Chapter VIII.3
Teachers, Instructors and Trainers: An Australian Focus

Erica Smith

1 Introduction

In Australia, the workforce in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as compared to that in other sectors of education is not easy to describe or analyse. TVET practitioners work in a variety of institutions, locations and roles, and do not necessarily see themselves as a coherent body of professionals. This diversity makes it difficult to generalize about practitioners and, more importantly, for governments and practitioners' employers to devise policies and practices that address their required qualifications and professional development.

Arrangements among countries vary depending upon the way in which the TVET system is organized, but in general there is some commonality in the ways in which teachers, instructors and trainers can be classified. One way is by their working context (which we may call 'site of training practice') and another is by the extent to which the training they deliver is involved in some way with government-accredited qualifications (which we may call 'formality of training'). A third way is by the extent to which training is a full part of the individual's career (which we may call 'role focus of trainer'). This chapter uses Australia as a case study to examine TVET teachers, trainers and instructors and the ways in which their skills are developed and certified, using these classifications as an organizing framework.

2 The Australian Context for Formal TVET

The past fifteen years have seen significant changes to the nature and operation of the TVET sector or, as it is more usually known in Australia, the vocational education and training (VET) sector. The Australian VET sector has grown considerably over the past decade, from 1.2 million participants in 1995 to 1.7 million in 2003 (NCVER, 2004) with a slight decline to 1.6 million in 2004 (NCVER, 2005). Substantial changes in the system, known as training reforms, over the past fifteen years (Smith & Keating, 2003) have improved national consistency of qualifications and made competency-based training the norm. These changes have been accompanied

by intensive marketing of VET qualifications to industry and considerable government investment in the system, including funding for some work-based delivery by enterprises (Smith et al., 2005). To a certain extent, there has also been a movement away from a strong focus on up-front and entry-level training to an increased emphasis on in-service training for existing workers. Central to the reforms has been a consolidation of thousands of existing state-based qualifications into a national system of around eighty competency-based 'training packages', each package containing a number of qualifications at different levels. Such qualifications, and the competency standards of which they are composed, are known as 'nationally recognized training'. A strict quality control system, the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), was introduced in 2002 to monitor all organizations delivering nationally-recognized training. From 1994 until 2005, the VET system was overseen by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), although state and territory systems actually managed training delivery processes. In mid-2005 ANTA was disbanded and its functions subsumed under the federal Department of Education, Science and Training.

In terms of provision of VET, there has been a movement away from a near monopoly by the Technical and Further Education System (TAFE), the public provider, to one in which over 4,000 registered training organizations (RTOs) exist (Smith & Keating, 2003).[1] Private RTOs can access government funding for certain programmes, particularly, but not only, for training of apprentices and trainees. There is therefore a shift in the balance of public funding from public to private training providers. Some private RTOs are not-for-profit; they may, for example, be local adult and community education (ACE) colleges which offer formal VET qualifications alongside hobby courses or access courses for people returning to study, or from disadvantaged backgrounds. Firms can become RTOs and award qualifications to their workers themselves, or they may work in partnership with TAFE or another RTO. Around 200 companies have become what is known as 'enterprise RTOs', able to deliver and award national qualifications; these include some of the largest employers in Australia such as Coles-Myer, the largest retail chain, and McDonalds Australia, the fast-food chain.

Much government funding for VET relates to the apprenticeship system. There are almost 400,000 apprentices and trainees in training in Australia (Walters, 2003), of whom a proportion are newly-recruited workers including school-leavers, but of whom a large number are existing workers who have been offered the opportunity to gain an employment-based qualification through in-service training, often on-the-job with no day release to college.

3 VET Practitioners

The previous section outlined the range and diversity of VET practice, together with substantial changes that have taken place in the sector over the past fifteen years. It is not surprising that these factors have influenced both the nature of VET practitioners and their qualifications and training.

It is difficult to establish the size of the teaching workforce in formal VET, but it is thought that there are around 40,000 full-time TAFE teachers and perhaps 300,000 other people involved in VET teaching and training (Guthrie, 2003). The larger figure involves assessors and others involved in workplace delivery of VET, for whom training might only be a small part of their job, as well as part-time TAFE teachers. TAFE systems are administered by each of Australia's eight state and territory governments, so the nature and conditions of teachers' work vary quite widely.

