Quality assessment: practice and perspectives: Josie Misko

Quality assessment: practice and perspectives

- **Purpose:** Investigate teacher perspectives and practice on quality assessments (including recognition of prior learning)

- **Areas of interest**
  - Certificate III Community Services (aged care)
  - Certificate III Electro-technology (electrician)
  - Certificate III and above Business Administration
  - Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
A range of research questions

- Quality assessments
- Validation and moderation
- Employer involvement
- Key assessment challenges for teachers and students
- Typical course durations
- Uptake and streamlining of Recognition of Prior Learning
Methods

- Interviews: RTO practitioners and students
- Public and private sector (VIC, SA, QLD, NSW)
- Analysis of national data VET Provider Collection
- Analysis of data from Student Outcomes Survey
- Web search & mystery shopping exercises
What are quality assessments?

- Practitioners can generally verbalise and explain what is required for quality assessments, including
  - validity, fairness, reliability and consistency
  - gathering sufficient evidence
  - Meeting criteria of relevant Training Packages
Practical application provides more challenges

- validation and moderation confusion
- Upfront validation preferred
- Difficulty of obtaining employer involvement
What is uptake of recognition of prior learning?

- Low uptake – 90% say no
- Higher uptake for Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
- Limited streamlining of RPL occurring
- High risk courses preclude RPL
What are typical course durations, delivery arrangements, tuition fees?

- Cert III - Aged care, Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
- Calculations and investigations of national data
- Delivery and cost arrangements
Certificate III Aged Care

- Commencement and completion data:
  - Average duration 192 days
  - Median duration 147 days, bi-modal
- Web search & mystery shopping:
  - Shortest course 4 weeks full-time (9.00am till 3.00pm), Longest course 6 months (24 hours per week)
  - 50% of RTOs used face-to-face delivery in class, 33% of RTOs used online courses only, remainder – blended learning (online, class, distance)
  - Courses that were delivered fully on line, or using mixture of online, class and distance methods were expected to be completed within predetermined number of months (12 to 18 months)
  - All had practical work placements but no uniformity in length of time (two 40 hour placements, or one 40 hour placement), generally no night shift expected
  - Different course durations for different delivery methods
- Median cost was $1950.
Certificate IV in Training and Assessment

- Commencement and completion data VET statistics
  - Average duration 160 days, median duration 133 days

- Website search & mystery shopping
  - Shortest course 5 days full-time, Longest course 12 weeks full-time
  - Around 50% of RTOs used face-to-face delivery in class, around 33% of RTOs – blended learning (online, class, distance), 25% online only
  - Courses that were delivered fully on line, by distance method were expected to be completed within pre-determined number of months (generally 12 months)
  - Median cost was $1895.
When short durations make sense

- Strong prior knowledge
- Existing workers
- Specialist relevant occupations
- Adequate and reliable evidence
Assessment challenges for teachers

- Making valid judgements
- Pitching assessment to right level
- Achieving consistency among assessors
- Keeping up with latest requirements
- Customisation and implementation
- Sources of evidence (including for RPL)
- Student knowledge, skills, motivation and application
Student assessment challenges as perceived by teachers

- Low motivation and aspiration
- Deficient practical skills (e.g. manual handling (aged care))
- Application of business and financial concepts (business)
- Application of theoretical concepts and calculations (electrical)
- Lack of confidence, fear of assessments, inability to apply themselves
Assessment challenges perceived by students

- No real challenges
- Between 83% and 90% of SOS respondents satisfied
- Knew they were to be assessed prior to assessment
- Assessment was a fair test of skills and a good test of what they had been taught
- Assessed at regular intervals throughout course
- Received useful feedback
Conclusions

- Teachers are confident about their knowledge of quality
- Less confident of practical applications
- Confusion about moderation and validation
- Reticent to apply streamlined RPL processes: fear loss of reputation, and examinations through quality audits
Next steps

- Expanding knowledge about assessments
- Sharing practical tools and activities
- Engaging employers in validating tools and assessments
- Implementing mentoring and buddying strategies
- Validating results with colleagues
More

- Misko, Josie; Halliday Wynes, Sian; Stanwick, John; Gemici, Sinan 2014, Quality assessments: practice and perspectives, NCVER, Adelaide