The advent of training packages has had a major impact on curriculum development processes within the TAFE system. Delivery issues have traditionally dominated new program planning processes at the Canberra Institute of Technology and assessment issues have subsequently been formulated to support the selected delivery models. The advent of training packages has shifted the emphasis so that assessment has become the primary focus of program planning, and delivery models have been formulated to support the assessment requirements of new programs.

It was realised, early on in the planning process for training package implementation, that a single curriculum model would not be appropriate to meet the diverse range of training needs across the institute. Individual discipline areas vary markedly according to their curriculum and delivery/assessment needs. For instance, the implementation strategy for the Horticulture Training Package differs from the implementation strategy for the Business Services Training Package. The institute tailored the development of curriculum to meet the needs of the individual discipline areas. This discipline-based approach is seen as a major strength of the Canberra Institute of Technology implementation strategy.

The flexible implementation process for training packages at the Canberra Institute of Technology allows for:

✧ assessment of individual competencies

✧ assessment of competencies within a modular delivery framework

✧ use of a holistic approach to assessment where several competencies may be assessed concurrently through a project-based or event-based approach

✧ amalgamation of small competencies or for the segmentation of large competencies

✧ 'capstone' assessments where students initially complete several modules and then eventually move to an integrated assessment event which, once successfully completed, will result in students being awarded competence.

The 'capstone' assessment would typically pose a real workplace problem and would require the students to demonstrate competence in the specific competencies being assessed. It also allows students to demonstrate work readiness in being able to use their competencies in an integrated fashion, as well as cope with the broader workplace demands such as time and contingency management.

The specification of learning pathways is a critical element of the curriculum approach at the institute. Learning pathways are developed for the whole range of qualifications included within a particular training package. It should be noted that learning pathways are, in the institute context, therefore not structured around the needs of individual learners.

An individualised learning pathway is designed for each training package qualification according to the needs of the industry sector. Traditional trade areas are more likely to opt for programs based solely on competencies whereas vocational areas with a more general focus are more likely to opt for module-based programs.

When students are enrolled into modular programs, competencies are carefully mapped to modules. A dual reporting system is used for results, so that students are given results against modules, as well as against competencies. This is regarded as a value-adding approach because competencies are still assessed according to industry standards, but underpinning knowledge and more generic skills, such as problem-solving skills, can also be given emphasis.

The Canberra Institute of Technology has developed its own implementation guides, which outline the learning pathway students must complete in order for a qualification to be awarded. The implementation guides are comprehensive documents outlining the whole process required for the implementation of specific training packages and give particular emphasis to assessment issues.

One of the major advantages of defining a learning pathway is that it assists in the process of negotiating credit transfer arrangements with universities. It has been critically important for the institute to produce evidence that supports the claim that underpinning knowledge has been clearly documented and remains an integral part of courses during these negotiations.

Process 4: System support

The Canberra Institute of Technology uses the Banner student information management system. The system was purchased prior to the implementation of training packages at the institute and was therefore set up for enrolment of students in modular programs. Some departments have moved to enrolling students in, and issuing results directly against, competencies. Consequently, the Banner system was modified to allow students to receive results against competencies. However, not all departments have adopted this approach and many have developed modular programs in which competencies are embedded. Sometimes there is a one-to-one relationship between modules and competencies, but in other instances several modules may need to be completed before competence is awarded. The Banner system has subsequently been amended to cope with the situation where students need to complete several subjects and then a 'capstone' subject in order to trigger the awarding of a particular competency. The system also generates accurate and current progress reports to assist students to ascertain their progress towards achievement of competence. The curriculum team has worked closely with the Banner team to sort through this complex range of problems, as they constitute a critical part of the training package implementation strategy.

Issues and how they were addressed in the implementation process

Issue	How implementation processes addressed the issue
Small business was not well informed about the detail concerning training packages or the responsibilities involved when enterprises take on workplace-based learners	• information sessions, mailouts and meetings with local enterprises and employer groups to inform them of the implications of training packages and to clarify their roles and responsibilities in the new training environment
Inadequate learning resource development to support on-job and flexible delivery strategies	• development of learning resources with funds from within existing budgets or, alternatively, minimal use of flexible and on-job delivery models
Lack of support for staff engaged in workplace assessment and inability of existing teacher management systems to recognise and account for time spent doing workplace assessment and flexible delivery	• ongoing negotiations at the department/faculty level and with unions to develop new systems to account for teachers' time and to ensure that they can get access to institute vehicles when they are required to engage in workplace assessment and flexible delivery activities
Significant change in the role of teachers, particularly in relation to the large increase in administrative work associated with work-based learners	• increased flexibility in the structure of training delivery so that administrative work does not become an additional unpaid burden on teachers
Lack of funding to support the additional cost of flexible delivery and year-round enrolments	• setting of minimum class sizes to maintain financial viability of programs and modification of teachers' working conditions to better suit flexible delivery models
The need for the administrative system to be able to record results for students enrolled in modules only, competencies only, grouped competencies or a blend of models	• modification of the student information management system to accommodate the diverse range of assessment models
Questions over the validity of assessment of competence in a simulated environment	• negotiations with industry training advisory bodies and employer groups to reach agreement on which competencies can be assessed in a simulated environment and which must be assessed on the job
The existence of small businesses that cannot support the delivery of the full range of competencies specified within training packages on the job	• adoption of a training model that identifies the range of competencies that particular enterprises can deliver and the provision of on-campus training to deliver competencies that cannot be done on the job

Stakeholder perspectives

It has become evident from the stakeholder interviews that although the Canberra Institute of Technology has used an institute-wide framework to underpin the strategy for the implementation of training packages, there has been a very diverse range of outcomes at the departmental level due to the highly individual characteristics of the departmental training delivery profiles and the industry groups whose training needs they service.

Senior manager's perspective

A senior manager with an active involvement in the curriculum area at the institute indicated that training packages are regarded as having diversified the outcomes of training but need to be implemented in the context of broader learning pathways. Training packages have been sold as complete off-the-shelf products. However, in a large institution like the Canberra Institute of Technology, a more systematic approach, such as the learning pathway approach to training delivery, is needed.

There was a range of influences that coincided to produce the outcomes of the implementation process. Some relate solely to implementation of training packages and some relate to the different funding arrangements for new apprenticeships, but the net impact of both has been a lot of work-based training delivery for new apprentices and perhaps less formal structured training at the institute.

The focus on current industry training requirements in training packages does not necessarily assist students with what they may need in the future and the development of a positive attitude to lifelong learning.

Presentations to and liaison with interstate providers have assisted the institute's objective of attaining national consistency in training package implementation.

Curriculum and accreditation services' perspective

The main shift that has occurred with the introduction of training packages is that educators no longer drive the process of deciding what makes up a qualification, and, as a consequence, the importance of underpinning knowledge is generally not clearly emphasised or explicitly documented in training packages. There is a lack of higher order, generic competencies, such as problem solving, critical thinking, communication, information technology and team work skills. The specification of learning pathways has been used to sharpen the focus of programs and to address these issues.

The reality has not kept pace with the rhetoric regarding important systemic support issues such as: the allocation of occupational codes for programs and national discipline codes for units of competency; the accuracy and currency of information on the National Training Information System; and the notification of upgrades to training packages. This has caused frustrations and inefficiencies during the curriculum development process.

Training package implementation has only been successful because committed teachers have worked tirelessly to support their implementation and have changed the way they work, assess, deliver training, give feedback to students and the way they engage with industry. They have done it because they can cope with change and they could see the advantages in training packages.

> What we've got to do is prepare people to be educated. Sure they've got to have the competencies to do the job today, but they have got to have the underpinning knowledge and skills to let them do the job today, and also, so that they can design tomorrow's job.

Professional development project managers' perspectives

Professional development project manager 1

This project manager's main role was the facilitation of the action learning groups during 1999 and 2000.

The approach to professional development for the implementation of training packages had to be a hands-on approach and it had to reach the teachers who were going to be directly involved in delivering the training. The action learning group approach has proved to be an effective professional development framework to assist teachers to work through training package implementation issues specific to their area of expertise. It has also helped to refocus teachers' thinking to focus firstly on assessment and secondly on delivery issues, which is necessary in the training package environment.

Teachers from the trade areas, who had been using competency standards previously, found it much easier to adjust to the changes required for training package implementation than teachers from areas which had not been using competency standards.

> … moving from the language of modules and learning programs to a Training Package with units of competency and all of the language that that entails, was a big shift for a lot of teachers, particularly if they hadn't up until then been required to liaise in any direct way with employers.

The level of resistance to the implementation of training packages was very high in some areas because teachers firmly believed that they would have a negative impact, and would diminish the quality of what they had been doing. In most instances, however, this shifted to a more positive view of the impact of training packages during the course of the professional development process.

> My belief now is that Training Packages are very useful resources for a whole range of reasons. But in the early days of their implementation, I just wonder how anyone who didn't have an educational system in place was able to work their way through getting somebody to a qualification. I still firmly believe that Training Packages are a collection of units of competency, that have been packaged into qualifications, but are not necessarily an educational pathway that people would take.

Professional development project manager 2

This project manager was mostly involved in the process of communicating the changes that training packages would have on staff during 1999 and 2000, and the impact that training packages would have on the way staff worked with industry.

Initial responses to training package implementation issues were on an *ad hoc* basis at the departmental level, and it was anticipated that there was a need to develop a more institute-wide strategic approach to training package implementation. It was necessary to provide staff with a comprehensive summary of the background and reasons for the implementation because staff generally did not know about the Training Reform Agenda, the roles of the Australian National Training Authority and the industry training advisory bodies, or the training package development process.

The timeframe for training package implementation was short, and staff had to be made aware that it would involve immediate change, so the institute employed a 'just in time' approach to the process of change management. The information dissemination approach focussed on involving and informing 'vertical slices' of work groups to ensure that everybody in the work area was informed, not just teachers.

The use of the industry forum at the end of 1999 was a good way to bring together people from the Australian National Training Authority, the industry training advisory bodies, the unions, people

involved in best practice models in the institute and people who had concerns and issues. The outcomes from the forum underpinned the development of strategies and forward plans for 2000 onwards at the institute.

The integration of on- and off-job training has been a major 'plus' from the implementation of training packages; however, the assumptions by some training managers within the institute, that workplace delivery and assessment would be cheaper and that technology would make delivery cheaper, have not yet been proved to be correct.

> I think it's absolutely critical to acknowledge that TAFE teachers and TAFE staff in general, are very receptive to change and have been involved in a whole stack of stuff prior to Training Packages. And I think, you know with a few exceptions, it would be hard to find a group of professionals, in general, that have adapted so well through probably 10 years of the most tumultuous change. National VET policy developers also need to acknowledge that the changes they have driven through have been enormous. I think they need to acknowledge the major progress that TAFE has made in the implementation of Training Packages.

Professional development project manager 3

This project manager was involved in planning for the forum in 1999 and also in the online forum and the action learning groups during 2000.

The action learning group-based professional development approach was not a directive one. It was more an investigative, experiential way for a group to determine pathways for their own future.

The action learning groups were useful because people could get together and decide which workplace problem they needed to solve. It was important for participants in these groups not to feel that they had to completely redesign what they had been doing previously because much of what they had been doing in the past had been quite useful.

Instead of the facilitator having the role of the person with all the answers, it was found to be more effective for the facilitator to arrange for colleagues with experience in training package implementation from other departments to present information to group members in their own workplace, or for group members to visit other departments and to observe what was being done to implement training packages.

It was absolutely crucial to involve support staff (the administrative and technical people) in the implementation process, not just the teachers.

The major difficulties in the implementation process were: the initial lack of information about the detail and likely impact of training packages; the lack of an initial change management strategy; very short implementation timeframes; teacher resistance; lack of co-operation from industry; management ineptitude; the lack of funding to provide professional development for all staff and the lack of resources to support delivery (especially flexible delivery) of new programs.