3.1 Site of Training Practice

In Australia, VET practitioners may work in a range of contexts, which include the following (arranged in what might be considered the order of 'closeness to industry'):

- trainers in firms or non-profit/government enterprises;
- trainers in industry skill centres;
- trainers working for private consultancy firms or employer associations;
- trainers in public or private technical or further education colleges;
- VET teachers in secondary schools.

In firms or other enterprises, people work in a variety of training roles. These may range from those who coach people on-the-job (Harris, Simons & Bone, 2000) to those who are responsible for human-resource development (HRD) functions for large organizations. This type of VET practitioner may have one of a variety of job titles, such as training officer, HRD officer or learning and development manager.

Industry skill-centres offer off-the-job training to a range of firms in an industry area, as do private consultancy firms or employer associations. Sometimes, skill centres are managed by employer associations. Trainers in these types of companies may spend much of their time delivering face-to-face training or may undertake other roles as well.

The largest number of VET practitioners is employed by TAFE—the public further education system—and comprises a core of full-time teachers augmented by a considerable number of part-time staff who generally teach as an addition to their 'day' jobs in trades and professions. For example, the teachers may be plumbers or accountants who teach plumbing or accounting in the evening. Students who are studying as apprentices attend in the daytime, so are generally taught by full-time teachers. There are also some part-timers whose only work is in TAFE. This traditional pattern of TAFE teaching persists, although there has been an extension of casual and temporary contract staff (Forward, 2004). The TAFE workforce is relatively old, with many teachers in their 40s and 50s. TAFE is becoming increasingly feminized, with many female teachers being appointed to teach relatively new teaching areas such as hospitality, retail and community services, while the more traditional TAFE areas such as engineering and construction, where most of the teachers are male, are in relative—although not absolute—decline (Guthrie, 2003).

Part-time and casual VET teachers are more likely to be female than male, as in the workforce as a whole (Harris et al., 2001).

In the private sector, with over 4,000 RTOs now registered—of whom only a few hundred are in the public sector—the non-TAFE VET workforce is much larger than it used to be. Non-TAFE practitioners have some different characteristics from TAFE teachers: for example, private RTOs often recruit younger staff early in their careers who are willing to accept a relatively low rate of pay (Guthrie, 2003). These practitioners are more likely to be involved in selling training to companies, in assessment and in administrative work rather than in teaching. This is because the most typical client group for non-TAFE RTOs is on-the-job or work-based trainees. With these students, teachers travel to the trainee organization's premises to plan training and assess the trainee's performance rather than the student attending the RTO for face-to-face teaching. This makes the job quite different from that of the traditional TAFE teacher, who is more likely to deliver training to a group of students in a classroom or workshop, although TAFE teachers are increasingly involved in such 'non-standard' work. Moreover, non-TAFE RTOs are heavy users of nationally developed learning materials in their teaching and assessment; so their staff are less likely than TAFE teachers to be involved in programming or writing learning materials.

The rapid growth of VET in schools (Polesol et al., 2004) has led to many school-teachers becoming qualified to deliver accredited VET qualifications through the curriculum based on 'training packages'. Teachers of VET in secondary schools are, however, outside the scope of this chapter, which focuses only on the VET sector. The qualifications of VET teachers in schools fall in a complex arena (Green, 2004), which incorporates an added level of regulatory requirements to do with state and territory school-teacher accreditation bodies. Many teachers of VET in schools teach traditional school subjects as well as VET subjects, and teachers of VET in schools generally identify themselves as school-teachers rather than as VET teachers. Thus, these teachers are quite different from VET teachers and are best discussed separately.

