How Novice Vocational Education and Training Teachers Learn to Become Teachers

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
University of Technology Sydney
2016
Certificate of Authorship / Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not been previously 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.

Signature of Student: __________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________________________________________
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To my mother, Robyn Francisco, who instilled in me a love of learning from an early age, who helped me realise that learning does not only occur through formal study associated with educational institutions, and who wholeheartedly continues learning herself.
Author publications and presentations

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# Contents

**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS** .................................................................................................................. XV  
Tables .................................................................................................................................................. xv  
Figures .............................................................................................................................................. xvii  

**ABBREVIATIONS** ............................................................................................................................ XVII  

**ABSTRACT** ........................................................................................................................................ XVIII  

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS** ..................................................................................................................... XX  

**CHAPTER 1**  INTRODUCTION TO HOW NOVICE VET TEACHERS LEARN TO BECOME TEACHERS  
1.1 VET teachers and the Australian VET sector ........................................................................... 2  
1.2 Where are the gaps? ...................................................................................................................... 6  
1.3 The research questions .............................................................................................................. 7  
1.4 Learning in the workplace ......................................................................................................... 9  
1.5 The conceptual background ................................................................................................... 10  
1.6 The study and scope of the research ......................................................................................... 11  
1.7 Introducing myself and my relationship to the research ............................................. 14  
1.8 Organisation of this thesis .................................................................................................... 16  
1.9 Conclusion ................................................................................................................................. 18  

**CHAPTER 2**  VET TEACHERS, LEARNING AND PRACTICE THEORY  
2.1 Vocational Education and Training (VET) teachers ............................................................. 20  
2.2 Learning how to be a VET teacher .......................................................................................... 37  
2.3 Theorising practice ................................................................................................................... 51  
2.4 Revisiting learning ................................................................................................................... 71  
2.5 Conclusion .................................................................................................................................. 73  

**CHAPTER 3**  RESEARCHING THE LEARNING OF NOVICE VET TEACHERS: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS  
3.1 Methodological journey .......................................................................................................... 76  
3.2 Case study methodology ........................................................................................................ 81  
3.3 Dimensions of the research .................................................................................................... 83  
3.4 Being an insider/outsider ....................................................................................................... 84  
3.5 Methods ..................................................................................................................................... 91  
3.6 Ethics and reflexivity .............................................................................................................. 104  
3.7 Analysis of data ...................................................................................................................... 111  
3.8 Conclusion ................................................................................................................................ 114  

**CHAPTER 4**  BEING STIRRED INTO PRACTICES: CASUAL TEACHERS LEARNING TO BECOME TEACHERS  
4.1 Chapter overview .................................................................................................................... 117  
4.2 Being stirred into practice ....................................................................................................... 119  
4.3 Learning 'how to go on' as a teacher in Sport and Fitness .............................................. 120  
4.4 Learning 'how to go on' as a teacher in Horticulture ....................................................... 144  
4.5 Learning 'how to go on' as a teacher in Business .............................................................. 165
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table of Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Learning 'how to go on' as a teacher in Beauty Therapy....................................................183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Conclusion..............................................................................................................................................196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 5  BEING STIRRED INTO PRACTICES: CONTRACT AND PERMANENT TEACHERS LEARNING TO BECOME TEACHERS</strong> ............. 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Chapter overview................................................................................................................................197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Learning 'how to go on' as a teacher in Building Design....................................................................198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Learning 'how to go on' as a teacher in Community Services .............................................................209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Learning 'how to go on' as a teacher in Electronics............................................................................230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Learning 'how to go on' as a teacher in Air Conditioning and Refrigeration......................................264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 6  LEARNING HOW TO GO ON: CROSS CASE FINDINGS...................................... 277</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Chapter overview................................................................................................................................277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 What teachers do................................................................................................................................278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 What teachers learn................................................................................................................................284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 How teachers learnt through undertaking the role of a teacher ..........................................................289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 How teachers learnt through practices additional to the teaching role..............................................296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 Ecologies of practices and developing a trellis of practices that support learning...........................300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7 Conclusion..............................................................................................................................................306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 7  ENABLING AND CONSTRAINING NOVICE TEACHER LEARNING: CROSS CASE FINDINGS</strong> ........................................ 309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Chapter overview................................................................................................................................309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Employment arrangements....................................................................................................................310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Cultural-discursive arrangements that enabled and constrained learning 'how to go on' as a teacher ........................................................................................................................................ 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Material-economic arrangements that enabled and constrained learning 'how to go on' as a teacher ........................................................................................................................................ 316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 Social-political arrangements that enabled and constrained learning 'how to go on' as a teacher ........................................................................................................................................ 326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6 Key practice architectures that enabled and constrained learning ......................................................335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7 Individual agency ................................................................................................................................337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8 Conclusion..............................................................................................................................................342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 8  SYNTHESIS, IMPLICATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH</strong> .......... 343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Chapter overview................................................................................................................................343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 How do novice VET teachers learn to become teachers through undertaking the teaching role? ........................................................................................................................................... 344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 How do novice VET teachers learn to become teachers through practices additional to the teaching role? ........................................................................................................................................... 346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 What do novice VET teachers learn? ......................................................................................................347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5 What enables and constrains the learning of novice VET teachers? ....................................................348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6 Implications of the research findings....................................................................................................352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7 Using the theory of practice architectures .............................................................................................358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8 Future research......................................................................................................................................360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.9 Concluding remarks...............................................................................................................................362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDICES</strong> ...................................................................................................................................... 364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX A  ETHICS APPROVAL AND PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM</strong> ............ 365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX B  RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS</strong> ................................................................................................. 367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES...................................................................................................................377
List of Illustrations