> When I talk about management ineptitude, I don't always mean that the manager is completely inept, but rather that they may not be able to handle a big issue like Training Package implementation. They may not be people who have been involved in change management before, and they may not be able to handle teacher resistance, and to turn things around.

There has also been insufficient time for teachers to reflect on the implications of the changes, to review the learning materials that they had used previously, to take time to discuss the changes with colleagues and to build up a methodology for thinking about how things could be done differently.

> I think one of the biggest problems is that people who are innovative are not particularly rewarded, so you don't always get the people with the good ideas for the new directions out the front.

Perspectives of staff directly involved in training delivery

The following perspectives are taken from interviews with heads of departments and teachers involved in the delivery of specific training programs and consequently give an indication of the broad diversity of outcomes occurring at the departmental level within the institute.

Tourism Studies Department perspective

The department was involved in developing a program to deliver the Advanced Diploma in Tourism Management. The advanced diploma includes a core module called 'Assess Tourism Opportunities for Local Communities'. This module was chosen as a good one to use to explore new, flexible and innovative delivery strategies. The action learning group model was used to develop the implementation process for this module. It was anticipated that many of the insights gained would be applicable to other higher-level modules. The professional development project manager for training package implementation worked with the head of department to maintain a clear focus on the quality of the educational outcomes for the program and to ensure that the program did reflect the intent of the training package. The assessment processes were rigorously evaluated to ensure that they satisfied the requirements that they be valid, reliable, consistent and fair while ensuring that the training outcomes satisfied industry expectations.

The students undertook a consultancy to assess future tourism opportunities for a local rural shire council. The brief was to investigate the current tourism activities, evaluate the potential of existing facilities and tourism events within the town and to formulate ideas for future tourism-based activities. The approach was flexible and innovative because there was no delivery of content; rather, students were expected to synthesise their existing knowledge in the context of a real-life consultancy conducted in the field. The project was assessed on the basis of a final presentation of two new ideas to the council that were feasible and practical.

Students, staff and the council regarded the outcomes from the unit as very successful and the shire council is now implementing some of the ideas generated during the pilot program.

One major issue that emerged was the need for teacher management systems to be further modified to enable teaching staff to more easily gain recognition for their work when engaged in off-campus flexible delivery models. Particular concern was expressed over how external auditing processes would account for the work of the teachers. Trusting teachers to conduct the training in a professional and credible manner is one of the biggest issues with this flexible delivery model.

> It is the most exciting thing I have ever done. It has challenged everything I ever thought about training models and I think competency-based training wins hands down. This to me is creative education … I wouldn't swap with the old way for quids. It's a much more interesting way to work.

Business Services and Technology Department perspective

The department was involved in planning the implementation of the Business Services Training Package for Semester 1, 2002. Staff from the department participated in the institute-wide awareness-raising and information-sharing sessions and professional development funds were used to provide release time for staff involved in planning for the change management process and the development of the implementation strategy. All staff also completed workplace assessor qualifications as part of their preparation for delivery of the training package and this was regarded as valuable professional development. This area has had good quality learning resources developed both in house at the institute and also by commercial publishers. These resources underpin the flexible approach to delivery.

The department has completely changed its learning and assessment strategy for the implementation for the Business Services Training Package. The department previously enrolled

and assessed students in modular programs. This approach has been replaced by enrolment of students directly into competencies. Training delivery and assessment has also shifted from a classroom-based, highly structured model to the increasing location of training delivery within a simulated business environment known as a 'practice firm'. The use of the practice firm model involved a shift in the role of the teacher to one of facilitation and support and required teachers to facilitate the delivery of multiple competencies concurrently, which significantly increased the complexity of the teaching role.

The main benefits of the practice firm approach to the department are improved integration of learning and assessment, the facilitation of a more holistic and consistent approach to assessment and increased flexibility. Holistic assessment allows for competencies to be grouped together for assessment purposes.

> … there is more rigour to the holistic approach to assessment because you're able to observe students as they conduct a range of tasks over a period of time. I think that the holistic approach mirrors the expectations in workplace.

The practice firm model allows for students to be presented with unexpected challenges and it gives them the opportunity to demonstrate their initiative. Some competencies from the Business Services Training Package such as 'Project Management' and 'Workplace Supervision' were regarded as very difficult to assess using a traditional training model and were regarded as more appropriately assessed within the simulated workplace environment provided by the practice firm approach.

> … successful Training Package implementation is dependent on the confidence of the staff and on the resources that they have and that they've got a good support group across the institute in terms of delivery mechanisms.

Child Studies Department perspective

The department was involved in the delivery of Certificate- and Diploma-level training in the Child Studies sector from the Community Services Training Package.

Staff from the department participated in the awareness-raising and information-sharing part of the institute-wide implementation process. Professional development funds were used to provide release hours for staff to participate in an action learning group with the aim of exploring and developing an implementation model, reviewing assessment procedures and reviewing delivery models with particular emphasis on field placements and work-based learning. Staff also engaged in professional development to assist them to fully understand and utilise the capacity of the institute student information management system. The department adopted a change management strategy to prepare staff for the changes involved in the introduction of the training package, but conveyed to industry that the changes would be minimal, as it was regarded as important for industry to have a sense of continuity between the old and the new programs.

The department initially trialled enrolling students directly into competencies, but after a six-month trial period it was decided that this approach did not allow for enough emphasis to be placed on underpinning knowledge and the department returned to enrolment of students into modules because the modular delivery framework was thought to have more educational rigour. The modular pathway was also regarded as being easier for industry people to understand and had more industry support. The department now uses a blend of campus-based learning and work placement to deliver and assess the program.

> … we did enrol students directly into competencies during first semester 2000, but we found there was a great sense of a loss of underpinning knowledge, a sense of confusion and a sense that we didn't any longer have Practical Placement modules, Study Skills modules or an introductory Program Planning module. We'd lost a lot of our content … that sort of drew the course together and made it educationally cohesive.

The child studies sector had developed national Children's Services competencies and learning resources prior to the development of the training package and these competencies were later used as the basis for the training package, so teachers in this area had experience of teaching the national competencies and this assisted the transition to training package delivery. The availability of relevant learning resources that had been developed for the national competencies also assisted in the process of implementing the training package and has facilitated the flexible delivery of course content material.

Automotive, Metals and Logistics Department perspective

Staff from this area participated in the awareness-raising and information-sharing part of the institute implementation program. The department also received professional development funding to participate in an action learning group with the aim of formulating cost effective delivery strategies, reviewing assessment procedures, refining record-keeping procedures, identifying existing learning resources and developing new learning resources. Professional development was also provided to staff and the local industry by the industry training advisory body.

The training package implementation strategy used by this department was regarded as an example of good practice and representatives from the department gave presentations to other departments as part of the information-sharing process.

Fully on-the-job delivery was trialled at the beginning of 2000 but it was discontinued. Industry representatives indicated that they did not like the system. It was difficult and expensive to visit all the students on job and to ensure that their work was being completed. A flexible blend of on-campus and on-job training was subsequently adopted.

> Stage One students need more time with the teacher, and they need more old-fashioned structured training I suppose you could call it. That seems to be what the results that we're getting indicate and that's what the students say they want. When they get into Stage Two they need less time on campus and by Stage Three we can cut back on the CIT component 50% in some cases.

The staff in this area decided to trial new work practices to create more flexibility in program delivery. A team approach was used where each teacher was allocated about 45 students and was expected to manage their educational progress. Teachers were given the responsibility to work out co-operatively how the workplace assessment, administration work and campus-based delivery would be done within their standard attendance requirement. This provided a more flexible working environment where teachers could vary the amount of classroom-based teaching to fit with the other demands on their time. This model represents a departure from the usual working conditions for teachers at the institute and required staff to undergo a major cultural change.

> … the teacher's role has changed from being just a teacher to being a manager of training. There's less face-to-face teaching, but there's more administration, whether that be chasing training plans to get money, talking to New Apprenticeship Centres, talking to the Office of Training and Adult Education, talking to industry, but the whole role's changed. The paperwork is absolutely horrendous, and it just seems to be increasing.

Conclusions

The positive outcomes from the training package implementation process thus far have been achieved through the innovative and flexible attitudes of institute staff. There has been no single person responsible for driving the implementation process at the Canberra Institute of Technology, but rather a team approach has proved to be effective.

The overall result of the training package implementation strategy has been that staff in all areas of the institute have had the opportunity to participate in a range of professional development activities, such as workshops, forums, information sessions, action learning groups, staff meetings

and networks. This has provided breadth and depth of understanding to the training package implementation process.

There is a range of issues, such as assessment procedures, the recognition of teachers' work when engaged in on-job and flexible delivery and the provision of resources to support these processes, that are not yet fully resolved and which require further refinement and financial support in order for the potential flexibility and benefits of training packages to be fully realised.

Case study 2: Hunter School of Performing Arts

The implementation process: Roles of the main players

The Hunter School of Performing Arts

The school is the central player in the innovative approach. It is a public K–12 specialist performing arts school and has ultimate responsibility for the management of the learning and assessment processes. Students complete Certificate II (Front of House) in the Entertainment Training Package in Year 11. The certificate II takes about 240 hours in total, including 120 hours to complete the core competencies in the Certificate II (General) and an additional 120 hours to complete the Front of House specialisation competencies. After completion of their certificate II, students then have the option to complete certificate III in Year 12.

The NSW Department of Education and Training required trainers involved in delivering the Entertainment Training Package to have, at least, certificate IV qualifications from the Entertainment Training Package themselves. In order to satisfy the qualifications requirements to deliver the Entertainment Training Package, staff at the school identified Sydney Opera House as an appropriate registered training organisation to provide the qualifications and undertook training and assessment to gain certificate IV qualifications in the Entertainment Training Package. Some staff members have completed qualifications in excess of the requirements to deliver the training at the school. For instance, two staff members have completed Diplomas in Entertainment and the course co-ordinator has also been credentialled by Sydney Opera House with an Advanced Diploma in Stage Management.

Staff also completed the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training through a business college in Wollongong at their own expense. These qualifications have equipped the staff from the Hunter School of Performing Arts to be able to undertake on-job assessment of students in workplaces. The school puts on dramatic productions in its own right and also works collaboratively with Civic Theatre Newcastle to deliver and assess the program.

The completion of these qualifications required a significant contribution of personal time and energy from the staff at Hunter School of Performing Arts. Considering that the delivery of training in the Entertainment Training Package only represents a small part of the teaching load at the school and that the VET-in-schools program was initially only a pilot with a limited number of participating students and with an uncertain future, the effort made by the staff to support the development of the program and see it through to implementation has been very significant.

The Civic Theatre Newcastle

The theatre is an affiliate of the Newcastle City Council trading as the Civic Theatre Newcastle and is the premier regional theatre in New South Wales. It is a 1524-seat theatre, which is built in an Art Deco style and has been recently renovated and equipped to make it a 'state of the art' facility.

The theatre has provided the workplace for the program. Students from the school undertake work experience at Civic Theatre Newcastle during live performances and in the process, students build

competence in the areas of front of house, box office, general administration duties, set design and construction, props manufacture, audiovisual operations, scenic art, staging, costume design and manufacture, make-up, sound production and lighting techniques.

Staff from the theatre also provide training and workplace assessment for the students.

Low levels of qualified staff, high levels of casualisation and the itinerant nature of entertainment industry workers have created the situation where Civic Theatre Newcastle has often experienced difficulty in sourcing enough skilled workers for large productions. The Civic Theatre Newcastle is a strong supporter of the program, as it is envisaged the program will increase the number of trained and qualified people available in the Newcastle area, while providing theatre staff with stimulating challenges in engaging in training and assessment.

Hunter School of Performing Arts has signed a memorandum of understanding with Newcastle City Council which prescribes how the arrangement for using the Civic Theatre Newcastle as workplace will operate.

