

***Blurring the Boundaries in Education:  
towards a more seamless system  
of post-compulsory education***

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## Abstract

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This discussion paper was written for the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) to explore developments in Australian education leading to the blurring of boundaries between the traditional sectors of education provision. The sectors of interest were those traditionally responsible for school education, vocational education and training, adult and community education and higher education. The paper argues that this blurring of boundaries between sectors is most apparent in the emerging systems of post-compulsory education and training that are now coming into place across Australia in this first decade of the twenty-first century.

The paper identifies, as a pressure point within the education system of Australia, the demands now being placed on providers of education for young Australians between the ages of 15 to 19 years. Here teachers are becoming more likely to experience education programs that are based on new educational alliances and new pathways between and across the historically familiar sectors as the most appropriate way for meeting students' learning needs and aspirations. It is then argued that as schools and systems respond to these new program arrangements a cascade of change may well be afoot.

From this initial discussion the paper considers the impact of notions of lifelong and life-wide learning on the provision of education to young Australians. A brief account of the range of contexts within which learning takes place, along with a discussion of the formal recognition of this learning and the building of qualifications and credentials throughout workers' careers, is included at this point in the paper. Included also is an account of contemporary developments in a number of Australian States that seek to establish explicit articulation arrangements across the range of accredited courses delivered by the school, vocational education and training and higher education sectors. The paper then discusses, as a prelude to what may follow, the policy pressures for collaborative partnerships between the sectors of education that is currently underway. The concept of an emerging post-compulsory education and training system is explored at this point.

The paper concludes with the observation that a key challenge to the realisation of a more seamless formal education system supportive of the emerging forms of post-compulsory education and training is the development of an expanded vision of teaching and learning more generally within the teaching profession. This observation leads into a consideration of the capacity of teacher educators to transform their initial and continuing accredited teacher education programs in ways that will enable the teaching profession to meet this challenge.



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# **Blurring the Boundaries in Education: towards a more seamless system of post-compulsory education**

## **Introduction**

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As Australia's cultures, societies and its economies are driven remorselessly towards new forms, still to be shaped firmly but spoken about in terms of globalisation of business, learning societies and innovation and knowledge economies, pressure to respond accordingly is gathering increased momentum within Australia's education system. Education has become one of the key leveraging points through which the Australian population is to be transformed into knowledge workers and lifelong learners able to both create and secure productive and meaningful places within the new cultural and economic forms to come.

Although the education system has been fragmented, historically, across States and Territory boundaries, with Federal interventions, and across sectors connecting to the Australian population from pre-school years through to adulthood, the once neat geographical and sectorial compartments of this 'national' system are also under pressure as separate silos of educational provision. A transition to a less-bunkered form of institutionalised education appears to be central to the change processes now being lived through by the education professionals and learners currently engaged with Australia's education system.

The innovations being explored in schools, education and training providers in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) and in the Adult and Community Education (ACE) sectors, and by universities and university colleges in the Higher Education sector tend to share a common dimension – the need for pathways of learning that either draw upon resources from across the traditional sector-based institutional boundaries, or a questioning of the established articulation arrangements between schools, VET and ACE providers and universities. This dimension was identified in the ACDE New Learning Charter (2001) under its Lifelong/Lifewide Learning proposition (pp. 59-61 & pp. 67-68). There is a growing realisation that schools, as developed through the previous century, are not coping well with the imperatives of New Learning, as defined in the ACDE Charter, and the forces at work to 'blur the boundaries' between sectors. The point was made by the ACDE in these terms:

*New learning requires fluidity, flexibility and diversity. It also requires greater collaboration and coordination. ... Collaboration between schools and VET providers, between schools and businesses, and between schools and local councils, will become more important. ... The university sector, in particular, needs to become more closely involved with schools (2001, p. 96).*

Here is a clear call for learners to engage with the learning resources of our communities in ways that will require radically different structural and organisational arrangements in terms of the delivery of learning programs and the location of these programs. The ACDE Charter extends the scope of potential collaborative arrangements involving schools beyond the education system, as traditionally perceived, to include learning contexts located in the world of work and the community generally. The challenges to education professionals, including administrators and managers, are considerable if not daunting, as educational institutions work to establish these new forms of learning programs as a reality for learners.

This paper identifies the education provision for young people between the ages of 15 to 19 years as the pressure point within the education system of Australia where the old convenience of discrete and bounded sectors of education provision is no longer being experienced by learners and their teachers as the most appropriate way for meeting their immediate learning needs and aspirations; where it is sensible to seek new educational alliances and new pathways between and across the historically determined sectors. The paper therefore focuses on the post-compulsory years of education and the issues relevant to the transition of young people from full time education to further study and employment. An argument is developed that the set of issues facing schools in the post-compulsory years can no longer be ignored at both the local and central levels of the formal education system. It is argued that as schools and systems respond to these issues that are clearly not being adequately addressed by a continuation of the status quo in the senior years of school education, a cascade of change may well be afoot.

From this initial discussion the paper considers the impact of notions of lifelong and life-wide learning on the provision of education to young Australians. A brief account of the range of contexts within which learning takes place, along with a discussion of the formal recognition of this learning and the building of qualifications and credentials throughout workers' careers, is included at this point in the paper. Included also is an account of contemporary developments in a number of Australian States that seek to establish explicit articulation arrangements across the range of accredited courses delivered by the school, VET and Higher Education sectors. The pathways policy agenda is also examined in this section of the paper.

The paper then discusses the policy pressures building for collaborative partnerships between the sectors of education – school, VET, ACE and higher education – and the blurring of the boundaries that is currently underway as a prelude to what may follow. In this context, a commentary on developments in post-compulsory school education is considered in the light of creating new opportunities for young people through cross-sectoral course delivery arrangements leading to new pathways into both higher education and TAFE study. The



concept of an emerging post-compulsory education and training system is explored at this point.

The paper concludes with the observation that a key challenge to the realisation of a more seamless formal education system supportive of post-compulsory education and training and lifelong learning is ushering in an expanded vision of teaching and learning more generally within the teaching profession. This discussion quickly moves to a brief consideration of the capacity of teacher educators to transform their initial and continuing teacher education course provision in ways that will enable the teaching profession to meet this challenge.



## **Post-compulsory School Education: responding to the diversity of learners**

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Post-compulsory school education is facing a crisis across Australia. Federal, State and Territory governments have, since the 1980s, placed great emphasis, through policy statements, on the necessity for increasing school retention rates into the final years of secondary education. The expressed motivations for these 'retentionphilic' policies are couched typically in terms of equipping the nation's workforce with higher levels of knowledge and skills than was the case in the past, and the importance of young people completing the final years of secondary education, or its equivalent, as preparation for the necessary further study while making the transition to employment in Australia's knowledge economy. Education has always been securely connected to the economic well being of the country in the minds of politicians and others, but its role as the handmaiden to the future economic prosperity of the nation state is now promoted by Australian governments in unequivocal terminology (see for example, Kosky 2002 p. 1). Recent research (Fullarton, Walker, Ainley & Hillman, 2003) supports this positioning of education with respect to the broader economic developments of the country at the level of individual participation in the workforce. This research indicates that young people who have completed of Year 12 or its vocational equivalent "are more likely to continue their involvement in education and training, gain employment-related skills and generally fare better in the labour market compared to those who do not complete Year 12 or its equivalent" (p. vii).

