

Examining the impact of a systemic change professional development initiative for vocational education and training (VET) trainers in Western Australia

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The professional development of vocational teachers and trainers is increasingly viewed as an integral part of improving teacher quality and effectiveness.

Models of professional development are wide and varied and much debate surrounds the power of different models in terms of transforming individual practice and ultimately having a positive impact on student learning. Designing and implementing teacher professional development programs based on research and theory is a complex and demanding process but measuring the impact of such programs can present even greater challenges.

This paper will outline a mixed methods approach taken to examine the impact of a four year systemic change professional development initiative, designed to extend the instructional practices of thirty vocational teachers working in eleven tertiary and further education colleges in Western Australian (TAFEWA).

The methods used to examine impact were adopted in an attempt to recognise and examine the complex nature of the change process as a personal, emotional, behavioural, systemic and dynamic process which occurs over a period of time.

The paper will focus on:

- the research context – the Australian vocational education and training system (specifically Western Australia – TAFEWA),
- the research design – outlining research methodology which includes the use of;
 - the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) instrumentation - Levels of Use (LoU) and Stages of Concern (SoC),
 - in-depth interviews examined by means of narrative analysis,
 - classroom observations, and
 - reflective interviews;
 - results from the study.