3.2 Formality of Training

Another way of looking at VET practitioners is to consider the extent to which they are involved in delivering formal qualifications. In Australia, this normally means whether they are delivering qualifications from 'training packages' or, to a lesser extent, some other nationally recognized qualifications that are outside the training-package system. Practitioners who work for an RTO, whether TAFE or a private RTO, are likely to spend most of their time delivering and/or assessing formal qualifications, or sometimes short courses that are called 'statements of attainment' and consist of single or multiple units of competency. Such practitioners need a particular skill set that relates to competency-based training and assessment, and requires compliance with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). Teachers may also be involved with other formal accredited courses, such as those

relating to proprietary training for computer software, for example, and this may require additional qualifications or certification for the teachers. However, particularly in ACE providers, there are many teachers who are involved in the delivery of courses that do not have a qualification outcome.

Traditionally, training in enterprises, skill centres and the like has not involved formality; while companies have offered off-the-job training courses or sent employees to courses offered externally, courses did not normally attract qualifications and the performance of trainees was not formally assessed. With the increasing adoption of nationally recognized training in enterprises, however, this has changed. Sometimes trainers in enterprises deliver such training, or sometimes they work closely with other RTOs who deliver the training, with staff in the enterprise perhaps assisting with assessment (Smith et al., 2005). These developments have led to a new breed of enterprise training staff, very familiar with the VET system, and who know how to use it to the benefit of their organizations (Chappell & Johnston, 2003). As enterprises have increased their use of nationally-recognized training and their involvement with the VET system, they have also learned how this form of training can be integrated more effectively with recruitment, selection, career progression and organization change processes (Smith et al., 2005). It is the administration of the integration of enterprise-level training with the national training system that is becoming the unique feature of enterprise-based training staff in Australia. However there are still companies and therefore training staff who are not closely engaged with the national training system, and these practitioners would identify more closely with 'traditional HRD' as a field of practice (Koornheef, Oostvogel & Poell, 2005).

3.3 Role Focus of Trainer

In many cases TVET practitioners have roles apart from their training roles. In firms they may have roles in other fields of activity within the human resource-management function, working as a manager or supervisor, or simply performing some training activities while contributing mainly as an operational or shop-floor worker. Even staff who identify primarily as trainers may spend much of their time planning or brokering training rather than delivering training.

In some RTO contexts, the RTO is part of a fuller range of services within which the practitioner works. For example, many not-for-profit RTOs (as well as some for-profit RTOs) offer employment services or counselling services to clients, particularly disadvantaged clients, as well as providing training. This has happened since the Australian federal government has progressively over the past two decades put out many such services to tender. A prime example of this type of RTO is Mission Australia,[2] which delivers over 100 national qualifications in every state and territory, as well as non-accredited training. Its staff may move between employment services and training activities.

Even in those RTOs that are primarily training providers, there are large numbers of VET practitioners who have a number of roles as individuals. Trainers in public and private RTOs may only be part-time. They may spend much of their working week in industry, or may work across a range of RTOs. Their commitment to each RTO and their understanding of organizational culture and norms may be quite low, and they may be disadvantaged in terms of access to staff development activities.

4 Common Challenges in Australian VET Practice

While the VET workforce is diverse, there are some common challenges that all practitioners are facing; as well as groups of challenges particular to certain types of practitioners. A challenge related to all training is the increasing use of flexible delivery in both institutional and enterprise settings. E-learning is the most obvious example, although delivery may be flexible in time or place as well as mode (Smith & Keating, 2003, p. 129). Research has shown (e.g. Brennan, 2003) that e-learning does not suit all learners, and many providers, both in enterprises and in RTOs, are reasonably cautious about the extent to which they use it; however, in such a large country like Australia with a small population, there are obvious advantages to learning methods that do not rely on teacher and student being at the same location at the same time. An example of an enterprise that uses e-learning extensively, but not at a sophisticated level is Coles-Myer.[3] This company uses on-line recruitment and selection processes which have recently extended to on-line induction modules, as well as, for example, some skills training which can be delivered to check-out operators at their check-outs. Coles-Myer's uptake of such systems was preceded by a study into attitudes of managers and employees (Elkner, 2001). In the public domain, TAFE in New South Wales has a delivery unit—the Open Education and Training Network (OTEN)[4]—which, over the past decade, has been increasingly moving from traditional distance learning materials to e-learning. VET practitioners involved with such developments have needed to develop new skills, both in the technological and pedagogical field. A national professional development programme, Learnscope,[5] has been running for nearly ten years to assist with this process.

