

Vocational Education and Training in the Military Context

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the

Masters of Education (Honours)

University of Technology Sydney

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2012

Certificate of Authorship/Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Acknowledgements

Throughout the completion of this thesis many individuals, organisations and people close to me have contributed to, and supported the efforts of the researcher in undertaking, researching and completing this thesis, without them this thesis would not have been as possible or as enjoyable.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Australian Defence Force for showing interest in my research study and in assisting me to achieve my research aims. Utmost cooperation was extended to me in all areas of my research requirements.

To the research participants I express my thanks for their assistance, interest in the research, and their valuable time given freely to the researcher in conducting the interviews and completing questionnaires. The valuable information and support provided by the participants made the production of this thesis possible and motivating for the researcher.

To my family who has shown me unstinting support and encouragement throughout this year, I convey my deepest gratitude and appreciation. Their understanding, and above all, patience has assisted me in undertaking and completing this research, with the added awareness that my struggles would be met with their consistent reassurance and belief in my capabilities.

To my supervisors Dr Tony Holland and Ann Reich for your continual support, encouragement, faith in my work and above all friendship, I express my utmost appreciation and thanks. The guidance and assistance you have given me has made this thesis possible and rewarding. Thank you both for your continual support and assistance throughout my thesis.

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Abstract

The fundamental intention of this research study was to investigate the vocational education experiences of learners undertaking military vocational training to ultimately draw an understanding of those learning experiences of military personnel, and therefore inform future practice. This research study aimed to address the following research question: How is vocational education and training, delivered in the military context, adequate in preparing military personnel for civilian work? This research question was designed to focus on the transferability of military attained vocational education skills and knowledge to the civilian workplace, and whether a military staff member making the move to the civilian workplace employed in an equivalent job would have adequate training.

The researcher has strived to highlight the perception of military trainees about the transferability of their military acquired vocational education and training skills and qualifications to the civilian workplace. In achieving this various trainees and trainers were invited to participate in this study to complete questionnaires and interviews concerning aspects of military vocational training and the transferability of these skills to the civilian workplace. The vocational fields of interest and analysed within the study include hospitality, clerical administration and aviation.

Case studies were developed and created from the data collected presenting and illustrating the learning experiences of military trainees who have undertaken military vocational training. These case studies examine and investigate the learners perceived quality of training, the support provided to the trainees, and their view on transition to the civilian workplace. The findings of the case studies are discussed and analysed in depth through a thematic analysis presenting the perceptions of both trainees and trainers of the transfer of military acquired vocational skills and qualifications to a civilian workplace.

Of major concern to this study was the situated nature of military delivered vocational training and whether these skills and knowledge can be transferred to a civilian workplace and whether military acquired vocational training can be used to gain civilian employment once transfer from the military is sought. Through the development of the case studies and thematic analysis of major topics and issues raised, various transition factors that may hinder

and impede a successful transition to civilian work are highlighted. What will be required of military personnel once seeking transition is also raised as well as an awareness highlighted by the participants that transfer is to an extent more significant than skills. Transition from the military to civilian work is a personal transition requiring the ex-military member to adapt to a new environment and organisation, learn new ways of work and to develop new working relationships.