

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Theoretical Review of Literature for Effective Service Delivery

Effective coordination of service delivery can enhance the quality of services and benefit service providers. Benefits include more efficient use of resources and improved working relationships.

Evidence from process evaluations and documented practice experience reveal that service delivery coordination initiatives designed with, and for, Indigenous populations must:

- Focus on outcomes
- Be culturally appropriate
- Invest time and resources into community consultations
- Apply a strengths-based approach
- Support Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff.

KEYWORDS: Research Methodology for Effective Service Delivery of Vocational Education, Efficient use of Resources and Improved Working Relationships

INTRODUCTION

Initiatives work best when they are targeting a specific issue or problem that demands coordination across organisations: that is, they must be ‘fit-for-purpose’.

The term ‘service delivery coordination’, along with its diverse range of idioms—including joined-up services, interagency collaboration, cross-agency work and multi-agency partnerships—is rarely defined in the literature. While some analysts describe cooperation, coordination and collaboration as distinct analytical constructs, service delivery practitioners and program evaluators continue to use the terms interchangeably as part of a common purpose to deliver achievable outcomes to clients (Keast, 2011). For the purpose of this paper, ‘service delivery coordination’ is underpinned by a common purpose; ...to improve the connections between services or between people and services in order to improve outcomes for individuals, families, communities and societies (Leigh, 2008).

The purpose of improving outcomes for consumers is particularly pertinent for many Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians are worse off than non-Indigenous Australians on a number of indicators of health and wellbeing, including those related to life expectancy, employment and housing (AIHW, 2011). Typically, an individual service is not able to respond directly to the multiple and complex issues experienced, particularly in remote and outer regional

communities where an estimated 46% of Indigenous people live (AIHW, 2011). Coordination between Indigenous-specific and other 'mainstream' services can enable multifaceted, on-going interventions capable of delivering the necessary care and support that is crucial to enhance the wellbeing of Indigenous Australians (J Dwyer, 2004). Since cost pressures have resulted in some services being concentrated in inner regional and metropolitan centres, many Indigenous Australians are likely to continue to be negatively affected by their lack of access to these services (AIHW A. &, 2008) (Prout, 2008). Service delivery coordination represents a means of facilitating referrals and cooperation between services to provide more widespread service access to Indigenous Australians in all locations (S Flaxman, 2009). The complexity of existing service systems can result in a mix of services that are multi-layered and fragmented, and services may be provided by Commonwealth, state/territory or local government, as well as nongovernment and community agencies. Additionally, services may be delivered to Indigenous Australians via Indigenous-specific services or mainstream programs. This can be confusing for users (Banks, 2007). International and Australian research suggests that coordinating services can reduce complexity, enhance service quality and provide a foundation to deliver achievable outcomes to users (S Flaxman, 2009) (Development, 2003) Office of Evaluation and Audit 2009).

In Australia, responsibility to administer Indigenous affairs is split between the Commonwealth, state, local governments and community agencies. Recognising the need to collaborate more effectively to produce better outcomes, some highly sophisticated and complex 'whole-of-government' service delivery models have been initiated (FaCSIA, 2007) (Kelly, 2007). The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) acknowledges the challenges in determining whether such coordination efforts have been effective, noting the difficulty of measuring short- and medium-term changes resulting from an initiative intended to affect programs that have long-term outcomes (Tolley, 2010). In an evaluation of the effectiveness of Indigenous Coordination Centres, it was suggested that monitoring and achievement of outcomes requires further exploration (FaCSIA, 2007). The synopsis of the evaluation report reiterates a recurring message: ...time to engage communities were crucial and [that] quick wins are not always possible when you are dealing with complex issues (Morgan Disney & Associates, 2006). For collaborative programs initiated from the community sector, where Indigenous and mainstream services are delivered through cooperative networks, systematic, evidence-based evaluations are less prevalent. Often, such programs are deemed 'successful' on the basis of anecdotes or from accounts of service delivery practitioners and/or their clients. Where evaluations are conducted, they are more often focused on the ability of service agencies to deliver outcomes to clients, rather than on the effectiveness of their coordination efforts with other agencies. One example is the Dubbo Leadership and Cultural Development Program (DLCP). While the DLCP is delivered under a collaborative community-based framework, the evaluation of its pilot program focused specifically on the impact of the program on Indigenous students (A Hampshire, 2005). In view of the limitations of both whole-of-government and community-initiated approaches, extreme care must be taken in relying on this type of 'evidence' as a universal solution for effective service delivery modelling, particularly in light of the complex and varied needs of Indigenous Australians.

Key factors of effective service delivery coordination It is important to recognise that distinctions between whole-of-government and community-initiated approaches are often blurred, particularly in cases where community-initiated programs are taken up by whole-of-government programs due to their perceived success in delivering real outcomes. Regardless of such distinctions, it is clear through an analysis of both approaches that certain factors associated with service delivery coordination can result in positive outcomes for Indigenous Australians. The key factors that are critical in delivering such outcomes include:

- Ensuring cultural appropriateness
- Investing time and resources into community consultations
- Applying a strengths-based approach
- Supporting Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff.

