



TAFE NSW Professional Development Framework for Teachers 2004-2006

2004 Outcomes Report for TAFE NSW Professional Development Framework for Teachers

25 November 2004
TAFE NSW Professional Development Strategy Committee

Summary

Professional development in TAFE NSW institutes supports their business frameworks and priorities. During 2004 there has been a particular emphasis in institutes on the priority areas of teacher qualifications, assessment, curriculum and resource development.

The arrangements for professional development (PD) vary across institutes, with some focusing on more distributed models of planning and funding, while others use more 'centrally' driven models. Regardless of model, all institutes align PD with their strategic directions and business priorities. In line with their models, institutes implement appropriate statistical and financial reporting and evaluative processes.

In addition to the priority areas for 2004, a wide range of PD needs have been addressed in all institutes. Many institutes have used innovative approaches and strategies within areas such as:

- PD for part time casual teachers – JIT, online, mentoring
- integrating the use of ICT teaching and learning practice and skills development
- reflecting on and sharing of teaching and learning practice
- upskilling in technical currency
- leadership development and business literacy
- head teacher operational training and educational forums
- career planning
- implementing unit based curriculum
- professional conversations and collaboration
- integration of institute PD plans and individual learning plans
- online access for staff to PD records.

Curriculum Centres provide many statewide PD activities for teachers and educational staff across a range of teaching disciplines and industry areas. Curriculum Centres develop institute PD plans in consultation with institutes and the plans are available on the Centre's Gateway site.

TAFE statewide units provide both specific and generic PD support for Institute priorities. PD initiatives have been undertaken in the areas of policy implementation, PD research, validation of assessment and development of local curriculum.

Context

Institutes are promoting strategic approaches to professional development (PD) to enable improved outcomes in restricted budget environments. The focus is on organizational quality and sustainability.

In response to industry and community needs, skills development in areas that align directly to potential, emerging growth and niche areas have been prioritised. For some institutes, there has been a significant shift in the local industry base and an increase in

diversity of employment opportunity. To provide timely and customized training, PD is required to equip staff to work closely with industry and community stakeholders.

In institutes where there are vast geographical distances between locations, the need for networking and upskilling in priority areas such as assessment validation is reinforced. In such areas, there is also an emphasis on ensuring part time teachers have required qualifications, as they work in isolation. In institutes with geographical diversity and demographics, significant resources are allocated to delivery of PD programs, and it affects the capacity of staff to attend metropolitan conferences, workshops and industry visits and to fully utilize the expertise and resources provided by Curriculum Centres.

Where there has been major staffing change due to statewide restructuring and amalgamation of institutes, the emphasis has been on supporting staff through the changes, preparing them for the new structures and operations, and integrating PD approaches and programs. Mechanisms for professional collaboration and learning across new groups have needed to be established.

Priority Area 1: Teacher Qualifications

TAFE NSW supports the development and learning of its workforce of over 4500 permanent and 9000 part time casual teachers. The primary effort is in maintaining and enhancing the qualifications of teachers to provide industry and the community with highly trained teachers and assessors.

The priority for institutes has been the provision of Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training for part time casual teachers to meet AQTF (Australian Quality Training Framework) standards. Many full time teachers joined part time teaching groups to refresh their teaching and assessment skills. Institutes provided Plan, Conduct and Review Assessment specifically for full time teachers. This has involved both recognition services and gap training.

Teachers have been supported in updating their professional skills and meeting new academic prescriptions. Curriculum Centres support institutes through forums, workshops and resources to ensure their teachers are up to date in their industry areas and Training Packages. Study assistance schemes operate in some institutes. Faculties provide industry specific training to support implementation of new Training Packages. Certificate IV Frontline Management has been contextualized and provided for both teachers and head teachers in some institutes, as well as graduate diplomas and bachelors in VET and specific developmental programs and kits for head teachers.

Teachers have been updating their skills in classroom management, flexible delivery, teaching youth and students with special needs, and returning to industry to enhance their technical skills. Some institutes provide comprehensive initial teacher development programs and strategies for newly appointed teachers prior to commencement of study for teaching degrees or in collaboration with universities as part of their teacher education programs. Teacher support is provided through teacher coordinators and teacher development officers.

For many, skills development in elearning and blended learning has been a priority. Teachers have developed skills in online facilitation through FAME (Facilitating and Managing elearning) and ItTO (Introduction to Teaching Online). Teachers have been introduced to the use of Toolboxes and to a wide range of new learning technologies through NET*Working conferences and institute based programs. Computer literacy, web design and desktop publishing has been a focus in some institutes. Institute teaching and learning units provide specialist programs and training in high demand areas. The TAFE NSW International Centre for VET managed the Australian Flexible Learning Community where over 6000 members from across Australia, including many TAEF NSW teachers, networked, joined specialist groups, down loaded resources and learnt about PD options and pathways, student perspectives in online learning, designing for learning and using technology. LearnScope projects provided PD to over 500 teachers and educational support staff in TAFE NSW in 2004 and increased capacity to provide online and flexible learning options.

A number of institutes have collaborated to utilize the services of universities such as Charles Sturt to provide initial teacher education for full time teachers. The collaboration enables networking between new teachers from different institutes, a blended learning approach and for teachers to work in small groups. TAFE staff provide some services, such as mentoring and facilitation of workshops.

The active involvement of many staff in the development of strategies to meet their PD needs has resulted in responsive and cost effective strategies that institutes review and assess against business outcomes. A wide range of methodologies are used, including online and blended learning strategies. Information and learning resources are provided on institute intranet sites.