School retention rates in Australia have undergone significant changes over the past two decades. The percentage of students staying at school into the final year was 38% in 1980. This rose to 73% in 2001 with a highpoint of 77% in 1992 (Ainley 1998, Fullarton et al 2003).

Thus the rise in the secondary school retention rates has come to pass but the secondary school sector has been slow to respond to the learning needs of a much more diverse student population. Systematic advanced planning by the school sector for what was to come as a result of having young people, whose counterparts in previous times would have left school as soon as they were legally able, staying on into the post-compulsory years was limited at best. Schools have struggled to engage those young people whose learning needs are not readily accommodated by the bookish pedagogies and curricula of the academic and disciplines-based senior secondary school classrooms. The introduction of vocational learning programs has been the default response but the impact of these programs on the overall institutional form of senior school programs has been minimal to date (Dalton 2003) and suffered through the 1990s from the tendency of schools to shape VET in Schools courses as minimalist departures from the norms for senior school certificate subjects (Henry, Dalton, Wilde, Walsh & Wilde 2003).

The end of the twentieth century was a time for a number of reviews of State and Territory post-compulsory education provision. These have been conducted around the country with a review underway in the Northern Territory at the time of writing. These reviews have highlighted an issue with considerable social and economic implications for society at large – the phenomenon of the early school leaver or, to put it another way, the phenomenon of the 'escapee from the education system'. These are young people between the ages of 15 to 19

years of age who are 'at risk' of not making a successful transition from school into adult life through work and study and are only marginally attached to the education, training and employment systems of Australia (Marsh and MacDonald, 2002, p. 1). The percentage of 15 to 19 year old Australians not in education or full time work in 1999 was 19 %, a percentage that placed Australia at a ranking of 14 amongst OECD nations in terms of increasing comparative percentages of youth disengagement with study and employment (Jones 2002).

The 2000 Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria (the Kirby Review) reported that, in any one year, approximately 11,000 young people leave Victorian schools. These young people are entering a youth labour market that is dominated by part-time jobs due to the disappearance of more than half of the jobs held by boys and two thirds of the jobs held by girls since 1978. Kirby (2000) found that most young people who leave school early in Victoria do so either during or at the end of Year 11. The two main factors cited by the young people influencing their decision to leave school before completing Year 12 were "the desire for work and the lack of interest in schoolwork" (pp. 54). These reasons are supported by other researchers (Samdal, Nutbeam, Wold and Kannas, 1998, Stokes, 2000, Lamb, Wyn & Dwyer 2000, Teese 2002).

While the outcomes of early leaving are not necessarily negative for all young people, when early school leavers are compared with Year 12 graduates the picture that emerges is that they will be more likely to experience extended periods of unemployment, obtain jobs in a narrow field of occupations, have less access to on-the-job training and be less likely to engage in lifelong learning (Lamb & McKenzie 2001).

The destinations of these young people in Victoria were tracked by the Kirby Review team. The team noted that the main barrier for early school leavers to undertake further study or training was their own sense of failure. "Poor results at school are likely to discourage early leavers from continuing in some form of education or training" (Kirby 2000, pp. 58).

This picture is not unique to Victoria. Consider the following situations in a sample of other States. The recent reviews of post-compulsory education in Queensland (Pitman 2002, Gardner 2002) noted that that 10,000 15 to 16 year olds in that State were neither in school, at work or in training. The figures for Western Australian 15 to 19 year olds show that 28% were neither at school nor in further study (ABS 2002 cited in Jacobson & Ord 2003). The Western Australian Education Department has developed a Retention and Participation Plan (2003) as a response to concerns of its schools and their communities "about a significant number of students who feel alienated from schooling and who are therefore unable to achieve their educational potential" (website). The 2001 Year 10 Destination Survey by the Tasmanian Department of Education showed that around 450 Year 10 students do not go on to further education, training or employment (website). One of the State government's educational priorities for 2003-2005 is the retention and participation of Tasmanians in education and training beyond Year 10.

Whilst this research shows that there is a broad ‘retention problem’ across all States of Australia, the flip-side of these retention statistics is that more young people than ever before are staying on at school. This means that schools now have students enrolled in the post-compulsory years who, even two decades before, would not still be in school.

The responses from schools to their newfound diversity in the post-compulsory years and to the phenomenon of the early school leavers have been mixed, ad hoc and restrained by their entrenched institutionalised cultures. School-based developments occurring through the decade of the 1990s indicate that many secondary schools were experimenting with different forms of ‘alternative’ programs for those of their student cohorts that were disengaging from the general education curriculum being provided by the mainstream programs. These experimental programs were particularly evident in the middle and senior school levels of these innovative and responsive schools.

The VET in Schools initiative in the 1990s was a significant development for many secondary schools exploring alternative pathways and accreditation for those senior students looking to engage with more vocationally-oriented courses than were available within the structure of the Senior School Certificates at this time. But later in the decade, particularly after the injection of Federal funds into the VET in Schools program in 1997 VET in School courses were integrated selectively into the Senior School Certificates. These courses, for example, became VCE VET in Victoria. Similarly, in South Australia, VET in Schools courses are recognised for credit within the South Australian Certificate of Education. Recent developments in NSW “have seen not only Vocational Education and Training (VET) frameworks accepted for HSC study, but VET courses accredited for the University Admissions Index (UAI)” (Vinson 2002 website). This is a development not without its critics, as noted by Vinson: “some teachers are concerned with the direction of change. While they recognise that the HSC must cater to a range of students with diverse educational and career plans, they are worried that vocational training runs counter to the notion that the purpose of the HSC is to provide students with an intellectually demanding general education” (Vinson 2002 website).

This development of integrating VET in Schools into the Senior School Certificates award structure was, we believe, a mixed blessing. Students completing VET courses could now achieve dual accreditation for their studies – recognition by the State Training Authority under the VET sector course accreditation system and the Australian Qualifications Framework, and recognition of the VET courses as units of study within their Senior School Certificate study program and therefore contributing to an overall tertiary entrance score. This development made the selected VET courses more available to the full Year 11 and Year 12 student cohort but also embedded these courses securely within the accredited structure of the Senior School Certificates. But for many students for whom the schools had originally developed alternative senior school programs, and for whom VET courses were seen as most appropriate, moving the VET units into the academic certificates was a move in the wrong direction. What was required to satisfy the study and work aspirations of these students was the local flexibility and responsiveness of the alternative experimental programs and clear pathways to vocational education, training and work that these provided, together with external recognition of student

achievement in the form of a qualification. This was unlikely to be achieved through the integration of VET courses into the qualification structures of the Senior School Certificates around the country; an integration that moulded these vocationally oriented courses of study into a better fit within the dominant and exclusionary academic forms of learning of these certificates.