Additionally, coordination of service delivery must represent the best means of addressing a particular problem. It should be recognised that not all services may need to be fully linked (Gleeson, 2011). Rather, the task is to design collaborative initiatives to be 'fit for purpose' (Keast, 2011). Cultural appropriateness Service providers must support each other to design and implement work policies and procedures that are sensitive and appropriate to the cultures of their Indigenous consumers. The first step is to build cultural awareness and staff capacity to work with Indigenous peoples (Higgins, 2005) (Development, 2003). For example, 'Recognised Entities' are Indigenous organisations or individuals authorised by their communities, and approved and funded by the Queensland Department of Communities (Child Safety Services), to provide cultural advice in child protection matters relating to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children and young people. By drawing on local knowledge to advise the department, Recognised Entities ensure services delivered by the department are accessible, responsive and culturally appropriate for Indigenous children, youth, their families, and carers (<http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/child-safety-practice-manual/introduction/recognised-entities>).

Service providers may also establish systems that ensure they receive timely and relevant advice about how to support Indigenous peoples in a way that protects and respects their cultures. For example, (S Flaxman, 2009) noted the ability of Communities for Children (CfC) program to deliver cultural appropriate practices. The program operated under a framework designed specifically to provide the flexibility to allow service agencies to adopt their own strategies to meet the needs of their users. A key strength of the strategy was its flexibility, which facilitated appropriate cultural practices at the service delivery level (Gleeson, 2011). One such strategy is the employment of local Indigenous staff to help implement and deliver Indigenous services (S Flaxman, 2009). Consultation Community involvement is particularly important in planning and setting priorities for initiatives to enhance service delivery coordination. Typically not all necessary initiatives can be implemented simultaneously and input from community members helps to ensure the right initiatives are implemented for the right people at the right time (S Flaxman, 2009) (Leigh, 2008). A collaborative consultancy approach is demonstrated by the establishment of the Mornington Island and Doomadgee Wellbeing Centres. The local health councils in both communities have been active participants 9 Effective practices for service delivery coordination in Indigenous communities throughout the process by consulting on issues about governance, service delivery options and the design and layout of the centres. Service providers have also worked together to integrate several social and emotional wellbeing programs as part of an effort to improve service delivery and reduce duplication (CGRIS, 2011).

Strengths-based approaches a strengths-based approach involves understanding and working from a community's collective strengths to assist them to address their challenges. In bringing together different people with specific skills to collectively address a range of issues, communities can provide local solutions to local issues. This approach incorporates the practice of using culturally appropriate and consultative strategies as noted above, however, strengths based approaches also focus on maximising the collective and individual strengths of contributors. In doing so, targeted interventions are

more likely to realise sustained change because they empower communities to provide practical solutions that are appropriate for them (M Haswell-Elkins, 2009) (Leigh, 2008).

Indigenous staffs Service delivery coordination initiatives require people with appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to effectively plan, implement and deliver collaborative services to Indigenous Australians. Indigenous staff often have a distinct advantage in having pre-existing contacts, local knowledge and trusting relationships, which all help link Indigenous individuals and families with services and providers (S Flaxman, 2009) (Development, 2003). For example, a mix of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, both from inside and outside local communities, were responsible for implementing the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2004–2009. In this case, the local knowledge held by Indigenous and non-Indigenous ‘insiders’ reduced the time required to establish connections between Indigenous consumers and service providers (S Flaxman, 2009). For both mainstream and Indigenous-specific programs, training programs are required to build on the staff’s cultural competencies. For instance, the implication for the COAG Trials is the need to recognise that government personnel must understand Indigenous culture as it affects the development and maintenance of partnerships. Similarly, Indigenous leaders and communities need to understand government culture and its associated organisational constraints (Morgan Disney & Associates, 2006). (Jacqui Stewart, 2011)

Effective Service Delivery: indicators for effective service delivery been taken from various resources based on the requirements of Indian youth.

Issues in Youth Employment in India

Policy on vocational education India:

- Enhancing individual’s employability
- Improving productivity and living standards of people
- Attracting investment in skill development
- Check drop-out rate

Criteria used for the Selection of Good Practices

The present study will be based on following sources on setting the criteria for selecting good practices:

- Principles of Guidance Provision as stated by OECD (OECD, 2004);
- Quality standards pertaining to particular forms of guidance, which were considered significant according to the scope and objectives of the current baseline study, i.e. distance guidance and developing entrepreneurship skills.

There follows a description of the aforementioned categories of criteria that were taken into account in selecting the good practices.