Sydney Opera House

The Opera House used the recognition of current competence process to provide Newcastle Theatre staff and Hunter School of Performing Arts staff with qualifications in the Entertainment Training Package. These qualifications have enabled them to act as workplace assessors within the program. Opera House staff have also played a significant role in liaising with the school and the theatre, particularly in the planning stage for the pilot of the program.

The Opera House commenced the recognition of current competence process to provide their own staff with qualifications from the Entertainment Training Package and subsequently engaged in recognition of current competence of skilled workers in a range of external enterprises within the entertainment industry.

Department of Education and Training

The Newcastle District Vocational Education Consultant for the Department of Education and Training has played an active role in bringing together the other players in the case study. The department has approved seven vocational frameworks for VET-in-schools programs and includes vocational areas such as tourism and hospitality, primary industry, retailing, business administration, information technology, metals and engineering and construction, but does not include the Entertainment Training Package. There was therefore a need to negotiate to run a course that was outside the approved vocational framework. The District Vocation Education Consultant played a critical role in managing these negotiations. The Newcastle District Office of the Department of Education and Training is also the registered training organisation providing the credentials for students studying the entertainment course at the school.

Arts Training NSW

Arts Training NSW is the state-level industry training advisory body for the arts and entertainment industry in New South Wales. Arts Training NSW has actively supported the Sydney Opera House in its transition to becoming a registered training organisation. Arts Training NSW has run forums, facilitated meetings and developed a website to assist in the dissemination of information to support the implementation of the Entertainment Training Package. It has also advised and conducted meetings with the players in the Newcastle region to assist in the development of the VET-in-schools program at Hunter School of Performing Arts.

Arts Training NSW provided funding for the development and planning of the implementation of the pilot program delivered at the school.

Issues and how they were addressed in the implementation process

Issue	How implementation processes addressed the issue
Students and staff attending Civic Theatre Newcastle during evening performances	• Staff have been prepared to adopt a flexible approach to working hours, while parents have been informed and have given their consent for students to attend performances at the theatre until late in the evening.
Minors working in the bar area	• Minors required supervision at all times and did not serve alcohol. Supervision was not easily achieved given the brief and hectic nature of bar service before, during and after performances.
Students engaging in high-risk activities	• Level 3 training involves activities such as 'flying', which involves suspension and movement of heavy objects above the stage area during performances. Students are also involved in connection of lighting and equipment to the electricity supply. The guidelines for engagement of students in these sorts of activities were fully documented in a procedures manual prior to commencement of the program.
Building industry's confidence in the capacity of the VET-in-schools program at Hunter School of Performing Arts to meet the training and assessment requirements and to deliver the outcomes required by industry	• Arts Training NSW has been involved from the outset in the development of the program, fully supports the methods used and endorses the quality of the training and the trainees produced by the program. • Training is delivered and assessed on the premises of the most significant employer in the region, Civic Theatre Newcastle and to the enterprise standards. • Staff at Civic Theatre Newcastle have received qualifications under the Entertainment Training Package themselves, prior to being involved in the delivery of the training to students at the school and this has ensured that they have confidence in the outcomes of the process and are informed of the standard required by the enterprise for certification of competence.
Professional development	• Orientation workshops were run by the Department of Education and Training, Newcastle District Office to ensure that staff from the school and the theatre understood their responsibilities to the department, as the registered training organisation providing the qualifications to students in the program. • Staff from Hunter School of Performing Arts and Civic Theatre Newcastle have completed qualifications from the Entertainment Training Package and also assessment and workplace training qualifications. • Staff from Hunter School of Performing Arts are going through the process of becoming qualified assessors for Sydney Opera House, the registered training organisation. • Child protection training was provided for industry staff at Civic Theatre Newcastle, as they are working with people under 18.
Underpinning processes to monitor quality and evaluate the outcomes of the course	• The District Vocational Education Consultant at the regional Department of Education and Training office has responsibility to monitor the quality of the program. • Staff from Hunter School of Performing Arts also evaluated the program. • Feedback was sought from students in the program.
Ensuring adequate resources to support the implementation of the approach	• Arts Training NSW provided funding to help plan and implement the strategy. • the Department of Education and Training, Newcastle District Office assisted with resources to develop competency record books and also liaised with all major players.

Stakeholder perspectives

Program developer's perspective

The VET co-ordinator for Hunter School of Performing Arts had a broad understanding and experience of VET-in-schools delivery and assessment issues and developed the program from the Entertainment Training Package. She had seen the project through from the planning stage to full implementation of the pilot.

The main impact on assessment has been the change to assessment of more industry-specific competencies rather than assessment of learning in more generic courses. The program is important because the school wants to provide training relevant to the students needs, represents a relevant vocational training pathway and that gives them access to an industry credential, not just a Higher School Certificate.

The decision to run the program at Hunter School of the Performing Arts was a direct result of the need for the school to develop vocational training programs for students with demonstrated talents and skills in the entertainment industry, and the need to provide credentials to the students for their industry expertise in live theatre.

The lack of funding for the program, because it is outside of the seven vocational areas for the region, has meant that the success of the program has relied heavily on the goodwill of staff at the school and staff at the theatre. Close liaison with the local entertainment industry and the industry training advisory body has resulted in a high level of support for the program by industry. The program developer explained:

> The goal was to provide relevant curriculum options for our performing arts students. Our curriculum, like all other schools, is based mainly on the traditional core curriculum areas. However, most of the vocational courses available for delivery in schools were not appropriate to our particular student group. As a specialist 'arts' school, we needed to offer relevant training in the arts.

District Vocational Education Consultant

The District Vocational Education Consultant experienced difficulties with the way in which Australian National Training Authority funding is packaged. The consultant experienced difficulty in gaining access to both *Framing the future* funding and VET-in-schools funds for a course that was outside the approved vocational framework. This left the consultant feeling that the program had 'fallen through the cracks' between major funding allocations and that there is a need to reconsider funding arrangements and to identify funds for the development of this sort of program.

Employer perspective

The director of Civic Theatre Newcastle enthusiastically endorsed the program. The role of the theatre as the workplace for the program has ensured that the director is well informed about the program and its outcomes.

The program is regarded as highly relevant to industry because there is a high level of casualisation in the entertainment industry and many workers in the industry are unqualified. Regional theatres require numerous trained people to staff performances so there is a need to train more people locally to meet the needs of the theatre.

Theatre staff engaged in the training program had found it to be an enriching process and it had helped them to come to a clearer understanding of their own jobs.

Involving school students in live productions with paying clientele did present some liability problems and some clients (producers of touring shows) have expressed concerns over issues

regarding minors working in the bar area and students engaging in high risk activities such as 'flying', which involves suspension and movement of heavy objects above the stage area during performances. Students are also involved in connection of lighting and equipment to the electricity supply. The guidelines for engagement of students in these sorts of activities were fully documented in a procedures manual prior to commencement of the program.

> I can't think of any major negatives at all, and in fact, the positives have edged into areas that we really didn't take into account when we were putting it together … this training program has come together as part of our long-term strategy to build a skilled and trained local workforce.

Trainer's perspective

The trainer took the package that was developed by the Hunter School of Performing Arts VET Coordinator in conjunction with the Board of Studies and then worked out ways of implementing it at the school. The trainer had implemented certificate II and III-level training by working in liaison with Civic Theatre Newcastle.

The workload for the trainer had greatly increased, particularly due to the work placements. The students are now working on additional shows and having to juggle homework, theatre shifts and other work commitments. Collaborative workplace assessment was done on site at the theatre, mostly after hours, mainly by the school assessors but also by qualified workplace assessors from the theatre.

The trainer felt well prepared for the implementation of this new approach because of her past experience in the entertainment industry and the fact that she was involved in discussions with the school executive and the Board of Studies from the commencement of the planning process.

The school community sees the course as a very worthwhile approach, as the students have gained valuable experiences and skills.

> The main things that have facilitated the implementation process have been the good relationship with the Civic Theatre and the application of the students, it's something they love and they want to do … there's a lot of organisation, but it's worth it when you see what is achieved. My workload has increased, but the theatre is my life and it always has been and I don't see it as a chore.

Student perspectives

Students are receiving training in a broad range of aspects of theatre operations. The hands-on learning by experience is a popular aspect of the course and learning by trial and error is more enjoyable than reading about how things are done from a text.

Higher-level learning such as problem-solving is occurring and the fact that assessment is based on performance in the workplace, rather than on written work, is regarded as a positive aspect of the program.

Being able to see all of the behind-the-scenes aspects of the performances at the theatre was a valuable educational experience, and it made subsequent viewing of shows more interesting because it helped students understand how the performance is being staged:

> Probably the best thing about it is the hands-on job … that practical stuff, learning by experience, like being inside the theatre and learning from watching other people do it.

The fact that the program facilitates learning that is practical and immediately relevant was seen as a major strength and learning practical skills involving safety issues made the learning more meaningful. Learning at a venue apart from the school also added variety to the educational experience.

The diversity of the competencies covered within the program, including front-of-house skills, as well as technical skills, such as lighting, is a positive aspect of the program and seeing the range of competencies integrated in a performance gives a broad understanding of the performance process.

> I much prefer learning out of the classroom, like more practical, hands-on type learning. It's a big change for me. You learn something that you know you might use again, whereas in the classroom sometimes you think to yourself, why am I doing this. You see the rewards more.

State industry training advisory body perspective

Arts Training NSW is very supportive of the approach. They have funded the development of the pilot and liaised with all players during the implementation phase. They have stated that there is a need for a second round of funding to fully resource the delivery and assessment and, in particular, to compensate industry representatives for the use of their facilities and for their input as trainers and assessors.

Conclusions

The program to deliver qualifications from the Entertainment Training Package to students at Hunter School of Performing Arts as part of the VET-in-schools program has been very successful. It has brought together a diverse group of stakeholders who have worked together to deliver a training outcome that is regarded as effective by local employers and the relevant state and national industry training advisory bodies. Its success has been dependent on the commitment and dedication of the teachers at the school. The process has also been assisted by the depth of industry experience possessed by the teachers at the school.

The availability of the Civic Theatre as a training facility and the enthusiasm of the director to support the training arrangement have also been critical factors in the success of the program. The future of the program will depend on whether institutional funding can be provided to meet the need of developing further resources to support the program and also to remunerate industry representatives for the use of their facilities and for their time commitment for workplace training and assessment.

Case study 3:
Regency Institute of TAFE

The implementation process

The implementation process was catalysed by funding from *Framing the Future.* The staff member leading the implementation process viewed this funding as 'very important' because it provided the opportunity to bring childcare centre directors together with TAFE staff to meet throughout the development and pilot phases of the implementation process. The funding also allowed one staff member to be released from other duties so that she could concentrate solely on the development and piloting phases. This staff member arranged meetings, spent time in centres talking about the model and was continuously available to centre directors and staff to answer questions and deal with their concerns. While these functions might have been 'squeezed in' around normal duties, the funding provided a means whereby they could be undertaken in a more effective manner.

The funding also allowed an external facilitator to be hired for the meetings. This ensured that staff from both TAFE and industry were treated equally. As an outsider, the facilitator was also able to be objective and to 'ask the hard questions'. All these factors contributed to a thorough and rigorous preparation for the pilot phase.

These meetings, which occurred several times over the second semester in 1999, provided opportunities for participants to brainstorm ways in which the learning centre model might operate and to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of the model. After meetings, the directors returned to their centres and discussed the model and other issues with their staff and parents of children in their centres. Over the development period, eight centres decided to commit to the learning centre model. There were some centres which declined to participate for various reasons, including their preference for the older model of student placements or a lack of time to commit to the new process. TAFE teaching staff were involved in all meetings. The developmental phase of the implementation process was characterised by a long lead time and wide consultation with all those likely to be affected by the potential implementation of the model. The only key group not consulted was students. Piloting of the new model commenced early in 2000.

The piloting phase of the implementation process was characterised as a time which 'gave permission' for any party to reject the model or to modify it. It was a time of 'calculated risks'. Great emphasis was placed on ensuring that open lines of communication were maintained between the facilitators (TAFE teachers working in the childcare centres), the centre directors and their staff. A process of ongoing evaluation (both formal and informal) was initiated during the pilot phase.