Thus, as retention rates rose through the 1980s and plateaued above 70% in the 1990s, schools, more-or-less, attempted to accommodate learner diversity in the post-compulsory years of education with the inclusion of VET courses in the post-compulsory school curriculum. But what are the implications of this strategy for the future? Moreover, how will schools adapt to the greater levels of diversity that will inevitably follow if the retention targets of 90% by 2010 are reached?

One clear implication is that schools, as institutions, as places for engaging young people in learning that will be relevant to their futures, will be required to undergo quite dramatic transformations. The direction that these transformations will take has already been foreshadowed, in a general way, in the many reviews and research projects of the past ten years; the details have still to be struggled over. The evaluation report of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning, for example, noted that if this newly introduced and innovative certificate was to develop into a quality alternative pathway for post-compulsory learners in Victoria and not suffer the same fate as the VET in Schools courses of the 1990s (that is, become normalised into the established academic orientation of senior secondary school education course provision) then a number of critical developmental transformations were needed within secondary schools. These were expressed as follows:

- The need for a new conceptualisation of quality curriculum that resists the domination of the generalised/abstracted knowledge-based curriculum experiences of the mainstream secondary school education, and establishes instead applied learning of vocationally-oriented knowledge as a sustainable and valued pathway for students;
- The need for the development of teaching approaches for secondary school students that are informed by the principles of adult education and, as a result, are a clear departure from the teacher-centred, expository, classroom-based pedagogies that are still very much the norm in secondary schools today;
- The need for schools to enter into new partnerships and collaborative arrangements with other schools in their regions and with local community service agencies, employers, and TAFE and ACE providers in order to address more comprehensively the educational, training and employment needs of young people enrolled in applied learning and vocational education courses;
- The need for an expanded conception of the role of the teacher, as part of the diverse range of efforts necessary to address the above three points;
- The need to develop schools as more broadly based, inclusive and flexible learning and social environments for young people; and

- The need to overturn negative community perceptions about vocationally-oriented applied learning in comparison to vocationally-oriented academic learning, and to general and abstracted education (Henry et al, 2003, pp 4-5).

A constant theme from the research that informed the above evaluation of the VCAL pilot in Victoria is that if schools are to address the general and vocational education needs of the full cohort of young people staying on into the senior years of schooling then new partnership arrangements between schools and other sectors of education and training must come into place. For example, Malley, Keating, Robinson and Hawke (2001), in their vision of an expanded role for VET in Australian schools, called for “clusters of community interest bringing together employers, unions, service agencies such as Rotary, local government, other training providers and third-party enabling agencies such as area consultative committees and regional employment and youth agencies” (p. 6). James, St Leger and Ward, (2001), in reference to the Victorian Department of Education commissioned *Successful Learning Projects*, recommended an expanded case managed approach to encourage young people to stay on at school. This approach would involve “youth workers; provision of flexible school curriculum options, including life skills and literacy and numeracy programs – with accompanying timetabling and staffing changes; and increased access for young people to other sectors, such as TAFE and ACE” (James et al., 2001, pp. 19). Mulraney, Turner, Wyatt, Harris & Gibson (2002) researched the general status of existing workplace learning arrangements linking schools to local employers. They concluded “structured workplace learning has been constructed predominately from the perspective of schools and does not adequately reflect models of partnerships” (pp. 7). They highlighted the need for “infrastructure funding that further develops community partnerships, fostering their autonomy in developing local arrangements for establishing work-based learning environments for young adults” (pp. 8).

The increasing retention and participation of young people in the post-compulsory years of school education to completion of Year 12 is now a social phenomenon to which our school systems are struggling to respond. Schools struggle to establish learning programs that firstly, engage the full diversity of learners in quality and compelling learning programs and secondly, address the complexities of the transitional programmatic arrangements to further study and work that these students want and our changing society and economy demands. Schools acting alone or in school clusters will not address these challenges successfully. The pressure will be for schools to become networked into the fuller range of learning resources within their communities. These community-networked schools will be the outcome of the dramatic organisational, administrative and pedagogical transformations now only just being embarked upon in Australia. Where industrial age schools were created as learning ‘factories’ for children removed during their formative years from the social and economic life of their communities but with abstracted curricula connected tenuously to the knowledge, skills and dispositions of productive workers in the relatively closed and static economies of that era, these post-industrial and connected schools will be defined by curricula with greater degrees of authenticity as active and facilitatory learning programs for young people making the transition into adult independence as knowledge workers and as lifelong and lifewide learners.

What is now required is a broader conception of curriculum than that which supports a default to VET courses as the answer to the learning needs of the so-called 'non-academic' students staying on at school. The simplistic dichotomy of 'good with the mind vs good with the hands' must be relegated to the past (Peoples 1998). Old style vocationalism as a way of thinking about curriculum options for young people reinforces the "artificial divide between general and vocational education in the post-compulsory years (Peoples 1998 p. 18). The new learning possibilities of community-networked schools will be achieved through curriculum and associated pedagogical developments that break new ground beyond both this form of vocationalism and the form of academic learning that has been dominant in Australia's secondary schools for decades.



## **Lifelong and Lifewide Learners: a central contribution from schools**

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“Learning today will be lifelong and lifewide” (ACDE 2001 p. 55). Lifelong learning, as distinct from lifewide learning, has common currency in the futures discourse about education and training. The concept is firmly linked in recent policy documents (Kosky 2002 pp. 10-13, for example) to the need for preparation of workers for the innovation/knowledge economies in which knowledge and skills learnt at one time will become redundant within shorter time periods than was the case in the previous industrial and service economies, and retaining and relearning will become a consistent pattern for productive employees. Lifewide learning contributes to the lifelong learning concept the notion of an expected breadth in the retraining/relearning experiences of lifelong learners as they respond to the new opportunities within an expanding innovation economy and engage in new forms of work and workplaces as these are created and brought into the labour market. Lifewide learning also introduces the premise that learning through the post-compulsory years of education and training, and into adulthood, needs to be broader than economic and labour market oriented learning. The concept of lifelong learning has evolved over the past twenty years or so in Europe, and more recently in Australia, to include more socially oriented goals and quality-of-life issues (Laver, 1996). Kearns, McDonald, Candy, Knights & Papadopoulos (1999, p. 9) in their discussion of lifelong learning as a master concept of OECD programs acknowledge this broader role for lifelong learning that includes both social and economic outcomes.

Laver, in 1996, reported to the Australian Federal Minister of Employment, Education and Training on ways in which the education and training sectors of the education systems of Australia could contribute to the development of lifelong learning skills and development. This early Australian paper on this topic positions lifelong learning as a balanced development of the Australian citizenry. “Lifelong learning should be concerned, not only with a skilled and flexible workforce but also with enabling people to realise more of their individual potential and with ‘public learning’ – enhancing societal awareness and understanding of various issues in public policy” (Laver 1996 p. 4). As Australian governments developed policies for education and training since 1996, the tendency has been for lifelong learning to be included as a challenge for the education systems to address as a necessary response to the “impact of globalisation, new information and communication technologies, major changes in the workplace and in the organisation of work, the shift ... to a knowledge-based economy, and shifts in social attitudes and values” (NCVER 2003). But even so, there is a danger that the anticipated changes to the workplace in terms of work practices and techniques in the immediate future may be over-emphasised at the expense of the need for accompanying shifts in social attitudes and values. The potential for lifelong learning, as an organising concept for New Learning (ACDE 2001), to be captured by an “unduly narrow concept of ‘training’ or work relevance ... (with) a rigid linkage to direct occupational outcomes” (Ryan 2002 pp. 1-3) is a trend that educationalist must be alert to and resist.