Table 1

Criteria	Rationale	Evidence needed
1. Relevance	Career guidance is a comprehensive institution including a variety of services, addressed to a variety of target groups. It is important to ensure	The practice proposed should meet the needs of the prearranged target groups (high quality services of career guidance, updated information, guidance tools adequate for specific needs etc.)

	that we refer to a career guidance practice addressed to the predetermined target group	
2. Innovation	It is important not to demonstrate conventional practices of guidance but innovative, ICT-based, user-centered, interest-oriented ones	A practice should contain novel and distinctive features that add significant value to existing, conventional practices
3. Empowerment	It is of major significance that psycho-social services, as counseling and guidance, promote the autonomy of young people therefore it should enable them to manage their life.	The practice proposed should aim towards increasing young people’s autonomy; also, it should stress that young people become actively involved in the implementation of the practice.
4. Equality	Career choices are affected by socioeconomic factors and gender. A good practice should therefore combat prevailing discriminations.	The practice promotes equal opportunities and gender equality
5. Effectiveness	It is important that the practice is designed taking into consideration the expected results (preferably quantitative results)	The practice has clear outcomes or results and fulfills the criteria and objectives that are clearly defined at its rationale
6. Transferability	Conditions change over time and from country to country; it is important that the practice can be easily transferred to different conditions.	The practice can be easily transferred to different target groups, countries, organizations, contexts, professionals, etc.
7. Accessibility	According to the Council Resolution on Lifelong Guidance “European citizens should have access to guidance services at all life stages, with particular attention being paid to individuals and groups at risk”.	The practice proposed increases the proximity and familiarity of career guidance services to the end-users

Criteria selected from Principles of Guidance Provision as stated by OECD

In the process of reviewing good practices and setting the criteria upon which to base our selections, the following principles, suggested in OECD’s (2004) Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers (pp.68-69) (OECD, 2004) were taken into account¹:

Centrality of the Beneficiary

Independence: the guidance provided respects the freedom of the career choice and personal development of the citizen /user;

¹Some overlapping in the terminology with the previous table has purposely been maintained in order to stress the importance of the particular criteria.

Impartiality the guidance provided is in accordance with the citizen's interests only, is not influenced by provider, institutional and funding interests, and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, social class, qualifications, ability etc.;

Confidentiality: citizens have a right to the privacy of personal information they provide in the guidance process;

Equal opportunities: the guidance provided promotes equal opportunities in learning and work for all citizens;

Holistic approach: the personal, social, cultural and economic context of a citizen's decision-making is valued in the guidance provided.

Enabling Citizens

Active Involvement: guidance is a collaborative activity between the citizen and the provider and other significant actors (e.g. learning providers, enterprises, family members, community interests) and builds on the active involvement of the citizen;

Empowerment: the guidance provided assists citizens to become competent at planning and managing their learning and career paths and the transitions therein.

Improving Access

Transparency – the nature of the guidance service(s) provided is immediately apparent to the citizen;

Friendliness and empathy – guidance staff provide a welcoming atmosphere for the citizens;

Continuity – the guidance provided supports citizens through the range of learning, work, societal and personal transitions they undertake and/or encounter;

Availability – all citizens have a right to access guidance services⁴at any point in their lives;

Accessibility – the guidance provided is accessible in a flexible and user friendly way such as face to face, telephone, e-mail, outreach, and is available at times and in places that suit citizens' needs;

Responsiveness – guidance is provided through a wide range of methods to meet the diverse needs of citizens.

Assuring Quality

Appropriateness of guidance methods – the guidance methods used have a theoretical and/or scientific basis, relevant to the purpose for which they are used;

Continuous improvement – guidance services have a culture of continuous improvement involving regular citizen feedback and provide opportunities for staff for continuous training;

Right of redress – citizens have an entitlement to complain through a formal procedure if they deem the guidance they have received to be unsatisfactory;

Competent staff – staff providing guidance have nationally accredited competencies to identify and address the citizen's needs, and where appropriate, to refer the citizen to more suitable provision/service.

Criteria selected referring to Quality Standards for Distance Guidance

The ever increasing use of distance services and resources can be both a necessity and a convenience. Web sites are a convenience for individuals who want to access resources and receive services outside normal business hours, or at their place of residence or work. Moreover, distance delivery becomes a necessity for people (young or not) who may:

- Have motor disabilities;
- Live in remote geographic areas without reasonable access to career resources and services;
- Require the assistance of guidance practitioners in other geographic locations with specialized expertise, and
- May be reluctant to seek assistance and consider the anonymity of the internet a safe place to start obtaining resources and services.

E-Guidance includes client use of Internet Web sites with support from a career guidance practitioner or practitioner interaction without use of a Web site². Practitioners can interact with clients via e-mail, chat, telephone, or videoconferencing. A variety of service-delivery levels can be facilitated at a distance, including supported self-help, brief assistance, or intensive assistance. Brief assistance can be provided to clients who need help in locating and using resources on the Web site. Intensive assistance can be provided by scheduled individual guidance appointments (Sampson, 2008).

eGOS– e-Government and e-Guidance Services delivered a study on the Ethical guidelines for e-guidance delivery and usage³. The goal of establishing ethical principles for the design and use of ICT in career guidance is to promote the effective provision of career resources and the effective delivery of career services. Moreover, the intention of ethics is to protect the welfare of clients by identifying potentially harmful computer applications as well as identifying services making inappropriate use of ICT.