The remainder of the challenges discussed in this section relate primarily to nationally-recognized training and may be faced by practitioners involved with the national VET system working either in RTOs or in enterprise settings.

Many practitioners have found it difficult moving to a competency-based system. VET has always been closely linked to industry, but before the adoption of competency-based training (CBT) in the late 1980s as the future direction of the VET system, VET training was not necessarily outcomes-focused. A shift to CBT meant that the emphasis moved from curriculum inputs to outcomes that are expressed in student competency. Assessment became as important as teaching or training. Many teachers, particularly in TAFE, resisted these changes (Smith &

Keating, 2003). While CBT has now become accepted as the norm, many practitioners still experience difficulty in implementing CBT and working with 'training packages'.

The implementation of the AQTF, introduced in 2002 to ensure quality in the VET system, created challenges for both RTOs and for the teachers working in them. RTOs were required to document a number of procedures and practices, including the teaching and assessment strategies used in their courses (ANTA, 2005). This created much concern although the majority of reputable training providers seemed to welcome the need to examine and improve their processes; however, individual practitioners have sometimes experienced the change as burdensome (Brennan & Smith, 2002; Grace, 2005).

The use of 'training packages' in enterprises has led to challenges both for the enterprises and for RTOs working in partnership with them. Enterprise practitioners have needed to consider the issue of AQTF compliance, discussed in the previous paragraph. Practitioners in RTOs working with enterprises have needed to negotiate with enterprise issues, such as the extent of customization that enterprises would like to see in national 'training packages' (Callan & Ashworth, 2004), and, where traineeships are delivered on the job, the learning opportunities that are available for trainees (Wood, 2004) so that trainees' learning can be, as Unwin and Fuller (2003) describe it in the English context, expansive rather than restricted.

5 Qualifications and Professional Development for VET Practitioners

The professional development of teachers and trainers in the VET sector is a complex matter. As discussed above, there are many different types of settings in which they work, and the educational qualifications required to work in those settings vary greatly. As well as their teaching or training qualifications, VET practitioners working within the formal system must have a qualification in the vocational area in which they teach.

It cannot therefore be assumed—as it can, for example, for school-teachers—that all practitioners have the same base level of qualification. For this reason, there is less of a clear-cut division between 'initial teacher education' and 'continuing development' than there is for school-teachers: a VET practitioner undertaking an initial course in VET may already have many years' experience as a VET teacher.

5.1 'Up-Front' Teacher Training for VET Staff

Traditionally, universities have offered initial teacher training for full-time TAFE teachers; initially this consisted of diplomas and later full degrees, or graduate diplomas for teachers who were already graduates in another discipline, such as

management or social work. All new TAFE full-time teachers, unless they were already trained teachers, would undergo this teacher training. Commonly, similar courses were offered for instructors in the armed services or other public-sector training roles. This 'front-end' training was augmented by short staff-development courses in specific skills or issues. Generally, staff development was overseen by central staff-training units in TAFE systems.

Prior to the early 1990s, part-time TAFE teachers were often offered a variety of short courses in instructional techniques. For example, New South Wales TAFE offered the Basic Methods of Instruction (BMI) course, and other providers offered similar short courses to their teachers. Industry trainers sometimes studied human-resource management or human-resource development at university, or were sent by their employers on short 'train-the-trainer'-styled courses. Since the mid-1990s the scene has changed quite considerably. Few TAFE teachers are now sponsored by their employers to undertake full teacher-training courses—New South Wales TAFE being a notable exception. There have been three major reasons for this.