The implementation phase was notable for some unanticipated outcomes. One of the first groups of students exposed to the new model comprised recent school graduates all of whom knew each other well. When placed in the learning centres, the students tended to remain in a group together and did not interact with the centre staff as much as they should have. It was noted that, by the end of the first semester, the students had not 'developed' as predicted by the facilitator. The students were not displaying the degree of independence, confidence and initiative expected of them. The solution to this dilemma was to reconstitute the groups for the beginning of the second

semester, providing new groups, new centres and new facilitators to encourage greater interaction between centre staff and students.

Another unanticipated outcome related to problems between a facilitator and a particular group of staff in a centre who did not appear to 'click'. The facilitator was counselled and moved to another centre. The initial supposition was that the role of facilitator did not 'suit this particular TAFE staff member'. This proved to be unfounded, as the change to another childcare centre appeared to resolve the matter.

One of the main challenges of the implementation period related to the balance of time students spend on campus learning and the time needed in childcare centres. In order to ensure that the model was economically neutral (that is, it did not cost any extra money), some of the designated on-campus lecturing time was shifted into time spent in the childcare centres. This resulted in some lecturers feeling that they did not have enough time on campus to devote to teaching theory. Some facilitators endeavoured to resolve this by attempting to teach theory in the childcare centres. This, in turn, led to complaints about a lack of time to devote to assessment. This situation was resolved by finding more time (an extra session) to provide input to students on campus. This then left more time for the learning centre facilitators to conduct assessments and to talk to students about the theory they had been learning.

The innovation initially encountered some resistance from within the TAFE teaching team. Many of the staff were 'change weary', as they had encountered a great deal of change in the past five years. The size and complexity of the Children's Services Program within TAFE, combined with the few full-time and contract staff, have resulted in all staff having to undertake a range of co-ordination and management duties. The adoption of the learning centre model required staff to be absent from the TAFE institute for six hours a week, which reduced the time they had available to complete these functions. The pressure to achieve a balanced budget required that all full-time and contract staff had a full teaching load, and this contributed to the resistance of some staff to take up the facilitator role.

Across TAFE, there was interest in the model from some, but not all, campuses that offered children's services programs. Some campuses had made the decision to specialise in other types of delivery (for example, face-to-face). The result was that Regency had come to an 'uneasy agreement' with other institutes about their decision to promote one or more forms of delivery. Outside the Children's Services Program area, the learning centre model was relatively unknown.

Across industry, only those childcare centres approached during the development phase had knowledge of the innovation and within this group, acceptance of the innovation was obviously very high. The decision to restrict the implementation of the innovation to one particular region of Adelaide was deliberate and undertaken for various reasons. The primary reason was to ensure that Regency did not 'encroach' on any other institutes' territory in relation to particular childcare centres with which they had ongoing relationships. The relatively short development time also meant that the number of childcare centres that could be involved was restricted.

The learning centre model was seen to build upon previous training reforms and was viewed as a means of enhancing their adoption across the Children's Services Program. Features such as recognition of prior learning were facilitated through greater interaction between the students and facilitators in the childcare centres. This allowed greater opportunities for the facilitator to observe students and for their competence to be recognised.

The role of a key person acting as a 'driver' or catalyst for the change process was viewed as essential to the success of the implementation. This was particularly important since the change process to adopt the learning centre model was acknowledged as being 'an extensive one'. The key person was able to devote time to managing the change process and was able to listen to concerns and act upon them in a timely manner. This, in turn, resulted in all staff learning more about how to manage the change process.

A range of issues was identified as being of particularly relevant to the task of implementing training packages innovations. These issues, and the manner in which they were addressed during the implementation of the learning centre model, are set out below.

Issues and how they were addressed in the implementation process

Issue	How implementation processes addressed the issue
Building industry's confidence in the capacity of TAFE to meet the training and assessment requirements and deliver the outcomes required by industry using the innovation	• The development process included all stakeholders. • The initial implementation phase involved targeting all the centres within the geographic area for the development of learning centres. This ensured that no one centre felt alienated and all were given the choice to be involved rather than being 'selected' to participate. • The development stage was characterised by a high degree of honesty about the proposed model, with the admission that TAFE was not sure that it would be successful. This strategy gave 'permission' to industry to express their genuine thoughts and feelings about the model. • Well-established links and a high level of credibility with the industry had been developed over a number of years. • The innovation had links with and built on practices that were well recognised and accepted by the industry.
Ensuring parity between different approaches to learning and assessment (one of which includes the use of the innovation) that lead to the same qualification	• This issue has not been addressed at this point. It is of special concern, since one of the alternative approaches involves external students and it is important to ensure that they receive a 'fair deal'.
Underpinning processes to monitor quality	• There has been continuous evaluation of the innovation and the implementation process. Input has been sought from students, TAFE staff and industry. • Special efforts have been made to develop appropriate documentation to monitor the innovation and to record information accurately and reliably (for example, using proformas for 'signing off' competencies; providing directions for TAFE staff working as facilitators in the learning centres, as well as information for the childcare centre staff, directors, students.
Ensuring parity and monitoring standards across the learning centres	• Assessment materials are the same across all learning centres. • There are regular meetings held between all learning centre facilitators and on-campus teachers to examine what components of competency would be assessed in on- and off-the-job locations. • Discussions have also focussed on how assessment will take place in the learning centres and facilitators have been provided with written information. • Meetings with all learning centre facilitators are held once a term. These encourage staff to share ideas and practices and to identify any inconsistencies in practices across centres. • All learning centre facilitators have Early Childhood qualifications, a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training and a minimum of five years children's services industry experience.
Ensuring adequate resources to support the implementation of the innovation	• This has not really been an issue. Resourcing has involved a 're-jigging' of existing resources (for example, the program has always paid field educators). The extra resources needed were provided through *Framing the future* funding.

Stakeholder perspectives

TAFE staff perspectives

Within the learning centre model, TAFE staff could take on the role of a learning centre facilitator who works in the childcare centre with the students and/or work in their usual role as an on-campus lecturer. The role of the facilitator is, in many respects, similar to the role of a 'field worker' who, in previous versions of the curriculum, was responsible for assessing students during their field placements. Within the learning centre model, however, this role has taken on a new and expanded form.

According to the TAFE staff member interviewed for this case study, the role of the facilitator is to 'empower students to take on competencies and put them into practice within the centre'. From the staff member's perspective, one of the main drivers for the implementation of the model was related to assessment. Training packages required that many competencies be assessed on the job and that students demonstrate that they perform these consistently over time. This required that more evidence be collected to ensure that staff were confident that the student could perform the required competencies in a variety of situations.

The primary role of the facilitator was a support person, meeting with students in the childcare centre to discuss their learning, and to monitor and review students' progress. The facilitator reported spending time observing the students at work, giving feedback and intervening to provide support as needed. It was the responsibility of the facilitator to ensure that the students' learning was integrated into the work processes and practices of the centre and to encourage students to work through the designated competencies at a pace best for them. Ensuring the development of the knowledge base of students is a key focus. The facilitator also consulted regularly with centre staff to ensure that students were 'on the right track', to deal with any concerns staff might have had in relation to the students and to facilitate the rotation of students amongst the various work areas in the centre.

Prior to the introduction of the learning centre model, TAFE staff were involved in 'traditional' student placements. They would go out to childcare centres for about an hour a week. During this time they would assess students on a range of work practices. The new model, in contrast, gives TAFE staff an opportunity to better integrate theory and practice for students. Theory learnt on campus can be tested in the workplace in a more immediate way, rather than students needing to wait sometimes weeks before undertaking a work placement. The process of integrating theory and practice becomes 'an ongoing process'. Staff also believed that the model fostered greater teamwork between TAFE staff and students. Both groups are encouraged to work together and to enlist the support of staff in the childcare centre in the training process. This is in contrast to the old approach where a student had to relate to on-campus lecturers, field workers and centre staff in an isolated and unconnected way. Working in a more in-depth way with staff in the childcare centre enabled the facilitator to deal with the concerns of students and staff in a more immediate way and to intervene more quickly if needed.

The learning centre facilitator reported that there were a few difficulties in implementing the new model. These were largely attributed to the 'unknown' nature of the innovation and the staff member's comfort level with previous practices. She emphasised the importance of time in assisting her to 'work out' how to put the new model into practice and to develop a level of comfort with the range of issues that needed to be addressed.

Implementation required the staff member to be well organised and to manage time and paper work well. As well as being 'on the ball and aware of what needed to be done', the facilitator also had to ensure she did not impinge on students' autonomy in relation to their learning and that she maintained a balance between the twin tasks of supporting and monitoring students. As the

facilitator became more comfortable and experienced in her role, she was able to work in a more integrated manner (for example, linking competencies together for assessment purposes).

The facilitator identified various factors that supported her efforts to implement the new model. These included:

✧ her personal 'willingness to have a go'

✧ previous experience in the industry and as a student, which provided insights into the needs of both staff and students for support and information

✧ a flexible approach to timetabling from the institute which allowed for situations where the facilitator needed to spend more time in the childcare centre assessing students' competencies and less time facilitating learning in the on-campus environment.

The facilitator believed that her previous experience within the Children's Services Program had provided her with a sound basis from which she could begin to consider what was required by the new training package. She reported feeling 'well prepared' for the introduction of the model. This had been the product of extensive meetings with other learning centre facilitators to discuss their roles and expectations and how they would manage the process. Feedback from staff and students in the childcare centre was useful in assisting the facilitator to make decisions about changes that needed to be made during the implementation process.

The learning centre facilitator reported that special efforts had been made to support the integration of the work of on-campus teachers with those staff working in childcare centres. Although there were instances where staff undertook both these roles, this was not always the case, and regular meetings to discuss what was expected of students both on campus and in childcare centres were held to encourage open communication between the two groups of staff.

From the perspective of the facilitator, the learning centre model had limited support from within TAFE, since only one institute was involved in its implementation. Within the program area, however, the facilitator believed support was high. This was attributed to the willingness of management and staff to work together on all aspects relating to the development and implementation of the model and a clear understanding of the benefits of the new model for all groups involved. Prior practices which had fostered a diverse range of responses to delivering programs to students had equipped staff with the mental model needed to pursue the implementation of the learning centre model.

The facilitator believed that the model had been well received and supported by industry. Feedback from staff in the childcare centres demonstrated that they liked the consistency of having the same group of students to work with over an extended period of time. Staff also appreciated the presence of the facilitator, particularly for the liaison and 'troubleshooting' roles.

Students reported to the facilitator that the new model provided them with an authentic experience on which to base their decision to work in the children's services industry. Although there had been a slight increase in the number of students leaving the program in its early stages, this was viewed as a positive outcome and resulted in the development of 'much more committed children's services workers at the end'. Students also reported that the model provided the degree of flexibility needed to support them in their learning and they valued the opportunity to be able to move through their learning program at a pace that suited them or receive support as they needed it.

Industry perspectives

The employers (in this case, the directors of the childcare centres which agreed to 'host' a learning centre within their facility) played a vital role in the successful implementation of the model. One director who had been involved in working with three groups of students in her centre was asked to provide an employer's perspective on the innovation and the implementation process.

At a general level implementation of the model did not require significant changes in work practices for the childcare centres and the staff involved. Initially, however, there was some resistance to the innovation. Staff and members of the Centre Management Committee were concerned about how they would accommodate the increased number of students in the centre. These concerns were quickly resolved by discussions with the various parties and working through any problems as they arose during the early stages of implementation. The benefits of the innovation were explained to parents and families using the centre and particular attention was paid to dealing with any concerns they raised via the use of face-to-face forums and regular articles in the centre's newsletter.