To be fair, the recent NCVER publications on lifelong learning (Kearns et al, Vols 1 & 2, 1999, Kearns, 1999, and Robinson & Arthy, 1999) do attempt to marry the dual imperatives

(Laver 1996) of lifelong learning: that is, addressing both quality-of-life issues and the employment potentialities of individuals. For example, Kearns (1999) argued for “a new humanism in VET, with a focus on people, as a way of investing in human intellect, imagination and creativity. In addition to an enhanced quality of life and greater equity, industry will gain from a more committed, imaginative, and creative workforce able to adapt to rapidly changing conditions” (p. 1). An expanded view of lifelong learning survives in this attempt to integrate lifelong learning related to quality-of-life issues with vocational learning. And further, Kearns (1999) identified, as a challenge for our society, the building of a capability for lifelong learning for all “if Australia is to avoid a society divided into the information-rich and privileged, and the information-poor and under-privileged” (p. 7). The prospect of a “two-thirds society” (Lutz 1994 p. 108), in which the capacity to engage with the changing conditions of the social, economic and political forces at work in one’s community falls within the ambit of a diminishing majority, has a high probability of being the outcome of current lifelong learning policies unless these are accompanied by a radical shift in the educative arrangements currently available within Australia’s education and training systems. These arrangements include both organisational and pedagogical practices. Avoiding this prospect must become a core concern for Australia’s schools, VET and ACE providers and universities.

There are two themes to take forward from this brief introductory discussion of lifelong and lifewide learning. The first is essentially an equity theme – how to facilitate a propensity or inclination for learning throughout adulthood for all; the second is a structural theme – how to facilitate access to learning relevant to vocational and quality-of-life interests throughout adulthood (Selby Smith & Ferrier 2002 p. 5). These themes are of course interrelated. Australia’s foundational and advisory report on lifelong learning to the Federal Minister of Education, Employment and Training (Laver 1996) set the framework for subsequent research in this area. For example, the report’s identification of the characteristics of lifelong learners has been elaborated upon since (Kearns 1999, Bryce, Frigo, McKenzie & Withers 2000) but Laver’s simple list will suffice for this discussion paper. He reported that people most likely to engage with learning opportunities throughout their lives were those that had acquired:

- the necessary skills and attitudes for learning, especially literacy and numeracy;
- the confidence to learn, including a sense of engagement with the education system; and
- willingness and motivation to learn (Laver 1996 9. 3).

The first characteristic has attracted much attention and been expanded upon by later researchers. This characteristic has a strong resonance with the concept of New Learning advocated by the ACDE (2001). A consideration of the next two characteristics returns us to the obvious point that “schooling must become a positive experience for all students if they are to continue to participate in education throughout their lives” (Laver 1996 p. 15). The advice for teachers is to develop pedagogies through which students become more self-directed as learners, and within which the quality of teacher/student relationships facilitate quality learning and educational outcomes while enhancing student satisfaction with and motivation for

learning (Teese, Charlton & Polesel 1995). The organisational or structural advice from the literature on the enhancement of these lifelong learner characteristics amongst young people in their post-compulsory years of education includes invariably calls for partnerships between schools and the other sectors of the education and training system, and also with their communities and local industries.

Kearns (1999), while agreeing that lifelong learning was an evolving concept, identified it as “both an educational and social practice, and as an organising principle for a different approach to education and training” (p. 3). In essence this means, beyond the pedagogical imperatives referred to above, locating school education differently for young people than has been the mainstream experience up to this point in time. This new location of the ‘school’ will blur the distinction between school-based learning and tertiary-based learning, between school-based learning and workplace learning, and between school-based learning and community services-based learning. This will occur through school-specific managed change developments nested within broader community level changes with respect to the ‘Learning Age’. A clear example of these developments involving schools is the work now underway in each State and Territory of Australia to identify, expand and strengthen pathways to further study and employment for young people from school with increasing attention being paid to bridging, transitions and re-entry. The increased resources and energy going into the development of learning towns and cities around Australia is an example at the broader community level of related change that is now occurring. These learning community developments are premised on flexibility between the educational and training agencies within a defined locality partnered within common interest networks that include the economic drivers of these regions.

This discussion of lifelong and lifewide learning has returned us to the concept introduced in the previous section of this paper, the concept of the community-networked school. But the argument has drawn us to the conclusion that in meeting the challenge of building a capability for lifelong and lifewide learning in our society, schools are central. Schools are central because it is these institutions that must create, in the first instance, a learning culture that provides young people with both the capacities that will enable them to continue to learn and the motivation to want to return periodically to structured learning whether this be formal or informal, on-the-job or off-the-job, vocationally oriented or otherwise; and secondly, bridge these same young people into the significant learning contexts of adult life – VET, ACE and higher education and, importantly, the world of work, and community service. Our argument is that these two dimensions of the contribution schools can make to the lifelong and lifewide learning capability of Australian society are tightly intermeshed in practice and lead to an increased level of integration of senior secondary schools within the full range of education and training resources of their host communities.



## Policy developments and collaboration

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There is a sense in which the VET sector of the education and training systems of Australia is driving the agenda for cross-sectorial reform. A perusal of the research projects funded by ANTA and NCVER over the past five years indicates a drive in the direction of building the arguments for cross-sectorial developments and identifying the organisational arrangements that will facilitate collaborative institutional and programmatic relationships (see Kearns et al 1999, Wheelahan 2000, Teese and Watson 2001 for example). Wheelahan's research focused on cross-sectorial provision of education and training involving TAFE and higher education. While identifying significant obstacles to cross-sectorial collaboration, effective practices were identified from the ten cases studies undertaken by the researchers. In addition, needed cross-sectorial policy developments were identified, including a coherent national policy on lifelong learning, the funding of tertiary education by one level of government and a single award for higher education and TAFE teaching staff. Reference was also made to issues meriting further study. These included the possible introduction of community colleges in the tertiary sector and the establishment of a scheme that utilised the idea of a unit of currency of study credit facilitating the seamless movement of students across the VET and higher education sectors (Wheelahan 2000 pp. ix-x). The Teese and Watson research was in response to concerns that there was "increasing flow of students between the sectors (schools, VET, ACE and higher education) at the post-compulsory level, yet relatively little is known about the educational and employment pathways of students moving between the sectors" (2001, p. 7). These researchers mapped the capacity of existing data collections within the sectors to provide comparable information nationally on the cross-sectorial dimensions of student participation. Modifications were suggested to the data collection practices of each sector to improve the scope, utility and comparability of data. The researchers identified a need to provide a longitudinal perspective on student pathways. They suggested that a mechanism "such as a unique student identifier portable across all sectors" (p. 10) should be considered. This idea is compatible with an issue raised by Wheelahan (2002) as worthy of further investigation, that of "a universal student number as a way of tracking student flows and outcomes across the sectors" (p. x).