The first is that budgetary constraints caused TAFE systems to consider whether they could actually afford to sponsor their teachers through teacher-training courses. The major cost of the sponsorship has been not the course fees but the fact that sponsored teachers have traditionally been released from teaching duties, and casual teachers have needed to be employed to replace them. The second reason is that, with increased autonomy being accorded to TAFE institutes in every state and territory, decisions about teacher training are now made at the institute level and sometimes at department level. Some institutes might be able to afford to send their teachers to teacher training, or might value such education more highly, while others might not. The third reason is that there is now an alternative, albeit lower-level, qualification, the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, which was introduced in 1998 and has recently been superseded by the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. The AQTF has cemented the place of this qualification as a requirement to teach in accredited VET courses, so that now more parity exists between part-time teachers, private RTO staff, workplace trainers and full-time TAFE teachers. For VET providers, then, it is easy and cheap to insist on a Certificate IV as a pre-entry qualification, and there is apparent legitimacy in so doing. The qualification has therefore become not only the minimum qualification required to teach in VET, but in some cases also the maximum required (Harris et al., 2001). However, the qualification is extremely problematic and some of the issues associated with the Certificate IV are discussed in the next section.

5.2 Certificate IV Qualifications for VET Practitioners

During the early 1990s, competency standards were developed in Australia for workplace training and assessing. The original workplace-trainer standards divided workplace trainers into two categories: Category 1 trainers were considered to be those who occasionally undertook training tasks as part of their salaried work; Category 2 trainers had training as their main earning activity. The standards for

Category 2 trainers were, therefore, more rigorous and detailed than those for Category 1. A Certificate IV in workplace training met the Category 2 standards (NAWT, 2001). In addition, workplace assessor standards were developed in 1993. Training for workplace assessors was aimed primarily at people who carried out assessment in the workplace, generally as part of formal training programmes, but was sometimes undertaken also by people who taught in VET institutions.

In the second half of the 1990s, these standards were gathered together into the Training Package in Assessment and Workplace Training, endorsed in 1998. Although the title of the package suggests that it is designed for people who work in a workplace rather than an institutional setting, the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training that was one of the qualifications in the new training package became widely adopted in TAFE colleges and other RTOs. There were some serious problems with the training package itself, its delivery and its application. The following list of problems is partly based upon the report of Stage 1 of the training package review (NAWT, 2001).

- *Content of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training*. The units of competence were written in words that reflected the work of workplace trainers and not teachers in an RTO setting. They contained no reference to learning theory or teaching approaches. It has been noted that teachers who only have a Certificate IV have a very different approach to teaching from those who have a degree-level qualification (Lowrie, Smith & Hill, 1999).
- *Delivery of the qualification*. The Certificate IV was notorious among training package qualifications for the poor quality of delivery. Many RTOs delivered this qualification in well below the nominal hours (one-weekend courses were not unknown) and full recognition of prior learning (RPL) was commonly granted in the qualification. RTOs often awarded the qualification to their own staff, to meet AQTF requirements, which could be interpreted as a potential conflict of interest.
- *Application of the qualification*. While the Certificate IV may have been suitable for those who perform a limited range of teaching and assessment tasks in a limited range of settings, a problem is that it has been viewed, or at least utilized, as though it was suitable for the full range of VET teaching activities.

Dissatisfaction with the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training has been well documented (e.g. NAWT, 2001) and the subject of much discussion among VET personnel. State TAFE systems were worried about the drop in teaching standards which could ensue if their teaching workforce came to consist predominantly of people with only a Certificate IV-level teaching qualification. But states were also concerned about keeping costs of teacher development down. Most of them, therefore, looked at options where teacher training could be delivered at least partly in-house rather than at universities. Teachers' unions, however, prefer teachers to obtain qualifications outside their own systems, partly to contain the power which employers have over teaching staff and partly to ensure that teachers gain a much broader view of VET and have transferable skills.

5.3 The New Training and Assessment Training Package

The review of the Training Package in Assessment and Workplace Training was a lengthy process, taking place between 1999 and 2004, and was managed by National Assessors and Workplace Trainers (NAWT), the national body overseeing trainer qualifications which is now part of the Business Services Skills Council, Innovation and Business Skills Australia.[6] The review involved wide-ranging and successive consultation across Australia with various stakeholders. The revised training package was endorsed in late 2004, and has a new name—training and assessment—to reflect an increased emphasis upon teaching rather than assessment.