Guidance practitioner competences are essential to the effectiveness of ICT-based career resources and services. Achieving an appropriate level of practitioner competency with ICT also helps to avoid potential ethical problems resulting from guidance practitioners' actions or failure to act. Prince, Chartrand, and Silver (1999) noted that there is an ethical responsibility for developers of Web sites to indicate when there is a potential need for individuals to seek assistance from a counselor and how to secure help⁴.

In the aforementioned review of eGos, the problems of distance guidance are stressed and the following recommendations on how to avoid potential ethical issues that can result in serious problems are made⁵:

²Watts, A. G., & Dent, G. (2007). The use of telephone helplines in career information and guidance. In J. F. Malone, R. M. Miller, & G. R. Walz, (Eds.). *Distance counseling: Expanding the counselor's reach and impact* (pp. 159-179). Ann Arbor, MI: Counseling Outfitters.

²See Pages: 6 – 1, in Prince, J. P., Chartrand, J. M., & Silver, D. G. (2000). Constructing a quality career assessment site. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 8, 55-67

³See Raimo Vuorinen & James P. Sampson. E-gos. (2009) *Ethical guidelines for e-guidance delivery and usage*. Project WEB site address www.egos-cip.eu

⁴See Prince, J. P., Chartrand, J. M., & Silver, D. G. (2000). Constructing a quality career assessment site. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 8, 55-67

- Web sites that provide career assessments and information should indicate the circumstances when self-help is inappropriate and when assistance is likely needed from a guidance practitioner;
- Guidance professionals use informed consent to indicate to clients what persons are collecting and have access to the client's personal information, what security issues exist with an online format, and for how long records will be stored;
- Guidance professionals educate their clients concerning the challenges and problematic situations that may occur during distant guidance. Guidance professionals help the clients to anticipate preventive measures as well as strategies to deal with emerging problems;
- Guidance professionals familiarize themselves with available local resources for support in emergency situations in working with clients with possibilities of harm to self or of harm to others. These include, highly anxious, severely depressed or disturbed⁶. Some clients may not have the computer skills required to successfully access distance services.
- Guidance practitioners should assist their clients in locating facilities with low cost or with free public access to the Internet;
- Guidance professionals provide clients with information about their credentials and qualifications they, as well as any other professional who has access to client information;
- Assessments must be validated for self-help use if no guidance support is provided; or that appropriate guidance intervention is provided before and after completion of the assessment resource if the resource has not been validated for self-help use. Evidence of the quality of the assessment, including reliability and validity, need to be included in the professional manual and training materials for the measure. Assessments originally developed in paper-and-pencil format must have been tested in computer delivery mode to assure that their properties are the same in this mode of delivery as in print form.; alternatively, clients must be informed that they have not yet been tested in this same mode of delivery;
- The intended purpose, the target audience, and the potential use of the information should be clearly identified in the introduction to the material. The date of publication of the career information should be clearly indicated as well as how the validity and impartiality of the information is guaranteed;
- Evidence that the information provided is accurate and free from distortion caused by self-serving bias, sex stereotyping, or dated resources must be included;
- The vocabulary of the information should be appropriate to the target group of users Criteria selected referring to Quality Standards for Developing Entrepreneurship Skills

⁶Ravis, H. B. (2007). Challenges and special problems in distance counseling: How to respond to them. In J. In J. F. Malone, R. M. Miller, & G. R. Walz, (Eds.). *Distance counseling: Expanding the counselor's reach and impact* (pp. 133-148). Ann Arbor, MI: Counseling Outfitters.

In *Youth and Work* (2007), a publication by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, it is underlined that a less common way to promote youth employment is through action favoring entrepreneurship.

Stimulating entrepreneurial mindsets among young people, encouraging innovative business start-ups, and fostering a culture friendlier to entrepreneurship and the growth of small and medium-sized businesses, is directly linked with the Lisbon Strategy for growth and employment. To this effect, the Spring European Council of March 2006 underlined the need for a positive entrepreneurial climate overall and for framework conditions that facilitate and encourage entrepreneurship, and invited Member States to introduce greater measures, including entrepreneurship education⁷.

In selecting good practices, the present thematic group places focus on projects designed to encourage young people towards the development of entrepreneurship specifically targeted to young people, particularly risk groups such as those who have dropped out of school without qualifications or those who have graduated from high school aged over 16 years old and remain unemployed for more than three months. Furthermore, we will refer to projects targeted to secure the transition from education to employment, giving young people knowledge and experience about starting their own business, including VET programs that aim to enhance young peoples' skills and abilities (Maria Angeliki Zanaki, 2010).