Staff paid particular attention to integrating students into the workplace culture of the centre through a number of mechanisms, including introducing the students to all the parents and placing students' photographs on a board with the other staff. The staff also took the initiative by putting together an induction package for each student. This contained information about the centre (including its philosophy, goals etc.), guidelines of what was expected of the students, and copies of the parent's handbook and the centre's policies. All these initiatives were reported to be part of the successful preparation for the introduction of the model and staff reporting feeling well prepared by the time the first group of students arrived to work in the centre.

The centre director viewed both the innovation and its implementation in a very favourable manner. The learning centre model was seen as a positive move in terms of the greater consistency it provided for all those involved. For students and staff in the centre, the model enabled them to build good working relationships with each other and to clearly establish what was expected of all parties involved in the training process. For the children, parents and families using the facilities, the model provided opportunities for them to deal with 'familiar faces' and was not as disruptive as previous practices where new students were appearing in their centre at regular intervals. The presence of a facilitator in the childcare centre enabled questions and concerns relating to students' learning and progress to be dealt with immediately and promoted better relationships between the centre staff and TAFE. The facilitator was also able to offer support to staff involved in training students.

The success of the learning centre model was seen to rest on two significant features:

✧ the quality of the TAFE facilitator who worked in the centre and, in particular, their ability to communicate and build a relationship with staff

✧ the thorough preparation of staff within the centre prior to working with the students and the facilitator.

The director emphasised that staff within the centre needed to appreciate that the students were firstly, learners and secondly, future children's services workers. As such, it was essential to acknowledge the importance of learning in the workplace for their development.

Feedback from the management committee, parents and families throughout the implementation process indicated that all were satisfied with the outcomes achieved. Having had the experience of three groups of students working in the centre, they were convinced that students learning through this approach could be integrated into the running of the centre in a way that ensured that all groups, but particularly the children and their families, were happy.

The director believed that there was 'quite a bit of support' for the innovation across the children's services industry. She was also confident that the learning centre model was going to assist in the development of highly qualified workers for the industry. This outcome was possible because the model provided the students with a better quality learning experience than previous approaches to work placements. By allowing students to settle into one workplace, they could 'experience being accepted' by the staff and begin to 'feel like they belong'. This created an overall environment that was more conducive to students' learning and enabled them 'to get a lot more out of their placements'. The director believed that the learning centre model overall has promoted:

✧ greater communication between staff from the childcare centres and TAFE about the students and their needs

✧ greater understanding on the part of the childcare centre staff of the learning needs of students and the role that staff can play in facilitating and supporting this learning.

Conclusions

The implementation of the learning centre model within the Children's Services Program at Regency Institute of TAFE has been rated a success by all concerned. This success story is the product of the development of an innovation which, while sharing some links with previous practices, was also innovative and strategic in character. It is these qualities that were of particular importance in supporting staff in their goal of implementing the training package for their industry.

The success of the learning centre model is also a tale of an implementation process that has its roots in the culture and values embedded in the work teams and program area from which it was created. It clearly illustrates that an innovative mental model cannot be manufactured, but rather grows from a way of working and a pattern of leadership that supports and nurtures its development over time.

Case study 4: Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE

The implementation process: Roles of the main players

Those involved in this innovative implementation were:

✧ *TAFE Queensland:* indirectly but fundamentally involved via their provision of access to state-of-the-art technology (internet and email) at subsidised rates

✧ *Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE:* the parent institution that accommodates and supports individual departments' training policies and decisions (that is, to configure teaching loads in certain ways to enable some staff to spend up to four days at a time on the road, making visits to students in remote locations)

✧ *The institute's Horticulture and Environment team:* headed by the program developer, and supported by the trainers and administrative support staff who all work together to make this delivery strategy so successful

✧ *Rural Training Council of Australia:* the national industry training body for the horticulture industry

✧ *Queensland Rural Industry Training Council:* the state industry training advisory body for the horticulture industry.

As a team, the Horticulture and Environment trainers at Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE took the opportunity offered by the introduction of the training package to re-examine their whole program, and to consider how to keep their key stakeholders (current students and employers) informed about what the changes would mean. Of particular concern were those part-time students who were two-thirds of the way through the existing trade course. Some of these students had already experienced previous changes (such as the introduction of competency-based training) which impacted on their studies. Consequently, the team knew that, as well as accommodating these students by giving them credit against as many competencies as they could in the training package, they would have to spend a significant amount of time explaining the changes during the transition period. All of this required a great deal of effort, as 'we took the line that we should redo [the program] properly rather than just change the covers on books … so … there is a lot of work in that'.

One of the trainers on the team described the re-thinking thus:

> … we had to … spend time learning the scheme of the Training Package and what was the foundation of the Training Package, rather than, I mean the content area is basically the same, it hasn't really altered that much. Horticulture's still horticulture. It was just the structure of it that changed slightly, but … also our marketplace changed and our delivery strategy and I guess [that] opened our eyes as to how we could [make those changes].

The program developer and his team of trainers worked together, and continue to work together, to develop and refine their approach to the flexible delivery of the Horticulture training package, just as they had worked to contribute to its design.

The program developer believes that training packages were premised on the idea that the workplace understands training issues including the complexities of competency-based training and

assessment, but thinks that, because these issues are not the key concerns in the workplace, there is therefore not a high level of understanding. He feels that most local industry sees the training providers (especially TAFE) as the experts on training, both content and process. He also suggests that, despite the best intentions, there is not always understanding or communication on many issues between all levels and types of industry and government, but that this tends not to be the case with those industry players who are involved in associations and peak industry groups.

The role of training strategy development, therefore, is not one that he sees industry as being equipped or interested to handle, but rather one that educational institutions must manage:

> [Many] employers in industry … have, and [it's] not surprising, a very poor knowledge of what the training system means. Why would they? They are not in the training business, so they come to us and they say what sort of training do you offer?

The program's reputation has spread by word of mouth, with students in remote areas contacting the Horticulture campus and requesting training. Some town councils and other organisations in the region have also approached the team to provide tailored training to meet their needs.

The Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE has produced an information booklet that gives students details about the institute, staff contact details and an introduction to the national training package. In the booklet, the options for study within each level of the Australian Qualifications Framework are mapped out, showing students which units are essential, the number of industry sector points that must be achieved, and how many may be selected from other qualification levels. It is a clear and user-friendly guide to the possible pathways available to intending students in each of the six industry streams that are covered by this training package.

Issues and how they were addressed in the implementation process

Issue	How implementation processes addressed the issue
Building industry's confidence in the capacity of the institute to meet the training and assessment requirements and to deliver the outcomes required by industry	• The institute's Horticulture and Environment team produces a quarterly newsletter which they send out to approximately 700 people. They used this to communicate information about the training package while it was being developed and in its early stages of implementation so that local industry would understand the changes to training delivery. • The team has a good relationship with their locally constituted industry advisory council. • Industry is also kept informed by means of the trainers' participation in professional networks and activities.
Professional development	• Everyone has undertaken professional development to learn how to operate the video conferencing facility. • Each person on the team outlines their intended program of development at the beginning of each year. • In 2001 the team will undertake a professional development program regarding the national Training Package and the Australian Qualification Framework as an audit requirement.
Ensuring parity between this approach and previous approaches to learning and assessment	• Since Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE had been using the national curriculum for horticulture which is a competency-based training program, the transition into using the training packages was not difficult.
Ensuring adequate resources to support the implementation of the approach	• TAFE Queensland's support of the technological infrastructure has enabled the institute to be innovative and responsive in ways it would not otherwise have been able to afford. This, in turn, has made the Horticulture Training Package accessible to students who would not otherwise have been able to undertake the program.

Stakeholder perspectives

National industry training advisory body perspective (Rural Training Council of Australia)

In May 2000, David Rumsey and Associates completed their report into stage 1 of the Horticulture Training Package review. This review, commissioned by the national industry training advisory body, sought opinions from approximately 350 individuals and organisations nation-wide. Interestingly, some of the identified strengths and weaknesses of the training package, as identified by this population, were also identified by the Horticulture and Environment team at the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE.

The strengths of the training package were identified as flexibility, a focus on workplace competence, co-operation with industry, customisation and access.

The weaknesses of the training package were identified as the need for more flexibility, need for more horticultural content at diploma level and concerns with the assessment guides, learning guides and record books.

State industry training advisory body perspective (Queensland Rural Industry Training Council)

The state industry training advisory body would like to see more recognition of prior learning and recognition of current competencies being given for competencies demonstrated through long-standing employment in industry. This body feels that the approach to assessment which is often undertaken is too traditional, and too rarely takes a holistic, evidence-based approach. This industry advisory body would like to see industry experts being invited to do more assessment.

Employer perspective

Like many small business operators who have a good relationship with their local TAFE, this employer has been involved with the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE's Horticulture Campus in Toowoomba as a student and a part-time teacher, as well as an employer. The continuing dialogue between the two parties is very evident, with both very well informed about each other's needs and interests.

Regular personal contact is supplemented by a quarterly newsletter from the institute, which is posted out at the beginning of each new semester to inform readers about events of mutual interest, such as forthcoming garden festivals. This employer's experience as a part-time teacher means that she understands very well the logistical difficulties of offering programs when low enrolments threaten viability, and her experience as a student means that she empathises with students' needs to have greater flexibility and less actual time commitment to study. She understands that the appeal of flexible delivery is often that it's the travelling time that can be saved, and that students can fit study in around commitments to family.

This employer's focus was primarily as an advocate for her employees' learning, with her own needs as an employer coming second.

> Anything that helps the staff, it's another bit of flexibility within the system, and when people have families and they're working—from my point of view anything that aids them to gain extra qualifications and confidence and experience is worthwhile.

However, that flexibility had a positive outcome for her as an employer as well:

> We are only very small and we can't afford to have staff away for long amounts of time so things that they do in their own time … to achieve their aims quicker is all to our good as well.

The employer's only complaint was with the training record books, which she found frustratingly time-consuming to fill in:

> I just think as [structured placement] provider it would be much better for me to be spending the time I've got to spend with the student in showing them things, or teaching them things, than in filling out [the logbook] with a whole lot of aims that seem to repeat over and over.

Program developer's perspective

The program developer believes that using video streaming to deliver the training package to distance students, whether remote or local, is maximising the reach of the training package and meeting training needs that would otherwise remain unmet because of a lack of resources in remote locations. In those locations where enrolment numbers would not constitute a viable program, a handful of students can still register in the courses they wish to undertake and, via video streaming, can join a community of learners.

Although it may seem difficult to ask remote students to attend a workshop in Toowoomba, he says that people become accustomed to the travel necessitated by living in remote locations, and that the students acknowledge that there are components of their program that cannot successfully be undertaken by distance. The chance to network with others from all over Queensland adds to the appeal of spending a week in 'town'.

If funding were not tied to state-based training, this team would be actively pursuing training opportunities over the border.

Trainer perspectives

Trainer 1

Trainer 1 has been involved in the video training from its initial stages, and has managed the trainees as well as the technology. She understands how labour-intensive it can be to deliver programs in this way, especially as 40-hour programs are now being conflated to be delivered in 10 to 15 hours.

She describes the advantages of this form of online training for the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE's distance students:

> Some of these folk [would] come into a workshop, but you know that when they go back [to work] … there are so many pressures on them … Without being able to tune in and see a video link they'd forget that we exist and that the work side of it exists and that they've got other commitments … That's reality, that's what happens.
>
> A lot of the young ones, straight from school, are in these positions and they haven't really got a great deal of support out there.

Fundamental to the institute's approach in this program is the pastoral care that is extended to their students. The training contract requires them to make six visits a year, and in the case of their distance students, that can mean trips of several hundreds of kilometers. As the trainer said, 'It's always good to meet them in their environment rather than our environment. If possible, we actually go to a lot of their homes'.

The trainers believe in the importance of this contact for building relationships, and try to refer to the student's location in later dealings with them, for example, by referring to locally growing plants.