There are a number of major changes embodied in the new Certificate IV qualification:

- It is a 'bigger' qualification with fourteen rather than eight units of competency;
- Greater emphasis upon pedagogical theory;
- Some provision for specialization and electives; and
- Tightening of regulation about assessment of the units of competency, ensuring higher-quality graduates.

The new Certificate IV has twelve core units and two electives. It is intended that it should take about 300 hours to deliver. The core units are:

- Work effectively in VET;
- Foster and promote an inclusive learning culture;
- Ensure a healthy and safe learning environment;
- Use training packages to meet client needs;
- Design and develop learning programmes;
- Plan and organize group-based delivery;
- Facilitate work-based learning;
- Facilitate individual learning;
- Plan and organize assessment;
- Assess competence;
- Develop assessment tools; and
- Participate in assessment validation.

The proposed revisions are likely to go some way to meeting various shortcomings of the package, but criticisms will remain. There is little mechanism within the training-package framework to address problems of low-quality delivery practices. A recent study of the old Certificate IV (Simons, Harris & Smith, 2006) indicated substantial knowledge gaps among those delivering the qualification, and in the theory base acquired by learners enrolled in the qualification, which indicated the need for careful scrutiny of the quality of delivery. Also, there remains the problem that the Certificate IV could be regarded as a sufficient (rather than base-level) qualification for VET teachers. A further difficulty has been transition arrangements, especially the desire of people with the old Certificate IV (of whom there are a great number) to upgrade to the new qualification. The practices that are emerging show that many people wish to gain the new qualification through recognition of

prior learning rather than through new learning, despite the radically different nature of the new qualification—and unfortunately there are many RTOs willing to grant this wish! Universities offering VET teacher training, of which there are around twenty, have been working in a consultative way (Brennan-Kemmis & Smith, 2004) to manage articulation into university teacher-training qualifications, as well as embedding of the qualification within university awards, but this process has not been straightforward. For example, it is difficult (although not impossible) to reconcile VET-sector approaches to assessment with university expectations and regulations (Bush & Smith, 2004).

5.4 Continuing Education and Staff Development

Beyond the acquisition of qualifications, further staff development for VET teachers and trainers can take place at one or more of the following levels:

1. *National level*: because of the importance of skill formation of the workforce to the nation, there is a strong impetus for a national perspective to VET teachers' and trainers' development.
2. *State level*: state training authorities have an interest in ensuring that VET practitioners deliver high-quality training.
3. *Provider level*: Most VET providers offer staff development of some sort. When we look at TAFE systems, this can be on a very large scale.

5.4.1 National-Level Staff Development

During the past fifteen years there has been a succession of national programmes that have operated in a similar way; national funding is made available to groups of VET practitioners for specific types of staff development activities. The most important national initiative has been the 'Framing the Future' programme, now entitled 'Reframing the Future'.[7] This programme was given a large annual budget by the Australian National Training Authority and is now funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training. Framing the Future began by funding action-learning groups primarily to assist with the introduction of training packages, but the revised version post-2000 has been much broader and involves programmes for managers as well as practitioners. The 2005 programme has five areas of activity, which change each year. Programmes that are funded are required to submit summaries of their activities, which are published on the website.

5.4.2 State-Level Staff Development

State training authorities (STAs) offer short staff-development programmes, which are open to staff from any type of RTO. States have been increasingly concerned with helping RTO staff, particularly those from non-TAFE providers, to deliver good-quality training and assessment and to cope with changes in the VET system.

Such staff development programmes recognize STAs' responsibilities in relation to quality, and the fact that private RTOs are much more likely than TAFE systems to expect teachers to join them with all their skills ready-made rather than having to offer training for them (Harris et al., 2001). Many STAs offered extensive training programmes around the time of the introduction of the AQTF; and some states, for example South Australia, offer regular briefing sessions which RTOs can attend to keep up with VET development. In addition, training may be offered in specific topics related to training and assessment.