From a theoretical perspective, VET can be classified in the following categories (Grubb & Ryan, 1999)

- Pre-employment VET: prepares individuals for the initial entry into employment; in most countries these are traditional programmes of vocational and educational training in schools; they are found both in schools and workplaces as dual systems and are often operated by national ministries of education;
- Upgrade training: provides additional training for individuals who are already employed, as their jobs change, as the technology and work environment become more complex, or as they advance within the company;
- Retraining: provides training for individuals who have lost their jobs so that they can find new ones, or for individuals who seek new careers to develop the necessary competences for employment; individuals in retraining programmes, by definition have already had a labour-market experience; therefore, retraining may not have a direct connection with the occupation they already have;
- Remedial VET: provides education and training for individuals who are in some way marginal or out of the mainstream labour force; typically those who have not been employed for a long period of time or who do not have any labour-market experience; usually people depending on public income; Cedefop (Cedefop, Validation of non-formal and informal learning in Europe: a snapshot 2007, 2008) offered a distinction which encompasses the previous ones: initial and continuous educational training (IVET and CVET)
- IVET refers to general or vocational education and training carried out in the initial education system, usually before entering working life. Some training undertaken after entry into working life may be considered as initial

⁷European Commission, Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General Promotion of SME Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship(Final Version November 2009) *Best Procedure Project: 'Entrepreneurship in Vocational Education and Training' Final Report of the Expert Group.*

training (e.g. retraining). Initial education and training can be carried out at any level in general or vocational education (full-time school-based or alternate training) pathways or apprenticeship;

- CVET is defined by the area of education or training that comes in after entry into working life and aims to help people to (a) improve or update their knowledge and/or skills; (b) acquire new skills for a career move or retraining; (c) continue their personal or professional development (Cedefop, 2008); continuing education and training is part of lifelong learning and may encompass any kind of education: general, specialised or vocational, formal or non-formal, etc. (Cedefop, *The Benefits of Vocational Education and Training*, 2011).

The quality of VET and tertiary education in India is also highly variable. According to industry surveys, workers trained in the VET system are often ill-equipped and require significant on-the-job training (World Bank, 2008). Weaknesses in skill formation appear to be broad-based, with workers often lacking technical knowledge and having poor soft skills, including the inability to communicate effectively in the workplace. There is also evidence of a skills mismatch in technical and vocational areas, with graduates often employed in fields other than those in which they trained and employers reporting skill shortages. In the tertiary segment there are a group of small elite institutions at the top end of the scale including the IITs and IIMs as well as other institutions of national importance that are internationally renowned for high-quality research and education, especially of post-graduate students. A small number of business schools, predominately private, also score well in specialised international rankings of business schools.⁸ Few Indian institutions feature in international university rankings and none currently features in the top 100 of the most commonly cited indexes. To some extent this reflects India's relative level of economic development. An arguably more important indicator of the weakness in the higher education system is the seemingly poor employability of many Indian graduates. According to one industry association representing software and service sector firms, only 10 to 15% of business graduates and approximately one quarter of engineering graduates were judged to be employable (NASSCOM, 2009). Similarly, despite thousands of applicants taking a civil service entrance exam to fill just 30 specialised positions in economics and statistics, only 23 applicants were found to be suitable (Kapur, 2010).

In higher education, in India, as in other countries, the expansion of private education has been particularly strong in disciplines where start-up costs are relatively low, returns to graduates are high and the supply response from the public sector sluggish (Levy, 2008). Degree-conferring private colleges now dominate in a number of professional disciplines, including engineering, information technology, management and some allied health disciplines such as pharmacy. In VET, growth in private industrial training centres has been much faster than public-sector industrial training institutes. As this expansion has largely been driven by market forces, it has enabled the supply of tertiary education providers to become more closely aligned with the demands of the labour market. For vocationally-oriented degrees, in particular, students typically opt for the private sector if they are unable to secure a place at a public university or college. Hence, private providers have acted to absorb excess demand and have expanded access to those who can afford to pay in areas where labour market prospects are good. Private unaided institutions typically receive no financial support from the government and rely heavily on tuition fees as the main source of revenue. Fees are guided by state committees and operate on a multi-tier basis whereby a minimum percentage of places are required to be made available to disadvantaged students at a lower rate and the remaining places at a capped rate. Committees tend to set fees based on input costs whilst allowing

⁸The Indian School of Business ranked twelfth in the 2010 Financial Times list of the top MBA programmes in the world <http://rankings.ft.com/businessschoolrankings/global-mba-rankings>.

“reasonable” surpluses, despite the official non-profit policy. As disadvantaged students are cross subsidised, fees for students required to pay the top rate exceed costs and are typically high relative to average household incomes (Carnoy, 2010)

Teachers are critical in shaping learning outcomes and efforts to lift the overall quality of education need to consider ways to improve teacher effectiveness. In India high rates of teacher absence and low levels of effort have long been recognised as having a major deleterious impact on school learning (PROBE, 1999). Although teacher absence rates seem to be declining, they remain relatively high (ASER, 2011). There appear to be significant differences in teacher attendance and observable efforts between public and private schools, which may largely reflect differences in employment arrangements. Whereas regular public school teachers are normally employed by state governments on permanent contracts, teachers in private schools are employed at the school level on fixed term contracts. Teachers in private schools therefore face a stronger accountability mechanism: indeed, in a survey of 3 000 public schools there was only one instance of a head teacher dismissing a teacher for repeated absence, whereas in a sample of around 600 private schools, 35 head teachers had at some point dismissed a teacher for repeated absence (Muralidharan, 2007). Evidence on the impact of contract or “Para-teachers”, which have been recruited in large numbers by some state governments to fill shortfalls, is consistent with evidence on the effectiveness of private school teachers and further reinforces the importance of effective accountability mechanisms. Para-teachers are recruited locally, normally on a fixed-term contract, to work in public schools and typically have lower credentials, at least in terms of teacher qualifications (Pandey, 2006). Part of the rationale for recruiting Para-teachers was to assist regular teachers but in practice Para-teachers often perform the same function as regular teachers, despite being paid a fraction of regular teacher salaries (Atherton, 2010). Report says that contract teachers are more effective than regular teachers in Uttar Pradesh and at least as effective in Bihar.

