What makes a good VET teacher? Students’ views

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The project and the place of this paper

- Part of Stage 1 Phase (i) of major ARC-funded project.
- Industry partners: TAFE Queensland, Federation Training, Australian Council of private Education and Training, VET Development Centre
- This initial phase was designed originally only to inform the development of the survey and the case studies.
- This paper reports on data from three student focus groups.
The focus groups

- Metropolitan RTO-outer suburban: ‘Trade’ site
- Metropolitan RTO (the same), city centre location: Centre catering primarily for international students in specialist higher-level qualifications
- Metropolitan TAFE Institute (suburban): Multi-disciplinary VET provider

Many students had studied other qualifications in VET or higher education including in Australia and overseas
## Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Number and nature of students</th>
<th>Qualification level(s) currently studying</th>
<th>Industry areas currently studying</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private RTO site A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Electrical (majority) and carpentry (all apprentices)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 Apprentices</td>
<td>Cert III</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private RTO site B (city centre)</td>
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<td>Children’s services, mental health/AOD.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7 Fee-paying, mainly international students.</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
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<td>TAFE</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma, Degree</td>
<td>Library, Community services Some migrants/refugees</td>
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<td>5 Some migrants/refugees</td>
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</table>
What did the students all agree on?
Attributes of the teacher

They wanted a teacher who

- Was well-organised, prepared for class (and on time) and seemed to enjoy his/her job;
- Was relaxed not stressed;
- Had a deep knowledge of the subject area and who was clearly still engaged in learning further about the field;
- (preferably) Was a full-time teacher not a part-timer or casual;
- Was able to establish clear rules for the classroom.
What did the students agree on? Pedagogical skills/knowledge

They wanted a teacher who

- Did not waste too much class time on gossip and stories;
- Taught rather than getting the students to do the work;
- Could engage all students in learning, including those from diverse backgrounds;
- Set clear, and high, expectations;
- Set clear assessment tasks and taught to them;
- Returned assessment tasks on time with plenty of feedback.
What didn’t the students agree on?

Nothing!

-Whatever the AQF level, the discipline area, the student background, or the employment status, they all wanted the same things.
Comparing these expectations with the Certificate IV TAE

Personal attributes:

- ‘Working effectively in the VET sector’ now deleted.
- ‘Professionalism not really addressed
- Classroom management/ learner behaviour not really addressed.
- Deep and continuing learning in industry/discipline not really addressed.
“Teaching” is present in ‘TAEDEL401A but “how to teach/train” is not really there;

Setting expectations for learners isn’t really present;

Setting assessment tasks is not present at the moment;

Feedback to learners is present in TAEASS 402A but at a lower order than reporting and recording decision;

No unit of competency on diversity among learners.
Next phases of the project: 2015-16

- Case studies in 4 TAFE Institutes and 4 non-TAFE RTOs (completed, 2015) - asking primarily about the effects of teacher/trainer qualifications;
- Survey of VET teachers in 8 TAFE Institutes and 8 RTOs Analysis of professional development data to determine the differences in engagement between those with different levels of qualification;
- ‘Delphi’ three-stage process looking at implications of findings, with two streams of stakeholders: Policy and Practice;
- ... an answer to the research question ‘Would more highly-qualified teachers and trainers help to address quality problems in the Australian vocational education and training system?'
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- Project web page
  http://federation.edu.au/research-vet-quality