Priority Area 2: Assessment

A major investment by TAFE NSW has been in assessment validation to achieve AQTF compliance. Teachers have up to date training and qualifications in assessment design and validation through Certificate IV Assessment and Workplace Training programs, recognition of prior learning and gap training.

Institutes have adopted a variety of PD strategies, including short courses, work based activities and project teams, to support the understanding and implementing of evidence-based assessment in a Training Package environment and assessment validation. Teachers have attended validation workshops, assessment showcase days, forums, mapping exercises, meetings and cross-institute activities. Also, AQTF workshops, faculty based conferences and workshops on graded assessment and High Level Review of Training Packages. Mentoring training has been provided for some in SharePoint, an online platform for uploading, sharing, storing and validating assessments. Others have training in an online Educational Knowledge Bank that includes a repository for assessment documentation and validated assessment resources.

Some institutes have established communities of practice to explore common approaches to assessment. Teachers have attended industry or discipline meetings about assessment and workshops on designing and developing assessment tools, particularly those provided

by the previous Vocational Education and Training Centre (VEAC) and Training Divisions. Of value have been the VEAC produced resources 'On Track'. There is ongoing faculty liaison with Curriculum Centres and teachers have attended showcase days coordinated by Curriculum Centres. Access to ANTA funding such as Reframing the Future by both institutes and VEAC, has supported the development of assessment skills and assessor networks. Some institutes have focused on meeting AQTF requirements as they apply to distance delivery.

An institute undertook an evaluation of the VETASSESS Online Assessment System in partnership with the previous VEAC and has since then trialed the system and continued to use it. This institute has also received a NSW Training Award for Innovation for an online system for managing learning and assessment strategies. Institutes use their intranet to share information, experiences and instruments. The previous Professional Development Network intranet site has a sub site which is a 'one-stop shop' dedicated to assessment (produced in collaboration with VEAC and Teaching and Learning Support). The TAFE Teaching and Learning Support Unit has conducted statewide forums and workshops and developed resources to assist educational staff in implementing policy in areas of assessment, recognition, flexible learning and student selection, and supported improvements in the Application Processing System. The NSW TAFE International Centre for VET Teaching and Learning (through the previous VEAC) has published assessment research projects on the NCVET website, disseminated research findings in assessment in traineeships and promoted a facilitators guide and support materials on recognition.

Institutes have collaborated with Curriculum Centres on a statewide policy for graded assessment in TAFE NSW and participated in the Assessment Policy Support Forum. There is institute representation on a committee set up to examine consistency of assessment across NSW and on regional panels to develop strategies for validation of assessment. Institutes support PD strategies and cross validation processes that involve collaboration with industry partners and the school sector.

Priority Area 3: Curriculum and resource development – statewide and local

Many activities in professional development (PD) in institutes for curriculum and resource development have been based on staff involvement in externally funded projects and reviews by Curriculum Centres. The Course Developers Workshop provided by the TAFE Accreditation, Registration and Quality Services unit, was developed to promote guidelines for institutes undertaking local curriculum development and for new staff in Curriculum Centres. The course focused on the development of units of competency and the requirements that must be met in order to develop and implement new courses.

Cross-institute teacher collaboration arranged through Curriculum Centres and secondments to these Centres, have enhanced individual teacher capability. Institute staff involved in LearnScope teams frequently collaborate with other government agencies, private training providers and local industries. Through Reframing the Future funding, communities of practice have been established in a number of industry training areas to support implementation of new curriculum, including commercial delivery. These

communities bring together teachers, head teachers, institute managers, Curriculum Centre managers and representatives of industry and the workplace.

Teachers have attended central and institute-based workshops and meetings to develop resources for a variety of certificates and courses. Skills development has been supported through collaboration of teachers on institute-based projects for Training Packages in the areas of module writing, learning guide writing and student assessment guide writing. Teachers have developed skills in resource development for online and blended learning delivery and for the use of Toolboxes. Teachers have attended national and NET*Working conferences to enhance their skills development. Curriculum Centres have coordinated teacher involvement on policy groups. Some teachers have access to institute mentoring strategies and online resources that support the development of teachers in local resource development. One institute has collaborated with Newcastle University in course design and curriculum writing for the Bachelor of Education degree to be offered in 2005. Teachers have had access to sessions on how best to access and use third party products eg AE ShareNet, in updating and developing learning materials.

Some institutes are reviewing their capacity, capability and courseware for online delivery and resource development, as well as the previous programs provided through the TAFE NSW Online Professional Development Program, to better position themselves in the future. Teachers are being supported in all institutes to integrate elearning methodologies with mainstream curricula. TAFE NSW International Center for VET Teaching and Learning conducted an online conference *Cutting Loose* to share the learning, celebrate the TAFE NSW Online PD Project and investigate the question 'What next?' Specialist institute support units provide professional development, resource development and maintenance and technical support for teachers involved in blended and elearning. Participation in blended learning approaches and professional development through Introduction to Teaching Online (ItTO), training in Toolboxes and Janison Toolbox are in increasing demand.

Activities such as LearnScope projects, Toolbox workshops and ItTO provide teachers with the underpinning skills to develop and customize resources. Curriculum Centres conduct workshops on integrated delivery and assessment, work based learning, course and resource development. Central units organize workshops in new processes and systems for curriculum development. Curriculum Centre managers through their membership on key national and state industry bodies and networks, are kept up to date and disseminate new knowledge on the latest developments in good practice.