The value of vocational education was explicitly recognised by the Department for Education (DfE) in its recent response to the Wolf Review. It stated that ‘vocational education is a vital underpinning for our economy ‘ (DfE, 2011) and recognised that the future of the UK’s economy relies on high-level technical skills and its ability to remain at the forefront of technological change. The DfE called for education system to address the long term weakness in practical teaching and learning. The purpose of the (Wolf, 2011), published during the course of this research, was to consider how to improve vocational education for 14–19 year olds and thereby promote successful progression into the labour market and into higher level education and training routes. The report’s recommendations have been accepted by the Government and thus set the context for the future of vocational teaching and learning. It is therefore important to consider the implications of the findings and recommendations for systemic change in relation to effective vocational teaching and learning. As Wolf states, the removal of micro-management and bureaucracy in vocational education will ‘free up resources for teaching and learning’, which is an essential part of the vocational education improvement plan (Wolf, 2011).

(International, 2009) Recognises that vocational education is often distinguished from ‘general or academic education’. It defines academic education as that which enables the learner to build analytical and critical thinking skills and knowledge and vocational education – that which develops craftsmanship, practical experience and practical problem solving. As Educational International asserts however, this understanding ‘does not hold up to scrutiny’ and in fact it is now contested that analytical and critical thinking skills are no less needed by vocational learners than their academic counterparts and that vocational learning is no less intelligent (B Lucas, 2010). In research and education policy, vocational education is usually distinguished as education that leads to various occupations. It prepares people to function at a

specified level in specific roles in the context of usually paid employment (B Lucas, 2010). The importance of which, was recognised by the (Wolf, 2011), in its urge for English vocational qualifications to properly prepare young people for the labour market. This literature review thus accepts this definition and uses the term ‘vocational education’ in two ways: (a) as the route that enables individuals to gain vocational qualifications; and (b) as work related education that can occur across the curriculum and in a variety of settings, including the workplace. Pedagogy The LSIS Excellence Gateway (Gateway, 2011) suggests that the term pedagogy ‘denotes more than just a set of teaching techniques.

Pedagogy Encompasses

- What is taught/learned – the content
- How it is taught or learned – approaches to teaching and learning
- Why it is taught or learned – the underpinning values, philosophy or rationale.’

These three elements work in synergy and so, for example, the ‘why’ will have a strong influence on what is taught or learned and how. (J Cullen, 2002) suggested that pedagogy is synonymous with ‘teaching methods’ and ‘teaching styles’. In short, it is suggested that pedagogy can be taken to mean what teachers do to ensure effective teaching and learning takes place.

In the 21st Century, however, in order for individuals to play an active role in the UK’s future economic competitiveness, they have to be able to employ a wide repertoire of skills in order to respond effectively to rapid world changes and demands. This requires individuals to understand the knowledge they acquire, play with new ideas, communicate effectively, collaborate and relate well to others. They also need to be adaptive to change, be able to form plans, assess their progress and set new goals, use technology and solve problems creatively to find solutions to ‘wicked problems’ (Murgatroyd, 2010).

An improvement in the effectiveness of teaching and learning is likely to result in an improvement in learner outcomes. As indicated in the Introduction section of this report, research tells us that the quality of teaching is the main factor affecting learner achievement (Mourshed, 2008). Providers are judged on a number of factors during Ofsted Inspections, but the quality of the teaching and learning is considered to be a major consideration both for that area of inspection and the overall inspection grade. The Common Inspection Framework for further education and skills, (relevant for FECs and WBL providers) includes four key factors used to evaluate a provider’s effectiveness and efficiency in meeting the needs of learners and other users (Ofsted, 2009):

- Outcomes for learners
- Provider’s capacity to make and sustain improvements
- Quality of provision
- Leadership and management.