Trainer 2

Trainer 2 confirmed the perspectives of the program developer and Trainer 1 in observing that social changes have been primarily responsible for the changed modes of training delivery that the

institute has adopted in the last few years. The first factor was the demand for flexibility from the market: once the training was available in distance mode to the students in remote locations, local students began to ask for access to the same program. The second factor was the increased demand from employers for their staff to have qualifications, not only in order to progress along their chosen career path, but to maintain their position on that path.

Trainer 2 did identify that it would be a positive thing if it were possible to undertake nationally based comparisons of delivery that addressed the challenge of going beyond meeting minimum requirements onto that of ensuring consistency of standards.

Student perspectives

The student's perspective was quite a narrow one, as she could draw only upon the experience of participating in this program, and had none other to compare it with. She appreciated the flexibility of video linking despite having had some technical difficulties in mastering the technology—but these were her only difficulties.

As Trainer 1 pointed out:
> The challenges are coming more from the technology that you're using to implement rather than from the Training Packages themselves. I mean students, if they're new, often don't realise that there is a difference anyway to what's gone before …

More insight was offered by the employer (who had also been a student) and the program developer, who as the program's principal teacher had himself been qualified in the field long before the days of training packages.

The employer had always found TAFE very co-operative and responsive, recognising that 'there are times when you can take time off and there are times when you can't'.

The employer remembered the opening-up of the training market to providers other than TAFE, and the appeal there might have been to her as a student in the option of completing accredited training much more quickly than if she stayed at TAFE. However, she concluded that: 'I really couldn't see the point of having the piece of paper if you hadn't learnt something along the way'.

She had found the introduction of training packages frustrating, but only because it was the third scheme she had studied under, and she had found the subject changes and content overlaps confusing.

The program developer thought that people who had attained their qualifications prior to training packages with two or three years of full-time study might see the quality of the current qualification as comparing unfavourably.

Conclusions

There are no surprises or luck involved in the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE's successful implementation of the National Training Package in Horticulture. The Horticulture and Environment Department has a clear commitment to meeting the training needs of their learners and other stakeholders, and a very apparent team loyalty that enables them to be responsive in ways it would not were all its members not working together towards the same goals.

For this team, the introduction of the training package was but the latest in a series of training initiatives to which they were accustomed, as training professionals, to respond. If there were challenges, they accepted them as necessary and characteristic of the process of change implementation. This is a team that continually demonstrates that it is prepared to 'go the distance' necessary to deliver the product.

Case study 5: The Outlook Training and Resource Centre

The implementation process: Roles of the main players

Those involved in this innovative implementation were:

✧ *The Outlook Training and Resource Centre:* whose training co-ordinator is this program's chief developer

✧ *Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation Inc.:* a coalition of outdoor recreation groups who represent and advocate on behalf of the industry, whose executive officer is on the board of the national industry training body, and who acted as mentor to the state industry training advisory body-sponsored pilot study

✧ *Recreation Training Queensland:* the state industry training advisory body for the outdoor recreation industry

The Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation acknowledges that an organisation such as The Outlook is well placed to be an influential role model to others in the outdoor recreation industry because of the experiential nature of their programs. They have credibility within the industry that some institution-based programs do not have. However, a persistent difficulty from the industry training advisory body's perspective is that so many organisations want more than an inspirational model—they want a detailed blueprint to follow. The other organisations selected to join with The Outlook in the industry training advisory body-sponsored assessor training were ones identified as being most likely to follow The Outlook's lead and to make a similar transition to using training packages. The industry training advisory body points out that many of these organisations have not in fact followed through with the training package implementation, indicating that they find it all too difficult. It is a source of concern for the industry training advisory body that some organisations in the industry prefer to continue doing business without seeking to comply with the Australian Recognition Framework (now the Australian Quality Training Framework).

In expressing resistance to the proposed changes to their mode of operation, some operators have asked the industry training advisory body: 'Well, you know, we've been doing something for the last 20, 30, 40 years, we haven't killed anyone, so you know, what's all of this about?'

The federation agreed that it was the fact that The Outlook was already a well-organised operation that made it relatively easy to adopt the requirements of the training package:

> The Outlook is an organisation that is well organised to the extent that it has a very accurate record of all the programs that it conducts, what staff facilitate those programs, what activities within those programs the staff conduct, and in which capacity they're involved. That obviously made it very easy for recognition of prior learning; for The Outlook just to print out a whole range of stuff which then formed the basis of the assessing because you know they could, when they needed to, perhaps comply with some of the requirements within the Training Package in each competency for people who've conducted a particular activity in a range of different locations and a range of different types of working conditions, all those sorts of things, where there's different client groups. Well, you know, a push of a button on the computer at The Outlook provided that sort of information from their database. And so it was very, in some ways, much easier for those people to prepare a portfolio of evidence. It's not the case for most people within the industry, we've been encouraging people for a number of

years to keep logbooks, but they're a fairly tiresome requirement and it's not like in the aviation industry where they must do it. A lot of people are pretty slack in keeping their logbooks so therefore the preparation of evidence becomes, for most people, too hard. And that's the bottom line.

Issues and how they were addressed in the implementation process

Issue	How implementation processes addressed the issue
Building industry's confidence in the capacity of the organisation to meet the training and assessment requirements and deliver the outcomes required by industry using the innovative approach	• Three industry experts sat on the assessment panel at the time that The Outlook undertook its pilot program, and the organisation has maintained its links with those people, using them as an advisory group to ensure ongoing compliance with industry standards.
	• Recreation Training Queensland and the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation invited other providers of outdoor recreation training to take part in the initial part of the pilot program, which involved workplace trainer and assessor training. The objective was to encourage higher levels of consistency in assessment practice throughout the industry in Queensland.
Making provision for professional development for staff involved in the training package implementation	• The Outlook views training and development as a core part of their business, essential to their operations, and not as an additional expense.
	• Each staff member's professional development plan is incorporated into the department's yearly organisational plan, and several times a year team professional development activities are conducted.
Ensuring parity between this approach and previous approaches to learning and assessment	• Training in this field has always involved the development and assessment of competencies, so there have been no difficulties in that transition.
	• Feedback is sought at the completion of every training program. Since the implementation of the training package, the feedback has indicated that The Outlook's approach has been more professional, which in turn reminds the learners of the need for them to be professional (as facilitators of outdoor recreation activities) too.
	• The program developer mentors new trainers by co-teaching and co-assessing on their first few courses.
	• Reference to, and use of, external industry experts is built into the program.
	• Strategic alliances have been built with other organisations where it has been identified that the two can be mutually supportive.
	• Statewide program moderation is acknowledged as a desirable, but currently practically unattainable, goal. (The commercial mindset also militates against this happening.)
Ensuring adequate resources to support the implementation of the approach	• Funding has to be matched with enthusiasm for the implementation to be successful.

Stakeholder perspectives

Industry's perspective (Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation and Recreation Training Queensland)

From the industry training advisory body's perspective, the most important factors in the success of the training package implementation at The Outlook were the roles played by the program developer and his lead trainer:

> I think it's the most important factor you need. Quite a lot of things within this whole national training framework, in terms of implementation, all the policies and guidelines in the world won't make any difference at all if [there are] no individuals on the ground who are actually leaping forward within their own immediate environment ... So for example, within [The Outlook], if it wasn't for [the program developer and his lead trainer], it wouldn't happen ... [Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation and Recreation Training Queensland] try to do good ... we invested some time and money, but if there weren't individuals willing to work and to take this up ... then it wouldn't have happened.

However, that enthusiasm has to be matched by having appropriate processes in place to support the implementation. In The Outlook's case, these processes had been set in place since the earliest days of training reform in the early 1990s. The industry coalition cites instances of organisations wanting to jump on the training bandwagon:

> Organisations that haven't seen training being a major part of their business, are suddenly putting their hand up and trying to become registered training organisations overnight, and it's just not working.

As far as industry is concerned, that sort of approach is not consistent with a commitment to quality. The industry coalition observes that those organisations which are committed to quality provision, like The Outlook, will not seek to cut corners, but will seek to implement quality processes such as moderation and to establish strategic alliances and collaborative partnerships:

> Those registered training organisations that are firm about producing quality and being perceived as giving a quality product, are finding they really need to be talking with other registered training organisations who are assessing ...

The industry coalition also pointed out a further benefit relating to The Outlook's decision not to restrict itself to addressing activity-specific competencies, but the generic competencies. In the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation's opinion, that signaled to participants in the process that they had skills other than those which they drew on to teach specific outdoor recreation activities, such as rock climbing, as it also 'indicated to people an ongoing career path, in perhaps moving from very active outdoor recreation field work, to management and administration'.

Employer's perspective

One of The Outlook's unique characteristics is that it is mainly involved in training clients who will then go on to train their own clients; for example, a worker within a community service agency will undertake an Outlook training program in order to have the requisite skills to work with their own clients—for example, adolescents. Thus while the employees of such agencies who use The Outlook's facilities and undertake their training are students of The Outlook, their organisations are employers of Outlook graduates. Therefore, the following perspective, while that of an employer, is also that of a student.

The employer/student works with treatment-resistant adolescents from all over Queensland, whose mental health problems can't be treated in their local hospitals. His organisation uses a rehabilitative model to get these young people operating at a high level of psycho-social functioning and back into the community. He was invited to be part of the pilot scheme for this program as he had previously undertaken training at The Outlook, and the program developer was keen to get his assessment of how effective he thought the new training approach was.

Joining the program enabled the employer/student to gain formal qualifications by putting his existing experience into a formal framework and giving him credit via the recognition of prior learning process for the competencies that he could demonstrate he already had.

The formal qualifications are an important component of his credibility as a facilitator of experiential learning with his adolescent clients, as it is only in the last five years that this treatment method has been adopted in Queensland, and it therefore has yet to prove its validity. He describes the need in his profession for formalising skills to run this type of training as 'professionalising the industry'. In addition to being more professional, the qualification enables graduates like the employer/student to offer formal units of competency at certificate I and II levels to their adolescent clients, whom he describes as 'wanting to learn'. He concludes that '[this training is] another string in our bow, really'.

Program developer/trainer's perspective

For the program developer (The Outlook's training co-ordinator) there was much to be gained by taking this opportunity to pilot approaches to assessment that would be required by the training package. First, it enabled them to use the credentialing of existing staff and other trainers who use their facilities as a professional development exercise in that it gave staff experience in the assessment process which their students would later undertake. Second, it allowed them to formalise and have accredited some of what they had previously been offering as in-house, non-accredited programs. Although their training had all been to industry standard, it had not been recognised as such. According to the program developer:

> I think it's motivated us or allowed us to actually present training, to deliver training that is going to be more widely sought after and not only by the [learners] but also by the management. Because it's accredited training they are more likely to send the staff … because of a qualification outcome at the end of it.

The initiative has even been positive for those learners who choose not to undertake a complete program. As they note: 'now we can provide a training pathway'.

Not only is the approach good for the learners, it is beneficial to the trainers as well:

> I think it creates a lot more administration for us, but I think the outcomes have been improving our training processes.

> You are constantly checking what you have done or doing …

> I think we are much more professional now, we have to be … there are requirements, we follow certain procedures in the process [that create] a paper trail …

What's more, improving their processes and programs to this extent has also inspired staff at The Outlook to want to deliver programs at the next level, and to develop a unique program that integrates components of the Training Package in Outdoor Recreation with the Training Package in Community Services to become the Certificate IV in Program Development and Facilitation. This program was designed to meet the specific requirements of The Outlook's clients, and to create 'a training pathway' for them.

The program developer acknowledges that for many organisations involved in training, there is a lack of understanding of what the training packages offer, and that this leads to unrealistic expectations sometimes: 'A training package doesn't provide you with policies … and … organisational decisions'.

According to the program developer, liaising with industry, both directly and via the industry bodies, is also integral to the success of the training package implementation.

Student's perspective

The student had undertaken training in the industry long before the introduction of training packages and, so, was well placed to comment on the changes in the approach to training that were evident in her recent study. She was very appreciative of the acknowledgement of her experience that the recognition of prior learning process offered, and identified that as a significant change. She thought that the increased use of self-assessment was a positive thing, as was The Outlook's supportive approach to its learners. In contrast to previous training, she thought that the training package was 'more comprehensive and covers a wider range of things'.