5.4.3 Provider-Level Staff Development

Staff development usually occurs as a result of the need for new skills or new approaches to teachers' and trainers' work. A study of staff development in VET found that most stakeholders believed that half of VET teachers did not have most of the skills and knowledge that they identified as being important in the near future (Harris et al., 2001). Part-time, older and casual staff were perceived to possess the necessary skills and knowledge to a lesser extent than were full-time and younger staff (Harris et al., 2001, p. vii).

A special need for VET teachers, as compared, for instance, to school-teachers, is to keep up to date with trends in the industry for which they prepare students. Teachers need to find out what new technology is being used in their industry, what new skills are emerging and how the organization of work is changing. Maintaining technical currency is an important driver for staff development (Holland & Holland, 1998) and has become particularly important both with the implementation of the AQTF, which contains requirements about vocational competency, and with the introduction of new training-package qualifications which people have not taught before. Most VET providers have some type of 'return-to-industry' scheme, although available opportunities are not always well-utilized. The requirement for VET teachers to search for 'business' out in industry has not yet been systematically addressed by many TAFE providers: in some TAFE systems this activity is officially left to specialized consulting staff, although individual teachers may already be carrying out the activity, while private RTOs are generally more focused on this sort of activity.

Some TAFE systems maintain central staff development units, whilst others have decentralized this function to institutes or colleges. There is normally, however, some sort of central unit which sets directions and policy. Private RTOs utilize a range of staff-development processes and all RTOs are required, through the AQTF, to document the ways in which they develop their teaching and training staff.

5.5 Industry Trainers

With the major national focus upon formal training that is part of the VET system, industry trainers have become sidelined. While the new Certificate IV qualification has substantial applicability to industry-trainers delivering national qualifications,

it is not of great relevance to trainers who are outside the VET system. Comparison of human-resource development competencies, such as that developed by the American Society for Training and Development (Rothwell, Sanders & Soper, 1999), reveals a large gap between the field of practice implied by these competencies and those available through the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. The process of review of the training package was dominated by VET-sector personnel and hence industry training as a field of practice was not really considered (Smith, 2005). While the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is nevertheless likely to be a requirement for most industry training jobs, in looking for more highly-qualified staff, enterprises are likely to look at business or human-resource management qualifications than higher-level VET qualifications (Smith, 2005).

6 Final Commentary

This chapter has examined the nature of VET teachers, trainers and instructors in Australia and shown that they are a very diverse collection of practitioners. They vary in the site of their training practice, the extent to which they are involved with the formal VET system, and the degree to which training is the focus of their working week. Because of the diversity of working practices, there has not been, and probably cannot be, universal agreement on the skills needed for such work nor the qualifications that are required for practitioners. The competency-based qualification, the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, while an improvement on its predecessor, is nevertheless flawed. Training providers and enterprises that recruit trainers may find that their employees are not as skilled as they would like. Hence many practitioners seek university-level qualifications. Despite new quality regulations in the VET system, it is ultimately the responsibility of the teachers, trainers and instructors themselves to maintain their instructional and technical capabilities and to seek further training, especially when changes in the VET system require extra skills from practitioners. The quality of the VET system depends upon the quality of teachers, trainers and instructors, and hence relies heavily on the professionalism of these individuals.

Notes

1. Altogether, 4,214 RTOs were recorded in January 2006 on the National Training Information Service at <www.ntis.gov.au>
2. Mission Australia is an organization which was originally, and remains, a charity, but which now provides many employment and training services, see: <www.missionaustralia.com.au>
3. In 2006, there were over 2,500 Coles-Meyer outlets in Australia for its various brand names, employing 170,000 people, see <www.colesmyer.com>
4. OTEN uses only flexible delivery for its 37,000 students: <www.oten.edu.au>

5. <www.flexiblelearning.net.au>
6. <www.ibsa.org.au>
7. The Reframing the Future website provides information about all programmes, as well as descriptions and evaluations of them: <reframingthefuture.net>

References

Australian National Training Authority. 2005. *Standards for registered training organisations*, 2nd ed. Melbourne, Australia: ANTA.

Brennan, R. 2003. *One size doesn't fit all: pedagogy in the online environment*. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER.

Brennan, R.; Smith, E. 2002. AQTF: impact of provisions relating to teaching and teacher qualifications. *Australian vocational education review*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 8–23.