Here we can see a push to put in place the necessary foundations to support more collaborative approaches by the education and training sectors and to establishing study pathways for post-compulsory learners. However, this research and development work is not occurring in a policy vacuum. The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs in its Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century stated that in order to achieve its common and agreed national goals there needs to be a commitment to collaboration for the purpose of "further strengthening schools as learning communities where teachers, students and their families work in partnership with business, industry and the wider community" (MYCEETYA 1999a, p.1). MYCEETYA's *Framework for Vocational Education in Schools – Policy Directions* (2000b) identified vocational learning as being of assistance to young people by enhancing their transition to a broad range of post school options and pathways when built on strategic partnerships between schools, business, industry and the

wider community (p. 11). The same policy noted the need for establishing linkages between institutions delivering related vocational learning services (p. 13).

Within most of the State education and training systems across Australia the emerging 'policies for the new learning era' espouse stronger cross-sectoral linkages. Tasmania's *Learning Together* strategy, a post-compulsory education and training strategy being developed in 2003 to extend and enhance learning opportunities, experiences and outcomes for all Tasmanians, will "encompass compulsory education linkages to post-compulsory options, Years 11 and 12, vocational education and training, adult and community education, higher education and informal learning" (Department of Education Tasmania 2003 website). It is envisaged that these linkages will be achieved through legislative changes to improve retention and participation, expand the range of alternative and flexible pathways and supporting the development of "partnerships between Government, students, parents, schools, TAFE, training providers, the University, employers and community organisations" (2003 website).

In Western Australia the message is similar. The State government's consultative paper *Draft Plan for Government Schools 2004-2007* (Western Australian DET 2003) includes, amongst the future directions for education, planning for more effective use of local educational resources through "closer cooperation with parents, other government agencies, TAFE colleges and industry" (2003 p. 5). The two recent reviews of post-compulsory education in Queensland concluded that students need more flexibility to complete their studies over different periods of time and in different ways (Pitman 2002) and that the way learning and qualifications are coordinated and recognised in schools, VET and universities is inconsistent and unclear (Gardner 2002). Gardner called for greater collaboration between the sectors (Foley 2002).

The report of the Vinson Inquiry into the provision of public education in NSW (2001-2000) is more conservative in its comments on the cross-sectoral issue. This report focused on the VET/school interface and concluded that "the most important inter-connections between TAFE and the public education system for the present purposes concern collaboration in the provision of vocationally related education and providing 'second chance' education to students who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to cope with standard schooling" (Vinson 2002 Chapter 13). This is a more limiting rationale for supporting cross-sectoral collaboration involving schools than is the general case in Australia, though we note that the NSW Department of Education and Training has developed a proposal for consultation that is aiming to reshape public education in that State under the title of *Lifelong learning* (NSW DET 2003). The intention is "to create a 'whole-of-life' education provider that is more responsive to community needs" (NSW DET 2003 website).

In Victoria, strategic developments are now underway based on the earlier review of post-compulsory education (Kirby 2002) and subsequent consultations informed by a discussion paper *Knowledge, Innovation, Skills and Creativity* (Victorian DET 2001a). Three program initiatives have occurred. These are:

- programs that increase the range and flexibility of studies and qualifications available to young people;
- programs that create local networks of people and groups interested in education, training and employment to develop local responses to needs of young people and the wider community; and
- programs that support individual young people and their transitions (VLESC 2003, p. 7)

Currently there is a further consultation underway in Victoria. The Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission (VLESC) is developing advice to the Minister for Education and Training on a policy framework for post-compulsory education. The aim is to map “all players associated with post compulsory education and training – providers from all sectors, public and private (schools TAFE, ACE, other RTOs, higher education); education and training policy makers and administrators; support services; and the wider community including employers and the young people themselves” (VLESC 2003, p. 2). From this ‘map’ a framework will be developed incorporating expectations, roles and responsibilities of participants, new ways of working together, identified outcomes and pathways towards these. The intention is to transform the post-compulsory domain of education into a system in which “the efforts of all players should come together in a ‘joined up’ way for a common purpose, rather than occurring in a piecemeal fashion” (VLESC 2003, p. 3).

From these examples of policy developments at both the national and state levels of education and training, the consistent theme is that of closer partnerships and collaboration between the sectors contributing to the provision of post-compulsory education and training. Added to this theme is the work underway to ensure that there will be greater degrees of flexibility in the provision of pathways within this domain and support for young people traversing these pathways as they make their transitions to further study and employment.





## **Pathways, articulation and qualifications**

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Lifelong and lifewide learning presupposes a range of contexts within which learning occurs well into adult life. The post-compulsory years of education have become a ‘hotspot’ for State and Territory education and training systems as these systems respond to new policy and program initiatives in the wake of recent reviews. These new policies and programs target the school, VET and ACE sectors with implications always for universities. As identified earlier, the direction these policies and programs are pursuing is for greater collaboration between these sectors. Pathways planning, reviewing articulation arrangements across and between sectors and building new forms of qualifications that are not ‘sector specific’ are programmatic responses indicative of the new thinking that is driving this contemporary policy development in education.

### ***Pathways planning***

The Pathways concept in contemporary policy and programs focusing on the transitions of young people between education and work has attracted considerable research attention. Raffe (2003) reviewed cross-national research and policy debates about youth transition pathways. He critiqued the ‘metaphor of pathways’. While finding the metaphor useful as a general organising concept, he identified a number of weaknesses or limitations with its use in policy formulation. One criticism was a tendency to represent the transition to work pathway “in linear terms – as a single transition, from full time education to full time participation in the labour market, with no overlap and no intermediate statuses” (p. 16). Raffe’s second criticism was directed at the construction of the policy debate about pathways in strict transition to labour market terms thereby ignoring the more holistic nature of young people’s transitions involving family, household and lifestyle transitions, all interactive with education to work transitions (p. 16). The third issue for Raffe about much of the policy debate over pathways was the overemphasis on “structural factors under the direct control of policy makers” (p. 16). By focusing only on the design of pathways, education and training policy may not be paying sufficient attention to those social and cultural factors in our communities that impact on the actual transitional journeys young people embark upon – factors such as class, ethnicity and gender.

Evans (2002) explored the concept of bounded agency to explain the experiences of young people in England and Germany in transition. This thoughtful paper explores the complex social landscape in which young people find themselves. Policies that have an expectation that young people will take control of their lives, an expectation that many if not most young people share, must be mediated so as not to fall most heavily “on those least powerfully placed in the landscape” (p. 265).