Conclusions

The introduction of the training package has been a catalyst for two innovations at The Outlook. First, it was the prompt to formalise their outdoor recreation programs so that they could provide nationally recognised training. Second, it enabled the organisation to add further value to its clients' opportunities for learning by inspiring them to develop their own Certificate IV in Program Development and Facilitation.

However, neither of these initiatives would have been so successfully implemented had it not been for two other essential ingredients: an organisational history of best practice and a dedicated and energetic partnership between the industry bodies and the program developer and his trainers, committed to doing what it takes to establish a successful program.

Case study 6: Colac Adult and Community Education

The implementation process

The implementation process has focussed on training at the certificate IV, diploma and advanced diploma levels. The innovation was initially trialled and implemented in Colac Adult and Community Education before being offered to other organisations as a way to meet their training needs. Staff from Colac travelled to other organisations and provided training and support to staff, rather than asking staff to travel to Colac for their training. The underlying principle was to provide training that best fitted with staff needs, rather than the registered training organisation deciding what would be offered. This principle was further developed by offering training in the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training to other organisations to enable them to support and to manage their own training, rather than rely on Colac to provide these services. The key developer of the innovation emphasised that the task of implementation was a 'continual learning process', as the innovation had to be shaped to fit each new context in which it was applied.

Colac had invested considerable time and effort in ensuring that their staff had access to a wide range of teaching resources on an 'as-needs' basis. The organisation is currently working on a project to develop a multi-media centre to support the provision of training via the internet. This will enable staff to download resources from the internet when they are 'out in the field'.

Various issues arose during the implementation process. Assessment posed some significant challenges, particularly in relation to ensuring that assessment is commensurate with the level of qualification being sought. One of the key developers identified that a critical issue for further work revolves around the development of a process of moderation, where Colac links with other registered training organisations delivering the same level of qualifications. To this point, Colac has been working largely in isolation and this was acknowledged as being less than ideal.

The value of the innovation has been communicated to the wider industry using a number of strategies. Colac is a member of an alliance of disability service providers. This alliance provides a forum whereby Colac is able to talk directly with other service providers about its approach and how it might be used to meet the training needs of disability workers. Colac has also been active in providing a consultancy service whereby staff have gone into other organisations to talk about their work and how it might be implemented in different contexts. This communication of the innovation has been facilitated by Colac's long history within the disability sector. Staff from Colac believe that there is widespread support for their innovative approach and have won recognition for their work through an award. The Community Services and Health Industry Training Advisory Board has also played an active role in promoting the work of Colac.

From the perspective of the developer of the innovation, little resistance was experienced in the initial development and implementation within Colac. The organisation had a history of involvement during the early days of training reform and had spent considerable time coming to grips with issues such as competency standards and competency-based training and assessment. The organisation has also developed an understanding that the competency-based approach to training was a more 'practical one' which focussed on 'what people needed'. Over time, staff made the adjustment from thinking exclusively of formal classroom training to the development and assessment of competency in a wide range of contexts.

Other issues that have arisen during the implementation of the training package to organisations other than Colac include:

✧ managing the challenge of flexibility (which can be expensive)

✧ addressing issues relating to the way in which funding is provided for training. Current approaches to calculating student contact hours mean that Colac is funded to provide only a limited number of training places. Interest in the innovation has far exceeded the number of places the organisation is funded to provide. The organisation has resorted to offering training places to people who are able to fund their own training

✧ overcoming the perception that the qualifications achieved may not be the 'same quality' because there is no face-to-face delivery of training or because the qualifications are not being granted by TAFE

✧ promoting an understanding of competency-based training and assessment issues. Some people have difficulty equating training with the use of the innovation, suggesting that they 'don't think they've really been assessed as competent because they haven't sat in a classroom'.

Evaluation continues to be a feature of Colac's work in using the innovation with other organisations. Colac has established 'internal moderation systems' for staff working in different locations. Management reviews are held frequently and provide a forum for staff to meet, report on their progress and to discuss the approaches to training and assessment they are using in the organisations they are working with.

A range of issues was identified as being of particular relevance to the task of implementing innovations relating to training package. These issues and the manner in which they were addressed are summarised below.

Issues and how they were addressed in the implementation process

Issue	How implementation processes addressed the issue
Building industry's confidence in the capacity of Colac to meet the training and assessment requirements and deliver the outcomes required by industry using the innovation	• The process ensured that training personnel in Colac had the appropriate skills. • Colac recruited 'for excellence' by bringing in people who had the additional skills and expertise needed to ensure the proper implementation of the innovation in other organisations. • Particular attention was paid to 'demonstrating' to potential learners that Colac had implemented a rigorous assessment methodology.
Ensuring parity between different approaches to learning and assessment which lead to the same qualification	This is an issue that Colac intends to address through the implementation of a moderation system where it can compare itself with organisations that are providing institution-based pathways to the same qualifications. At the moment Colac is working largely in isolation.

The commitment of a team leader or person to drive the implementation process was considered critical for success. This person needed to have 'real commitment' to the approach and needed to understand that they were offering a way of approaching training that needed to become 'part of the way you [the organisation] operate'. Motivation was also considered to be critical, as it was a key ingredient to ensuring that workers initially engaged in, and remained committed to, the developmental pathway designed for them.

Stakeholder perspectives

Staff perspectives

The staff member interviewed for the case study was employed to work with a range of disability organisations in isolated regional areas. The work entailed contact with a variety of learners, all of whom were undertaking training in very diverse sets of competencies.

Prior to the introduction of the training package, the staff member had been employed by Colac as a teacher where she provided 'up-front delivery', primarily aimed at 'imparting information'. This role had changed with the implementation of the training package. Her primary role was to 'look for flexible approaches' to meet the needs of the learners with whom she worked. This was primarily done by ascertaining a learner's current level of competence, mapping this against the competency standards and then designing a training plan to suit the individual needs of the learner.

The staff member noted that people working in the disability field are not exposed to a well-developed learning culture. Learning usually takes the form of 'sitting by Ned or Nellie' or learning through the experience of work. By these methods, over time, staff gradually acquired the skills and knowledge they needed to do their jobs effectively. Recent changes, including the introduction of statutory requirements, have challenged the efficacy of these practices. People have begun to see that perhaps their colleagues are not reliable sources of knowledge, especially in relation to the statutory requirements. New ways of supporting learning that take account of the needs of staff needed to be developed and the training package provided the mechanism by which this could be achieved.

Preparation for involvement with the innovation arose out of the staff member's own personal experiences of having to sit in the classroom for a designated time instead of being able to have her competence recognised. This was also assisted by the organisation's vision and preparedness to respond to issues like this with new and innovative ways of training.

During implementation various issues arose. Limited funding reduced the number of people with whom Colac could work. There were also some limits to the amount of flexibility that could be shown in terms of meeting the needs of the learners. The implementation of the innovation also required a high degree of organisation. This was especially significant where the organisations being serviced by Colac were spread across a wide geographical area.

There were a few factors that assisted the staff in the implementation process. These included:

✧ involvement in existing networks of disability service providers which had given Colac a profile within the industry

✧ access to the Disability Service Training Support Services which fostered closer links with organisations

✧ support from the management within organisations who could see the innovation as providing them with an efficient and effective way of developing new knowledge and skills

✧ an entrepreneurial approach to seeking out potential markets for training services that enabled Colac to expand their service provision

✧ a willingness on the part of Colac to use its status as a training provider to assist organisations to get funded training and to be prepared to provide a diversity of training programs, rather than simply disability-specific training

✧ a preparedness on the part of Colac to come to organisations to provide training rather than expect organisations to send their staff to Colac

♦ Colac's knowledge of other organisations that provided insight and assisted in helping to negotiate options for meeting the identified training needs.

Industry perspectives

The innovation developed by Colac has industry-wide applicability and its implementation across a range of organisations has the potential to make a significant impact on the provision of training in the disability services sector. In order to obtain this industry-wide perspective, a representative from the Community Services and Health Industry Training Advisory Board was asked to provide a perspective on the innovation process and its implementation.

Prior to the implementation of the training package, providers in the disabilities sector had developed a range of flexible approaches to meet their staff training needs. The training package was able to build on this history. At a general level, the Community Services Training Package acted as a stimulus for more private and community-based organisations (such as Colac) to become involved in training for the disability service providers. It also acted as a catalyst for the development of different ways of providing this training. The training package was viewed as a 'tool' which allowed for a range of approaches to training, including the up-front assessment of existing workers' skills, the development of flexible training pathways and, more generally, a move away from the use of a single, consistent model of training provision. Another factor that drove the quest for more flexible approaches to training was the shortage of skilled workers for the sector in Victoria. This has been a major issue for both governments and providers. The pressure for the implementation of service delivery standards also had significant implications for training.

The need for training for existing and new workers, in order to address perceived skill shortages, was a significant factor in promoting the development of flexible models of training, including customising training, to meet the specific needs of workers. This was seen as being of particular importance because many of the people who work in disability services have developed a wide range of skills and experience and there was a need to have a mechanism by which these could be formally recognised. The training package has enabled this to occur.

The innovation at Colac was seen as part of an industry-wide strategy in which the industry training advisory body played a key role in communicating the benefits of training and the promotion of flexible developmental pathways to nationally recognised qualifications to new and existing workers. The industry training advisory body has supported organisations such as Colac and recognised their efforts through the development of a training award, promoting case studies of good practice and the sponsorship of a conference to disseminate information about innovative ways in which the Training Package for Community Services was being implemented. *Framing the future* funds have also been used to support some of these activities.

The industry training advisory body's representative believed that support for innovations, such as the one developed by Colac, varied across the disability sector. There were some organisations developing similar initiatives. Others were 'a bit more conservative'. The person driving the implementation of an innovation, such as the one developed by Colac, was singled out as playing a critical role in building acceptance of new and more flexible approaches to training. This person needed to be 'creative and prepared to listen' in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

Previous reforms in the vocational education and training sector had laid the foundation for practices such as the use of training plans. Competency standards and the development of curricula to meet the outcomes contained in the standards had assisted in the development of a culture of training which meant that the move to training packages 'was not a huge one'.

The Director of the Cooinda Day Placement Centre also provided his perspective on the innovation process at Colac and its implementation.

He commented that workplace-based learning has proved to be an effective model for them. Workers in the disability sector receive additional payment for having attained qualifications, so they are motivated to engage in training. Several staff from the centre had engaged in training provided by Colac. The learners did not want to have to spend a lot of time away from the workplace in order to complete their training. The centre has only a few staff and the learners and the employer both felt that there would be a negative impact on the centre if staff were regularly off site attending training at Colac, which is about 45 minutes drive away. The workers generally had significant experience working in the disability sector and therefore opted to have their existing skills mapped against the training package competencies using the recognition of current competency process. Additional training was provided to cover any gaps in skills and knowledge.

The director mentioned that the flexible training arrangement offered by Colac had been clearly communicated to him and that Colac provided a high level of customer service, including visits and direct communication. He thought that the training package environment had led to an improvement in how well training options were communicated to employers and industry people by training providers.

The director indicated that he did not have a good idea of the factors that have influenced the training package implementation agenda, but he did think that the flexibility inherent in the training package approach to delivery was well suited to the disability sector. He mentioned that many disability workers commenced working in the sector with vocational qualifications such as carpentry and horticulture which could be used in vocation-focussed therapy. Vocational therapy is a process which attempts to provide learners with vocational experience in a caring and nurturing environment. Workers engaged in vocational therapy must therefore have very good 'people skills' and they inevitably gain considerable competence in meeting the broader needs of their learners while engaging them in vocational activities. Workers with extensive experience of this type may then wish to move on to other roles in the disability sector and may want to have their skills as disability workers recognised in the form of qualifications. The recognition of current competence process has then been used to provide a time-efficient pathway to a qualification as a disability worker. This flexible pathway to qualifications was thought to be a major strength of the training provided by Colac and of the training package environment.