Tables

Table 2.1: VET Practitioner Capability Level 1 ................................................... 35
Table 3.1: Summary of Data Collection Methods ............................................ 98
Table 3.2: Interviews ............................................................................................. 101
Table 4.1: Sport and Fitness Novice Teacher: Grant ........................................ 123
Table 4.2: Horticulture Novice Teacher: Michael ............................................. 147
Table 4.3: Business Novice Teacher: Sarah ....................................................... 169
Table 4.4: Beauty Therapy Novice Teacher: Tabitha ........................................ 185
Table 5.1: Building Design Novice Teacher: Sam ............................................. 201
Table 5.2: Community Services Novice Teacher: Alice ................................... 211
Table 5.3: Electronics Novice Teacher: Trevor .................................................. 232
Table 5.4: Electronics Novice Teacher: Simon ................................................... 234
Table 5.5: Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Novice Teacher: Ewan .......... 266
Table 6.1: Practices that Made up the Teaching Role: First six months .......... 280
Table 6.2: Practices that Made up the Teaching Role: End of first year ........ 282
Table 6.3: Practices that Made up the Teaching Role: After two years .......... 283
Figures

Figure 5.1: Sam’s workstation ................................................................. 199

Figure 6.1: Interrelated practices that supported learning: Sarah ............. 303

Figure 6.3: Interrelated practices that supported learning: Ewan ............. 305

Figure 7.1: Workstation ........................................................................ 317

Abbreviations

ABS  Australian Bureau of Statistics
Cert IV TAA  Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
HoS  Head of School
TAFE  Technical and Further Education
VET  Vocational Education and Training
Abstract

Expectations of the vocational education and training (VET) sector continue to increase as governments, industry, and the community see vocational education and training as an answer to a range of issues. Meeting these expectations and providing quality VET requires VET teachers with a high level of skills and abilities. At the same time, in Australia, many VET teachers begin teaching with little or no prior experience or educational qualifications related to teaching. This thesis addresses the question of how novice vocational education and training teachers learn to undertake the teaching role. Specifically, it considers,

- How novice VET teachers learn to become teachers through undertaking the teaching role;
- How novice VET teachers learn to become teachers through practices additional to the teaching role;
- What novice VET teachers learn; and
- What enables and constrains novice VET teacher learning.

Nine novice teachers, in eight different teaching areas, and across four campuses, participated in the longitudinal multi-case study undertaken over two years. A practice theory framework was used to design the research and to analyse the data.

The research found that there was considerable variation in the practices that novice teachers undertook as part of their role as a teacher. For instance, ‘teaching’ involved different practices in each site. There was also variation in what each teacher needed to learn to undertake that role. The
research found that practices associated with undertaking the teaching role were more influential in supporting teacher learning than practices additional to the teaching role. In some sites, a trellis of interconnected practices that supported learning (PSLs) was developed. A trellis is made up of interconnected components that help support growth in a particular direction. In sites where a trellis of PSLs was developed, it provided greater support for novice teacher learning to undertake their role than in sites where PSLs were not interconnected. The thesis identifies the key arrangements in each site that enabled and constrained novice teacher learning.

*Keywords:* Workbased Learning; Practice Architectures; Trellis; Practices that Support Learning; Teacher Learning; Mentoring; VET Teachers
Glossary of Terms

The Australian VET system has an array of terms that can become confusing. The glossary below serves two purposes. It provides definitions for some of these terms. It also outlines some choices that I have made in using particular terms in this thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term Used</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate IV in Training and Assessment</td>
<td>Abbreviated throughout as Cert IV TAA. This includes the Training Package qualification Cert IV TAA and the more recent version of the qualification, the Cert IV TAE. The Cert IV TAA is the qualification that all VET teachers are meant to complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>A competency identifies the skills and knowledge that a learner needs to be competent in to achieve the competency. It does not provide information about how to support students to become competent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>In the Australian VET system the term ‘industry’ is often used to refer to the occupation that teachers are teaching about. For instance, the automotive industry, the beauty therapy industry or the sport and fitness industry. The term is also used more broadly such as ‘industry consultation’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Many terms are used to refer to the person who supports the learning of a group of people. These include teacher, facilitator, trainer and VET practitioner. Throughout this thesis I use the term ‘teacher’.</td>
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<td>Time release</td>
<td>Time release refers to a reduction in the time expected to be given to teaching duties to enable a teacher to undertake other roles such as mentoring or resource development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training Package</td>
<td>In Australia, most VET qualifications are encapsulated in nationally recognised Training Packages. Each Training Package is made up of a number of qualifications, which in turn are made up of a number of competencies. For each industry, a Training Package outlines the competencies that students need to meet for each VET qualification.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>