*Young people are social actors in a social landscape. How they perceive the horizons depends on where they stand in the landscape and where their journey takes them. Where they go depends on the pathways they perceive, choose, stumble across or clear for themselves, the terrain and the elements they encounter. Their progress depends on how well they are equipped, the help they can call on when they need it, whether they go alone or together and who their fellow travellers are (Evans 2002, p. 265).*

These insights from recent research identify the need to think about youth pathways more as the beginnings of life trajectories in need of adequate resourcing and pedagogical support in order to build and maintain momentum throughout life rather than in terms of a single bridge from education to employment. This is the challenge for post-compulsory education and training providers and the different levels of government that resource them.

In Victoria, pathways planning has been introduced through the *Managed Individual Pathways* (MIPs) program and *Youth Pathways Program*, initiatives that are providing young people in schools, TAFE Institutes and ACE organisations with individual pathway plans related to their education and career aspirations (Kosky 2002, p. 11). In 2002 the Victorian Department of Education & Training initiated a new program called *On-Track*. This program is building on the above pathways programs and young people are being followed up as they make the transition from full time school education or a *Youth Pathways Program* funded place in TAFE or ACE to further study and employment. This project is intended “to monitor progress towards goals and targets, and to establish and reinforce accountability at State and local level” (Kosky 2002, p. 11). The target group for these programs are those students who are at risk of leaving education and training early and therefore in danger of being lost to their communities as lifelong learners and fully engaged citizens and workers.

Similar pathways planning initiatives are either in place or being considered by the other State and Territory education and training systems of Australia. The Gardner review in Queensland specifically focused on pathways articulation for young people in that State. The Western Australian draft strategy plan for government schools identified, as a key priority, the provision of flexible and relevant learning pathways for young people. Initiatives to support this pathways priority in Western Australia include the development of a skills passport that will provide young people with formal records of their learning experiences and qualifications as they move from school to further study and work. A further initiative is the development of a comprehensive career guidance framework for schools (Western Australian DET 2003).

All of these State-based developments constitute a youth pathways ‘agenda’ that is fully supported by the declarations of MYCEETYA. These nationally agreed upon and endorsed statements have been published by MYCEETYA in the past two years (MYCEETYA 2002c, MYCEETYA 2003d, MYCEETYA 2003e). The national pathways action plan is based on seven principles of which four highlight the centrality of partnership arrangements across the sectors of education, training and employment. These principles are:

- collaborate and cooperate across sectors;
- communicate, consult and collaborate;
- promote partnerships and networks; and
- connect and ensure coherence (MYCEETYA 2003d website).

This national endorsement of pathways planning for young people is a further move in the direction of building strong local partnerships between schools, young people and their families, tertiary education providers, business and industry, and government and community service providers. Significantly, achievement of this vision of more seamless learning pathways for young people will require a substantial blurring of the traditional boundaries between the established sectors of education and training in Australia.

### ***Articulation and qualifications***

As post-compulsory courses of study across Australia are being expanded to accommodate additional pathways options for students, the issues associated with course articulation and credit transfer between qualifications arise in a more acute form than may have been the case in earlier more compartmentalised times. The programmatic developments to cater for the full cohort of young people now staying on into the post-compulsory years of education and training have tended to be qualification arrangements that accommodated accredited courses developed within the VET and ACE sectors within the Year 11 and 12 Senior School Certificates. This not only raises issues for learners articulating from schools to the tertiary sectors, but also for learners wishing to move across the ACE, VET and higher education sectors. Considerable research and development work has been undertaken focusing on the articulation issues as experienced in the VET/higher education sectors (AVCC 1994, Golding 1995, Golding, Marginson & Pascoe 1996, and Saunders 2001). Much of this research predates the current peak of policy activity focused on cross-sector collaboration and learning pathways in post-compulsory education learning programs and transitions with the issues still far from resolved, perhaps illustrating the depth of the difficulties experienced in resolving the articulation and credit recognition issues.

Universities/VET articulation and credit transfer is being re-visited in Western Australia by Lorrimar & Kroonstuiver (2003) in a project that is attempting to move articulation and credit transfer arrangements from the ad hoc, one-on-one, 'personality' dependent approaches, that have been frequently the case between university faculties and their departments, and TAFE institutes, to a more transparent systematic footing. If Deakin University is any guide, individual universities are also revisiting these arrangements in a more ordered fashion than may have been the case in the past partly as a response to the programmatic changes underway in the post-compulsory domain of their 'feeder' populations.

These more recent developments are occurring against the backdrop of the MYCEETYA *Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board's Implementation Handbook* (AQF Advisory Board 2002). This Handbook contains national policy guidelines for cross-sectoral qualification linkages jointly developed by the AVCC and ANTA. These policy guidelines provide institutions with assistance in determining structured cross-sectoral qualification

linkages while encouraging a diversity of approach. Further, there have been several recent case studies on cross-sectoral linkages between TAFE institutes and universities highlighting the advances achieved and the blockages to further articulation in these arrangements (Ramsay, Tranter, Kain & Sumner 1997, and Wheelahan 2000).

As a potential policy and programmatic response to these issues of course articulation and credit recognition across the sectors of education, the Victorian Qualifications Authority has produced a consultation paper entitled *The Credit Matrix: building bridges between qualifications* (VQA 2003). The paper introduces the concept of a system that could be applied across all of the different qualifications in Victoria enabling learners to build on what they already know and can do, and progress smoothly from one qualification to another. This concept of a qualifications system, referred to in the paper as a credit matrix, is a bold and potentially contentious initiative building on from the Australian Qualifications Framework at a potential level of detail involving a common measure or value on different kinds of achievement – “the credit matrix provides a common measure we can use to put a value on and compare learning in different kinds of qualifications” (VQA 2003, p. 11). This concept draws on similar developments in Europe and New Zealand (NZ Qualifications Authority 2002). If the credit matrix concept survives into policy implementation, and at this early stage of consultations this is by no means a certainty, it would become a significant component of the emerging post-compulsory education ‘system’ in Victoria building on the recent initiatives such as the VCAL, the MIPs program and the Local Learning and Employment Networks.

## Emerging post-compulsory education systems

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The Western Australian Plan for government schools 2004-2007 has within it elements that, over this period, could contribute to a post-compulsory education system within which the sectors of education and training have a more seamless set of relationships. The emphasis on building partnerships, having more flexible learning pathways for young people, establishing a comprehensive career guidance framework for schools and exploring a skills passport concept is indicative of a strong systematic approach to the provision of post-compulsory education and training utilising the full range of resources available to local communities. The proposal to trial Local Learning and Employment Partnerships (LLEPs) in several regional localities is a further possible element of a post-compulsory education and training system.

Victoria has moved further down the track in the direction of establishing a post-compulsory education and training system (VLESC 2003). In fact, the August 2003 VLESC consultation paper identifies the four requirements of a “good a post-compulsory education and training system” (p. 4). These are:

- a range of options: young people should be offered a range of relevant skills or topics to learn;
- flexibility of delivery: delivery of teaching should be flexible and matched to the needs of young people;
- credit for attainments: a qualification system which gives full credit for learning in a range of contexts; and
- individual support: effective and personalised support for young people in learning and in transition to employment (VLESC 2003, pp. 4-5).