> The new system is a good way to go as it allows people with other commitments to study … and the flexible approach used means more people can have access to training

Learner perspectives

One learner who had completed a certificate IV qualification was interviewed to gain insights into her perspective on the innovation. She believed that the main strengths of the approach were that the innovation provided the opportunity to learn with her colleagues in the workplace. All 'were in the same boat' and this facilitated the sharing of information and resources. The opportunity to learn at work but away from the usual work routine was also valued. The learner noted that the support of the facilitator from Colac was 'very helpful'. The facilitator:

> … prodded us in the right directions, she assisted us with research … and was always available for us if we needed her help. And she was also very willing to boost us up, give us a bit of confidence and make us feel important and make us feel as though we were doing a good job.

Another strength was that the innovation assisted the learner in receiving recognition of skills and knowledge already obtained, which, in turn, provided a boost to her confidence as an adult learner.

A limitation of the training was noted, in that the format of the course appeared to change between the first and second years of the program. The learner was unable to provide details on the nature of this change other than her belief that prior to it the course seemed 'more comprehensive'. After the change, the learner believed that the course 'lacked quality' and that 'you felt it was being brushed over the top'.

Conclusions

The innovation developed by Colac Adult and Community Education is an example of how training packages have enabled training to be provided to existing workers in an occupation in ways that are flexible and responsive. The innovation provides insights into how a learning culture is integral to appropriating the flexibility embedded in training packages for the benefit of both employers and their staff.

Appendix B:
Informants in the study

Project reference group

A project reference group was established to support the researchers in the management and conduct of the study. This group comprised the following members:

✧ Ms Trixie van Leeuwen, Head, Education Development Centre, Canberra Institute of Technology, Canberra, ACT. Area of expertise: policy and implementation at Institute level and member of National Curriculum Network

✧ Mr Bob Paton, National Executive Officer, Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Industry Training Advisory Body, North Sydney, NSW. Area of expertise: industry training advisory body representative

✧ Mr Andrew Boorman, Principal Policy Officer, VET Quality Branch, Department of Education, Training and Employment, Adelaide, SA. Area of expertise: involved in a parallel project on implementation of training packages in institutional settings and also a state training authority representative.

Industry training advisory bodies

The industry training advisory bodies contacted in developing a shortlist of case study sites included:

in New South Wales:

Arts Training NSW

NSW Communications ITAB

NSW Community Services and Health ITAB

NSW Finance Insurance and Business Services ITAB

NSW Light Manufacturing ITAB (Textile Clothing & Footwear Sector)

NSW Process Manufacturing ITAB

in Victoria:

Victorian Community, Services & Health ITB Inc.

Electro-technology, Printing, Information & Communications

Transport Training Victoria

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association

Victorian Wholesale, Retail & Personal Services ITB

in Queensland:

Arts Training Queensland

Business Services Industry Training Council

Seafood Training Queensland

Recreation Training Queensland

Forest Industries ITAB

Graphic Communications Training Board (Qld) Inc.

Local Government ITAB

Queensland Rural Industry Council Inc.

in South Australia:

South Australian Community Services and Health ITAB

Some industry training advisory bodies (for example, the Queensland Graphic Communications Training Board) indicated that it was too early in the implementation phase to recommend any specific training arrangements. Others (for example, the National Mining Industry Training Advisory Board) indicated that they did not think any innovation in training package implementation of particular merit was occurring at that time. Most, however, made at least one, and some made more than one recommendation.

Interviewees

The numbers and categories of individuals interviewed at each site were as follows.

Organisation	Roles of participants	Number interviewed
Canberra Institute of Technology	Administrative Services Officer	1
	Curriculum Managers	2
	Heads of Teaching Departments	4
	Training Package Implementation Project Officers	3
	Teachers	3
	Technical Officer	1
	Total	**14**
Hunter School of Performing Arts	District Vocational Education Consultant	1
	Employer	1
	Students	2
	Teachers	2
	ITAB (Executive Officer)	1
	Total	**7**
Regency Institute of TAFE	Employer	1
	Head of Department	1
	Learning centre Facilitator	1
	Total	**3**
Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE	Employer	1
	Head of Teaching Department	1
	Student	1
	Teachers	2
	Total	**5**
The Outlook Training and Resource Centre	Employer	1
	Learner	1
	Industry Coalition (Executive Officer)	1
	ITAB (Executive Officer)	1
	Training Manager	1
	Total	**5**
Colac Adult and Community Education	Learner	1
	ITAB (Executive Officer)	1
	Teacher	1
	Training Manager	1
	Total	**4**
	Grand total interviewed	**38**

Participants in the electronic forum

The foundation members of the training package implementation email discussion forum were as follows.

Researcher, Canberra Institute of Technology, ACT

Director, Civic Theatre, Newcastle, NSW

Research Director, Canberra Institute of Technology, ACT

Executive Officer, Recreational Training Queensland ITAB, Qld.

Training Co-ordinator, The Outlook, Qld.

Consultant, Canberra, ACT

Vocational Education Consultant, Dept. of Education and Training (Newcastle District Office), NSW

Head of Department, Canberra Institute of Technology, ACT

Teacher, Hunter School of Performing Arts, NSW

Research Director, University of South Australia, SA

Executive Officer, Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation, Qld.

Acting CEO of Adult Communication Education, Colac ACE, Vic.

Researcher, Canberra Institute of Technology, ACT

Trainer, Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, Qld.

Researcher, University of South Australia, SA

Trainer, Colac ACE, Vic.

Senior Researcher, Canberra Institute of Technology, ACT

Senior Manager, Canberra Institute of Technology, ACT

Executive Officer, Community Service and Health ITB, Vic.

Appendix C:
Interview schedules

Interview Schedule: People involved in the development of the innovative approach(es)

(a) Antecedents

1. How was training for this occupational group/industry undertaken prior to the implementation of the training package?

2. Apart from the availability of the training package, what factors influenced the decision to develop the innovative approach(es) to learning and assessment? *(Prompt if necessary: skill shortages, structural and technological change, enhance access, encourage new types of recruits into the area, provide pathways to existing qualification, increase numbers of existing workers with nationally recognised qualifications, others?)*

3. What was the strongest driver for change?

(b) Nature of the innovative approach(es)

4. What is the exact nature of the innovative approach(es) to learning and assessment that have been implemented/are being planned? *Description of innovative approach(es) to include comment on the following issues:*
   ✧ *occupational areas and AQF levels addressed by the approach(es)*
   ✧ *the mix of institutional (if applicable) and workplace-based training (including the use of flexible modes of delivery if applicable)*
   ✧ *how has the approach impacted on the methods of delivery of training?*
   ✧ *how issues of integrating learning and assessment have been handled (if applicable)*

(c) Implementation of the innovative approach(es) to learning and assessment

5. How have/will the innovative approach(es) be implemented?
   ✧ Who is involved?
   ✧ What is the role of:
      – registered training organisations
      – enterprises
      – group training schemes
      – schools
      – other parties
      in the implementation of these approaches?

6. How will the changes be communicated to the major stakeholders and employers/industry groups in particular?

7. What difficulties have been encountered/might be encountered in the implementation process?

8. What factors have facilitated/do you anticipate will facilitate the implementation process?

9. How widespread is the support for the innovative approach(es)? Is there any resistance from any particular group? If yes, why might this be so?

10. How (if at all) has the introduction of the new approach(es) been influenced by previous training reforms and their acceptance within the occupational group/industry (e.g. the introduction of CBT/CBE, RPL, etc.)

11. How important was the role of the facilitator/team leader in 'driving' the process to the stage where implementation could occur?

If the innovations involve alteration to existing learning and assessment practices, ask the following (modify according to the nature of the innovation in terms of it addressing either assessment and or learning approaches):

12. How has/will the implementation process address(ed) the following issues:
   ✧ building industry/other interested parties' confidence in the capacity of enterprises/RTOs to meet the training requirements of the innovative approach(es)?
   ✧ building industry/other interested parties' confidence in the capacity of enterprises/RTOs to meet the assessment requirements of the innovative approach(es)?
   ✧ building industry/other interested parties' confidence in the ability of the new approach(es) to deliver outcomes required by industry?
   ✧ ensuring parity between the new approach(es) to learning and assessment and other alternative approaches to achieving the same qualification that may already exist?
   ✧ ensuring the quality of the innovative approach(es)?
   ✧ ensuring adequate professional development for teachers/trainers involved in implementation?
   ✧ integrating on- and off-job learning and assessment (if applicable)?
   ✧ ensuring/obtaining adequate resources for implementation?

If the innovation(s) to learning and assessment involve the development of entirely new pathways, ask the following (modify according to the nature of the innovation(s) in terms of it addressing either assessment and/or learning approaches)

13. How has/will the implementation process address(ed) the following issues:
   ✧ building industry/other interested parties' acceptance of the innovative approach(es)?
   ✧ building industry/other interested parties' confidence in the capacity of enterprises/RTOs to meet the training/assessment requirements of the innovative approach(es)?
   ✧ building industry/other interested parties' confidence in the ability of new approaches to deliver outcomes required by industry?
   ✧ ensuring the quality of the innovative approach(es)? What measures have been put in place to evaluate the quality of the outcomes?
   ✧ ensuring adequate professional development for teachers/trainers involved in implementation? What types of professional development have occurred?
   ✧ integrating on- and off-job learning and assessment (if applicable)?
   ✧ ensuring/obtaining adequate resources for implementation?

14. Where there any/do you predict there will be any funding or legislative issues that will affect the implementation of the innovative approach(es)? How did you/might you deal with these issues?

15. Any other comments about the innovative approach(es) or the implementation of the approach(es) that you would like to make?

Interview Schedule: Teachers/trainers who will be or are involved in the implementation of the innovative approach(es)

[Introductions, focus talk about your experience in implementing/preparing to implement the innovative approach(es) to learning and assessment that have arisen out of the […] training package]

1. What is your role/will be your role in the implementation of the innovative approach(es) to learning and assessment that are being introduced as a part of this training package?

2. How has your work changed/how will it change as a result of the introduction of the innovative approach(es)?

3. What do you think influenced the introduction of the innovative approach(es)?

4. What difficulties have been encountered/might be encountered in the implementation process?

5. What factors have facilitated/do you anticipate will facilitate the implementation process?

6. How well prepared were you/are you for the introduction of the innovative approach(es)?

7. How widespread is the support for the innovative approach(es)? Is there any resistance from any particular group? If yes, why might this be so?

8. Any other comments?

Interview Schedule: Employers who have been or will be involved in the implementation of the innovative approach(es)

1. What has been your experience with the implementation of the innovative approach(es) to learning and assessment that is/are being introduced as a part of the […] training package? What has it meant for you? What have you/your enterprise had to do?

2. How well were the changes of approach to training communicated to you and your industry?

3. What factors do you think influenced the introduction of the innovative approach(es)?

4. How widespread is the support for the innovative approach(es) across the industry? Is there any resistance? If yes, why might this be so?

5. How well prepared were you for the introduction of the innovative approach(es)? What was helpful? What could have been different?

6. How confident are you that the new approach(es) will deliver the outcomes you require? Give reasons for your answer. Do you think other employers share your level of confidence? Why might this be the case?

7. Any other comments?

Interview Schedule: Learners who are experiencing the innovative approach(es)

1. What do you think are the main strengths of […]? [whatever the innovative approach is – even though it won't be 'innovative' to the learners, as they will probably not have experienced previous approaches]

2. What do you think are the main limitations/weaknesses of […]?

3. Did the approach suit your learning needs?

4. Do you have any suggestions for improvement? If so, what?

NCVER

The National Centre for Vocational
Education Research is Australia's
primary research and development
organisation in the field of vocational
education and training.

NCVER undertakes and manages
research programs and monitors the
performance of Australia's training
system.

NCVER provides a range of
information aimed at improving the
quality of training at all levels.