Brennan-Kemmis, R.; Smith, E. 2004. *Report of workshop: implementing the training and assessment training package across the sectors*. Melbourne, Australia: AVTEC. <education.curtin.edu.au/avtec/meetings/workshop2004-rept.html>

Bush, A.; Smith, E. 2004. *Articulation and embedding*. (Paper presented at the twelfth Annual International Conference on Post-Compulsory Education and Training, Griffith University Centre for Learning Research, Surfers Paradise, Australia, 6–9 December 2004.)

Callan, V.; Ashworth, P. 2004. *Working together: industry and VET provider training partnerships*. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER.

Chappell, C.; Johnston, R. 2003. *Changing work: changing roles for vocational education and training teachers and trainers*. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER.

Elkner, B. 2001. Building flexAbility, getting connected: measuring e-readiness at Coles Supermarkets. *TAFE frontiers and VISTA forum*. Melbourne, Australia: TAFE Frontiers.

Forward, P. 2004. Profession and identity. *Australian TAFE teacher*, vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 16–17.

Grace, L. 2005. *Training packages and the AQTF: freedom to move or components of a compliance-driven straitjacket?* (Paper presented at the eighth Australian VET Research Association (AVETRA) Conference, Brisbane, Australia, 13–15 April 2005.)

Green, A. 2004. *Bridging two worlds: an alternative pathway to teaching*. (Paper presented at the Forum for the Advancement of Continuing Education Conference, University of Stirling, United Kingdom, 2–4 July 2004.)

Guthrie, H. 2003. *VET managers' and practitioners' work: how is it changing?* (Kit compiled for AVETRA conference workshop, Sydney, Australia, 9–11 April 2003.)

Harris, R.; Simons, M.; Bone, J. 2000. *More than meets the eye? Rethinking the role of workplace trainer*. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER.

Harris, R. et al. 2001. *The changing role of staff development for teachers and trainers in vocational education and training*. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER.

Holland, A.; Holland, L. 1998. *Maintaining the technical currency of vocational educators*. (Paper presented to the European Educational Research Association Conference, Ljubljana, Slovenia, September 1998.)

Koornheef, M.; Oostvogel, K.; Poell, R. 2005. Between ideal and tradition: the roles of HRD practitioners in South Australian organisations. *Journal of European industrial training*, vol. 29, no. 5, pp. 356–68.

Lowrie, T.; Smith, E.; Hill, D. 1999. *Competency-based training: a staff development perspective*. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER.

National Assessors and Workplace Trainers—NAWT. 2001. *Review of the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training, Final Report Stage 1*. Melbourne, Australia: ANTA.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. 2004. *Australian VET statistics: students and courses, 2003*. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. 2005. *Pocket guide: Australian VET statistics 2004*. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER.

Polesol, J. et al. 2004. *VET in schools: a post-compulsory perspective*. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER.

Rothwell, W.; Sanders, E.; Soper, J. 1999. *ASTD models for workplace learning and performance: roles, competencies and outputs*. Alexandria, VA: ASTD.

Simons, M.; Harris, R.; Smith, E. 2006. *The Certificate IV in assessment and workplace training: understanding learners and learning*. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER.

Smith, E. 2005. *Getting down and dirty down under: battling over trainer qualifications in Australia*. (Paper presented at the sixth International Conference on HRD Research and Practice across Europe, Leeds Metropolitan University, United Kingdom, 25–27 May 2005.)

Smith, E.; Keating, J. 2003. *From training reform to training packages*. Tuggerah Lakes, Australia: Social Science Press.

Smith, E. et al. 2005. *Enterprises' commitment to nationally recognised training for existing workers*. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER.

Unwin, L.; Fuller, A. 2003. *Expanding learning in the workplace*. Leicester, UK: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

Wood, S. 2004. *Fully on-the-job training: experiences and steps ahead*. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER.

Walters, C. 2003. *Keynote address to the changing face of VET*. (Paper presented to the sixth Annual Conference of the Australian VET Research Association, Sydney, Australia, 9–11 April 2003.)