As already stated, components have been coming into place over the past three years in Victoria in response to the Kirby Report (2000) that can be mapped against some of these requirements of a post-compulsory education and training system. For example, the range of options have been expanded considerably with the introduction of VCAL, expansion of VET in Schools through block credit arrangements, school based new apprenticeships and the extension of providers delivering to the 15-19 year old cohort. The VCAL is a ‘framework qualification’ (Praetz 2002) that accommodates accredited courses, units and modules from the VET and ACE sectors along with VCE units and community service programs. The qualification has curriculum strands in literacy and numeracy, personal development, industry specific skills and work related skills. Students can undertake a VCAL learning program at one of three levels. As a framework qualification the flexibility available for individualised programs is far beyond that previously offered under the VCE qualification rules. In addition, VET courses and workplacement experiences can be integrated with general education learning experiences.

The establishment of 31 regionally based Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) during 2001-2002 has provided new levels of local resourcing to assist the flexibility of delivery of VCAL, VET in Schools and school based new apprenticeships. The LLENs are

responsible for developing and coordinating initiatives within their local region to support young people through “a local cooperative approach to planning community renewal and strengthening, minimising duplication and wasteful competition in service provision, and acknowledging community and industry shared responsibility and ownership of post-compulsory education and training (Victorian DET 2002b, p. 1).

The LLEN concept is essentially that of a funded regionally based change agent expected to intervene across normalised and historically separated and institutionally embedded work practices and cultures of the organisations of the various education and training sectors of a locality, and to create the circumstances for involvement of youth services bodies, employer groups and employment agencies with these education and training providers. Through networked projects the expectation is that new more integrated forms of program delivery and support for young people, based on new forms of professional practice and new forms of partnerships, will come into place. For example, in 2002 nine LLENs were associated with the trial of the VCAL pilots. This was new territory for both the LLENs and the schools involved. Some schools were unsure of their LLEN’s role and knew little of what it was planning or doing to support the program. In contrast, other schools had excellent relationships with their LLEN and saw the LLEN as a source of support for their pilot program. For example, through the LLEN all the teachers involved in VCAL in the several VCAL pilot schools in one region were able to meet together to discuss their programs and to share ideas and experiences (Henry et al 2003).

The LLEN innovation is now central to two ARC Linkage Projects: *Networks and LLENs: Policy and Practice* involving the Centre for Post Compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning, University of Melbourne, and *Understanding and managing ‘risk’ for 15-19 year olds in a learning network: a case study of the Geelong LLEN* involving the Faculty of Education, Deakin University. Both research projects will inform government policy and local practice in relation to the application of network theory to the implementation of a post-compulsory education and training system.

## **The contribution of teacher education to the establishment of more seamless post-compulsory education and training systems within the States and Territories**

All of the government documents reviewed for this paper identify, as a key dimension to the success of the innovative policies and programs in the new post-compulsory education and training era, an expanded vision of teaching and learning within schools, ACE and VET providers. This is the critical success factor in the transformation of post-compulsory education and training. The difficulties to be faced by the teachers in this transformation will be in terms of developing more appropriate learning programs as realistic options, adequately resourcing these and delivering programs in radically different ways to what they have been professionally prepared to teach. Teachers will be required to operationalise a broader range of courses through cross-sectoral arrangements not yet, necessarily, in place. These collaborative arrangements could include learning sites not traditionally considered as such for young people – work and community service sites, for example. Teachers will be required to cater for a broader range of learning needs than has been normally the case with senior secondary school students. Imperatives here will include the development in young people “in addition to vocationally focused skills, ... strong generic skills and a positive orientation to lifelong learning” (VELSC 2003, p. 8). Pedagogies for New Learning (ACDE 2001) will need to be developed and owned by teachers, pedagogies focusing more on ‘how’ to learn instead of ‘what’ to learn.

The new post-compulsory education and training system will require new teachers.

Currently there is an upsurge in research in the VET sector on innovations in teaching and learning (Cornford 1999, Harris et al 2001, ANTA 2002 and Mitchell 2003, for example). Currently Smith, Henry & Dalton (2003-2004) are undertaking a research project for NCVET investigating the application of learning style awareness in the teaching of learners in TAFE across three States. But research involving secondary school teachers and new pedagogies for the engagement of young people in New Learning needs to be expanded. Deakin researchers are currently working with the Geelong region LLEN on a project exploring the nature of education and training partnerships with industry (Henry & Dalton 2003). This work is still to be completed but a significant finding to date is the difficulties teachers have in establishing equitable partnerships with industry-based personnel within the context of workplacement programs.

As with any new and emerging sector of education, there are issues in the post-compulsory education and training system that are, at this time, clearly significant but not fully understood in terms of their eventual impact on the shape of practice in this domain. For example, there are concerns expressed by industry representatives and others over the quality of vocational education being delivered in schools and the appropriateness of the curriculum guidelines available to teachers via ANTA endorsed training packages. A further curriculum-related issue is the paradox of an overcrowded post-compulsory school curriculum that still does not address the educational aspirations of many students. Studies are emerging (for example, Henry et al,

2003, Dalton, 2003) that indicate that school educators are still predominantly oriented towards post-compulsory pathways that lead to higher education directly from the completion of Year 12. However, many students experience alternative possible pathways through their out-of-school part-time or casual employment. While these work-based experiences may be significant learning opportunities for those young people fortunate enough to secure employment within this volatile youth employment market, there is rarely any direct connection or contribution made to their programmatic and certificate-oriented education within the school-based curriculum. Exceptions to this situation are possible, for example, through School Based New Apprenticeships, but for this to occur both students and teachers need to be aware of this potential. This issue is connected to the broader issues associated with structured workplacements for post-compulsory students and to the degree to which employers can contribute, through partnerships, to the work of schools, TAFE institutes and ACE providers in the post-compulsory domain.

Issues requiring further research include those associated with the roles of ACE providers and TAFE institutes in the emerging post-compulsory education and training system. The ACE sector is becoming more important than ever before in complementing the work of schools. Higher retention rates of young people in education will inevitably involve partnerships and pathways between ACE agencies and schools and TAFE institutes at the local level. Increased funding for and a greater prioritising of the work of ACE providers will be necessary before the ACE component of the new post-compulsory system will fully flourish.

Further to the above issues requiring further research are those directly related to the potential of TAFE institutes to contribute to the educative agenda of the post-compulsory education and training system. As has been argued in this paper, young people require a full educational experience in their post-compulsory years, not simply the provision of narrow vocational training locking them into restricted pathways to employment. There is evidence from the VCAL evaluation in Victoria (Henry et al, 2003) that TAFE institutes may be struggling to provide broader educative programs for young students. This raises the issue of the structure of the VET teacher workforce with an increasing proportion of sessional staff over full time permanent staff in the employment profile and questions over the adequacy of the available qualifications for TAFE educators. The levels at which TAFE institutes are funded and the competitive ethos of the VET sector with its emphasis on responding to the 'training market' presage potential issues concerning the propriety of program offerings for young people as the youth training market niche expands.