These ten principles of effective teaching and learning, however, are relevant across schools and further education (Council, 2006):

- Equips learners for life in the broadest sense

- Engages with valued forms of knowledge
- Recognises the importance of prior existence and learning
- Requires the teacher to scaffold learning
- Needs assessment to be congruent with learning
- Promotes the active engagement of the learner
- Fosters both individual and social processes and outcomes
- Recognises the significance of informal learning
- Depends on teacher learning
- Demands consistent policy frameworks with support for teaching and learning as their primary focus.
- To discuss effective teaching and learning, it is helpful to use a framework and the one illustrated in Figure 3 below was developed from the Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA) research project. This framework encompasses four different elements of effective teaching - Teaching Skills, Teaching Relationships, Teacher Reflection and Teaching Models. Importantly, it is only when these four elements are in synergy that they are able to support effective teaching as Creemers informs us, 'isolated components or effective elements of individual components do not result in strong effects on student achievement' (Creemers, 1994). (Sally Faraday, 2011)

Online learning can be broadly defined as the use of the internet in some way to enhance the interaction between teacher and student. Online delivery covers both asynchronous forms of interaction such as assessment tools and the provision of web-based course materials and synchronous interaction through email, newsgroups and conferencing tools, such as chat groups. It includes both classroom-based instruction and as well as distance education modes. Other terms synonymous with online learning are 'web-based education' and 'e-learning'. E-learning is considered the latest advance in technology-based learning. It is generally regarded as 'electronic' delivery of learning on the Web, or Internet-enabled learning. E-learning is seen as an alternative to taking courses in the traditional classroom setting, providing flexibility and convenience in education ... The model that is emerging is access to learning, where, how and when it is needed, in a learning environment that exists almost entirely on the Web. (Charp, 2001).

Flexible learning strategies involving the use of the internet have generated much interest in academia and industry. However, as (Wright, 1999) note, cost-benefit analyses of web-based distance learning are sparse. Research on not only costs but also how these relate to effective outcomes is also rare. On the basis of a search of key sources, only 15 articles or books could be identified that discuss or report results of a study of the cost-effectiveness of flexible learning studies. Only two of these relate to an Australian context.

If technology is used as an add-on to existing activities, rather than as a means to reshape education, then it will simply add to the total cost of operations and few savings will be realised. Business has learned that productivity gains and cost savings come only when old ways of doing business are abandoned and technological solutions replace them. (Education, 2000) In broad terms, effectiveness is concerned with outcomes: training is effective to the extent that it produces outputs relevant to the needs and demands of its clients. It is cost-effective if its outcomes are relevant to the

needs and demands of clients and costs less than the outputs of other institutions that meet this criterion (Rumble, 1988). The report of the Web-based Education Commission, a bipartisan committee of the United States Congress, notes that the costs of the new technology need to be offset by a growth in educational productivity. However, the report acknowledges that this requires other organisational changes to be made to achieve more productive educational environments. The report also notes this process of supporting organisational change may not be a rapid one as ‘the productivity gains found in [United States] business through investments in technology took three decades to emerge’ (Education, 2000). The defining features of effective learning, presented in table 6, are derived from the discussion in the United States Web-based Education Commission’s report of education research findings on enhanced learning performance (Education, 2000). In terms of the learning process, the Web-based Education Commission identified four key elements from research: type of knowledge, learner focus, nature of social interactions, and forms of assessment.

In relation to learner instructor interaction, (Peters, 1997) note that the role of the instructor needs to change from that of content provider to content facilitator by becoming proficient in using the web as the primary teacher–student link. This involves learning to teach effectively without the visual control provided by direct eye contact.

Recent studies of corporate in-house training suggests that online delivery in this environment produces results whereby costs are lower and learning outcomes better (A Chute, 1999) (Berge, 1998). However, key components in these lower-cost results are savings in travelling costs and student downtime. Within the corporate training situation, the company incurs these costs that affect the bottom line costs. By contrast, in a VET situation, the institution/provider does not bear the costs of students’ travelling or time costs. While the students implicitly face such costs, these are often not recorded as a cost in assessments of the cost–benefits of flexible learning. (Curtain, 2002).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the study is three fold as discussed below:

- **Secondary data**

A review of policies and national systems of guidance whereby the legal and policy framework, the services delivered and the delivery methods will be described. This will provide a systemization of the varying national frameworks within which guidance operates.

- **Questionnaire Data**

It will cover experts/Trainers employed in the vocational training process & students who are on the receiving end of the programs who are consuming the services provided by the trained pupils to evaluate the quality of service delivery.

A questionnaire will be distributed across experts/ professionals that are employed in guidance-related organizations/ structures. The aim of the questionnaire is to find the actual tools being used in delivering the guidance, opinion of experts to establish how far these tools are in compliance with policy conceptual framework, and draw some conclusions on current state and suggestions for improvisation in the learning process.

- **Case Studies**

A description of good practices in guidance will be provided which will be in coordination with the scope and objectives of the study

Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) While qualitative research has been critiqued for lacking the rigor generally employed in quantitative research, the CQR process offers a more rigorous qualitative approach by systematically examining the representativeness of results as well as engaging multiple researchers who analyse and reach consensus in interpreting results (Hill & Williams, 2012; Hill, et.al., 1997). A modified version of the consensual qualitative research (CQR) methodology developed by Hill and associates was used to analyse the comprehensive case study data (Hill & Williams, 2012; Hill et al., 1997). Consensual qualitative research methodology is one of the two most frequently used qualitative inquiry approaches incorporated into counselling psychology research and is particularly useful in analysing semi-structured interview data. CQR incorporates elements from phenomenology, grounded theory, and comprehensive process analysis.

The essential components of CQR are the use of (a) open-ended questions and semi-structured data collection techniques, typically in interview format, which allow for the collection of consistent data across individuals as well as a more in-depth examination of individual differences; (b) several researchers participating throughout the data analysis process to foster multiple perspectives; (c) consensus to arrive at judgments about the meaning of the data; (d) at least one auditor to check the work of the primary team of researchers and minimize the effects of groupthink among the members of the primary team; and (e) identification and synthesis through three distinct steps into domains, core ideas, and cross-analyses in the data analysis process.

In the present study, the core CQR components were adapted into the analytic strategy with the integration of data gathered through both focus groups and individual interviews conducted with participants. Data analysis using CQR involves three central steps. Domains (i.e., topics used to group or cluster data) are identified and used to segment focus group and interview data.

Core ideas (i.e., summaries of the data that capture the essence of what was said in fewer words and with greater clarity) are abstracted from the focus group and interview data within domains. Finally, cross-analysis is used to construct common themes across participants (i.e., develop categories that describe common themes reflected in the core ideas within domains across cases).

Within the CQR process, representativeness is generally achieved by using labels to identify the frequency of responses when data has been collected via individual interviews. However, when using data collected through multiple modalities, including focus groups, into the analytic process, alternative methods for appropriately reflecting representativeness must be addressed (Chui, Jackson, Liu, & Hill, 2012). The researchers in this study intentionally modified the CQR process by forgoing response frequency and instead ascertained representativeness through careful individual analysis, substantial team discussion, and subscription of response value through the consensus process. An auditor familiar with the study, but external to the consensus process, provided input to ensure trustworthiness and integrity of the results by providing an extensive review of the drafts. A draft version of the results was also sent to main participants in each state agency for a factual review of content, and they concurred that the findings accurately represented their respective agencies.

Data Analysis: Data was analysed using consensual qualitative research (CQR) methodology with members of the research team each following the established research protocol. While discussion and differing viewpoints served as valuable functions of this process, ultimately the group reached consensus in identifying domains and core ideas that

accurately represented the data. Results of the study are portrayed in an interpretive narrative report consistent with the constructivist paradigm. Data analysis using the CQR method involved the following three prescribed steps.

Domain identification: The first step in analysing data using CQR methodology involved review of participant responses gathered through interviews and observations. Based on the interview questions, each member of the research team divided data into relevant domains, or topic areas, independently. Domains serve as the starting point in grouping or clustering copious amounts of information and may include context and specific strategies or interventions (Hill et al., 1997). Following the independent review and domain identification stage, the group convened to discuss suggested domains, add or delete domains as needed, and reach consensus on the final domains used to accurately portray results. The draft domains were sent to the external auditor for review. Auditor input was considered and discussed as a team with revisions to the domain areas made accordingly. **Core ideas.** Following domain identification, the researchers independently summarized the content of each domain into brief abstracts with the intent of capturing the essence of each domain in as few words as possible and with enhanced clarity (Hill et al., 1997). Core ideas including brief abstracts or summaries were developed for all material within each domain for the study. The draft core ideas were sent to the external auditor for review with appropriate changes based on auditor feedback subsequently made. The team then met to discuss the suggested core areas, revise as needed, and arrive at consensus before moving to cross-analysis of the data.

Cross-Analysis: The final step in the CQR process was a cross-analysis involving the development of categories to describe consistencies across the core ideas within domains (Hill et al., 2005; Hill et al., 1997). Cross-analysis is more complex than the previous steps of domain and core idea identification and allows for a higher level of abstraction. The cross-analysis process required the researchers to creatively and dutifully derive categories by identifying common themes or elements across responses within the sample. The researchers again independently reviewed the core areas identified within each domain and suggested potential categories. The team subsequently met to compare categories and determine which best represented the data (Hill et al., 1997; Ladany, Thompson, & Hill, 2012). Hill and colleagues (2005) recommend characterizing categories using frequency terms, rather than numerical representations, with general results applying to all or all but one of the cases, typical results applying to at least half of the cases, and variant results applying to at least two but fewer than half the cases. Appendix E contains a synthesis of findings across the four state samples.

Auditor

Integrating the assistance of an auditor, who is familiar with the study, but external to the consensus process, is a unique feature of CQR methodology (Ladany et al., 2012). The auditor for this study reviewed all raw data collected, reviewed and provided input for each domain to determine whether (a) the data was accurately assigned to the domain; (b) key material in the domain was accurately abstracted into core ideas; and (c) the wording of core ideas was concise and reflective of the raw data (Hill et al., 1997). Hill and colleagues (1997) recommend that auditors provide rich feedback as this encourages the research team to think carefully about abstracting and determining best construction of the data. The auditor provided her comments to the team who then considered and opted to accept or reject each comment based on a full and thoughtful discussion. The process was repeated to ensure that the domains identified by the team accurately represented the data. The auditor also reviewed the completed cross-analysis to evaluate adequacy and representativeness of the data and offer feedback to the primary team.

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