Of course, all of this has implications for the Faculties of Education of Australian universities. The challenges facing secondary school teachers, and ACE and VET teachers of young people can be transferred to the contexts of pre-service teacher education and teacher professional development post-graduate studies. Consider the questions below as indicators of the dimension of the challenge now confronting teacher education in Australia:



- Are our teacher education courses reflecting the demands now coming into place for teachers in this new post-compulsory system?
- Are we able to offer relevant teacher education programs that can be accessed by people with professional career expectations of becoming cross-sectoral teachers, and with backgrounds and maturity that would contribute to their professional practice upon graduation?
- Are our Faculties staffed with academics capable of devising and delivering teacher education courses that will prepare teachers for this new domain of professional educational work?
- How could we transform our courses and their delivery to address the professional needs of teachers working in these new post-compulsory systems?
- If post-compulsory learners are to develop those forms of knowledge, skills and dispositions to become knowledge workers in Australia's new innovation economy, how do we construct teacher education courses that will graduate educators as high level knowledge workers themselves<sup>1</sup>?

Once again we need to turn to vocational learning for insights into the size of the transformation required by teacher education in order to address appropriately the demand for new teachers of new learning in the new post-compulsory education and training system coming into place throughout this first decade of the twenty-first century. We do this with the caveat that the expanding post-compulsory education and training system, as envisioned in this paper, will require more than just the addition of vocational education to an already overcrowded curriculum. As argued earlier, the challenges of the emerging post-compulsory system are those associated with supporting developments towards community-networked schools with curriculum and pedagogical shifts that go beyond the old vocational/academic divide. But we can learn about the nature of the challenge ahead from the recent attempts to embed contemporary vocational education and training courses within Australia's secondary schools.

The now defunct Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEP) commissioned the Australian College of Educators in 2001 to undertake four inter-connected projects called *Building the profession to support vocational learning* (Preston 2002). The third of these projects focused on the provision of vocational learning teacher education; that is, "components or aspects of initial and post-initial teacher education in universities that is concerned with preparing teachers for teaching and supporting vocational learning (broadly defined), especially in schools" (p. 3). Preston found that vocational learning in school teacher education was patchy in provision but that it does appear to be expanding and in a state of dynamic change. Significant issues identified by this research were associated with:

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of a 'teacher-as-knowledge worker' should not be confused with that of a 'teacher-as-transmitter-of-knowledge'. Consider, in the context what it might mean to be a 'teacher-as-knowledge worker', Andrew's (2003) comment that the "conventional professional know-how no longer suffices for a knowledge worker; he or she must be a creative, independent, resourceful, innovative, enterprising, co-operative and versatile person who learns new things throughout their life" (p. 12).

- the differences between the espoused educational philosophies, cultures and traditions associated with vocational education and academic/general education respectively;
- the structure of teacher education courses for secondary teachers with an emphasis on traditional subject specialisations; and
- the lack of staff expertise and logistical difficulties associated with VET in Schools teacher preparation (Preston 2002, p. 3).

In addition to these issues the researcher noted the resource limitations faculties of education struggle with and the disincentive this brings to the development and sustaining of innovative courses. Further, university admission requirements, including inflexibility to RPL, that limit the enrolment of people with work and life experience backgrounds potentially valuable to the teaching profession and to vocational learning courses were seen to be a potential barrier to the level of required change in teacher education.

Preston's discussion of these issues (2002, pp. 30-38) is essential and cautionary reading for academic staff of faculties of education intending to mount a transformative agenda in teacher education course development and delivery aimed at better preparing teachers for the diversity of teaching roles within the emerging post-compulsory education and training system. Preston sets out a 'manifesto' for change which addresses teacher educators, university administrations, school authorities and teacher standards/registration bodies, the teaching profession including professional organisations, and, finally, business, industry and their representative organisations (2002 pp. 39-42). Importantly in all of this, Preston advocates strong collaborative relationships between academic groups concerned with adult VET research and teacher education, and those involved with school level research and teacher education. Building the necessary partnerships associated with teacher education course development, provision and assessment may require physical re-location in some cases. Teacher educators need to strengthen their collaborative relationships with teachers, school authorities and industry in making the transformations in teacher preparatory and continuing professional development courses now required.

This assessment to the transformations required in order to "build the profession to support vocational learning" (Preston 2002) is in fact only a partial assessment of the full transformation we face as providers of teacher education programs for the new teachers of the future. Vocational learning is but one element of the new learning required by young people to become more completely engaged with Australia's future. Reid (2003) identified that the new world economy requires schools to move beyond thinking about curriculum provision in terms of vocational and academic polarities. Reid is interested in exploring a multi-integrated curriculum "to support the development of citizens that are local, national and global and that can work in and tolerate a diverse society" (Reid 2003, p. 4). This curriculum concept could become a guiding concept for teacher educators to be explored further in the preparation of teachers to practice within a post-compulsory education domain that enables young people to explore an increasing range of study pathways through the integrated resources of their local, national and, in turn, global learning communities.

Possible ways forward would be through the involvement of regional and State/Territory organisations with Faculty academic staff in the planning and implementation of new pre-service and in-service courses for student teachers and teachers intending to work in the post-compulsory education and training domain. Teacher education course development planning groups established to inform university faculties of education could, in the context of Victoria for example, involve representatives of the relevant regional LLENs, local schools, ACE and TAFE providers, employer organisations, Area Consultative Committees, DEST School/Industry coordinating groups for post-compulsory student work placements, the Victorian Qualifications Authority and the Victorian Institute of Teaching, along with Faculty academic staff. As the scope of such a course planning group would be to advise on the development of new forms of teacher education courses that will prepare educators to teach young people participating in cross-sectoral post-compulsory education and training, it is anticipated that the core focus of these new teacher education courses would be on the development of new pedagogies for engaging young people in careers of lifelong learning.

New pedagogies will be based on a new relationship between pedagogy and content. Abbey (2003) reminds us that in the Anglo-American tradition, pedagogy is subsidiary to curriculum and sometimes is reduced to meaning little more than ‘teaching method’ (p. 9). This concept of pedagogy, and its serving relationship to discipline-based subject matter, is central to the logic of our existing secondary teacher education pre-service courses. It is also reflected in aspects of the professional development programs our Faculties offer to teachers. What would our teacher education courses look like if we were to break away from the strict adherence to the logic of subject specialisation, each with their own teaching method, and moved pedagogy to the position of a central study for teachers of post-compulsory learners? Can we envisage a teacher education course in which a new conception of pedagogy frames everything else, including the content of learning programs to be developed by teachers of young people in response to their learning needs and to a wider range of learning resources available in their communities? What are the implications of a re-conceptualisation of pedagogy for the ‘practicum problem’ that continues to be a contentious matter for Faculties of Education across the country?

These are some of the issues that we will be required to address as we explore the professional space coming into place in Australia for teachers of learners in the new post-compulsory education and training system.

The MYCEETYA Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century begins with:

*Australia’s future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society. High quality schooling is central to achieving this vision (MYCEETYA 1999a).*

The key question for us is: as teacher educators how can we prepare teachers for this ever more demanding task in the cross-sectoral space of post-compulsory education and training?



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