



Co-designing the case-based pedagogy and assessment in vocational teacher training

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Victorian Skills Authority Fellowship, 2025

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01

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02

Executive Summary

2.1 Summary of key findings

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is central to Australia's workforce development, with trainers and assessors playing a vital role in delivering industry-relevant skills and supporting national productivity. The latest 2025 Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council Communiqué (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, n.d. - d.) reported (p. 2):

Skills Ministers reaffirmed the critical role of vocational education and training and in driving national productivity and individual opportunity. Over 5 million Australians use VET each year to build the skills they need for work and Jobs and Skills Australia are projecting that over 90% of future employment growth over the next 10 years will be in occupations requiring post-secondary qualifications.

Ensuring high-quality training within the VET sector remains a key and ongoing priority for the government. A key aspect of the Commonwealth Government's latest quality reforms involves addressing issues related to the supply, retention, and capability of the VET workforce, which has led to the creation of the VET Workforce Blueprint (2024) (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, n.d. - f). Further efforts to enhance the quality of VET delivery are reflected in the updated 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), which came into effect on 1 July 2025 (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, n.d. - e). As VET educators play a vital role in preparing the skilled workforce

needed in Australia, responsibility is shared among trainers, industry experts, training providers, industry partners, peak bodies, and regulatory agencies. This represents a collective commitment to raise quality across the sector through a more adaptable, strong, and quality-focused teaching and learning and "supporting people to upskill and reskill in an ongoing process of lifelong learning" (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, n.d. - d, p. 2).

This Fellowship proposes a VOCase model as a powerful framework for embedding case-based pedagogy across the Australian vocational TAFE sector, with the potential to significantly enhance teacher quality, student outcomes, and industry partnerships. This model includes five interconnected domains:

- Advancing Teaching & Learning with industry- and AI-linked case pedagogy
- Scaffolding professional experience
- Modelling learners' employability skills
- Collaborating on professional development
- Increasing provider visibility and branding

By embedding authentic, industry-informed and AI-linked case-based pedagogy into vocational teacher education and training, VOCase model can strengthen both preservice and in-service educators with the tools to facilitate dynamic, learner-centred environments that mirror real workplace challenges. This model fosters continuous professional growth,

encouraging teachers to remain engaged with current industry practices while refining their pedagogical skills. For students, VOCase transforms learning into an active, problem-solving process that deepens understanding, sharpens employability skills, and increases motivation through relevance and realism. Crucially, VOCase promotes strong collaboration between vocational providers, dual sector universities, and industry partners by involving them in the co-design, delivery, and evaluation of case materials. This ensures training remains current, responsive, and aligned with evolving workforce demands. By institutionalising a case-based approach across sectors, VOCase creates a cohesive ecosystem that not only prepares teachers and students for the realities of work but also strengthens enduring partnerships with industry—driving innovation, quality, and relevance in vocational education.

2.2 Background

The vocational education and training (VET) sector in Victoria plays one of the key roles in promoting economic and social growth, increasing productivity and promoting innovation. Yet the quality of VET pedagogy in terms of learner outcomes and teaching quality is variable and remains an area of concern due to various reasons. Paired with a current call for deeper learning and skills acquisition, reformation of the education and professional development of VET teachers to address these quality concerns is urgently needed despite discursive, cultural, economic and social complexities in the teaching and learning environment. As Lucas (2014, pp. 5-6) highlighted that VET is often “seen as the ‘poorer cousin’ of academic education. In reality vocational pedagogy is a more complex concept to understand than its academic counterpart precisely because it takes place across two contexts – workplace and education space – and because it has crucially to involve both teachers and employers in its delivery.” Developing a more sophisticated and practically useful understanding of vocational pedagogy is essential for moving forward. As the vocational industry is moving towards learner-centred and work-centred culture (Billett, 2002), the aim of this Fellowship was to investigate how case-based

pedagogy can assist in this process by recreating the quality context in which future work will take place and engage learners in the learning process that is relevant and contextual. Cases describe a context in which teachers work and make decisions. A case-based approach emphasises active construction of knowledge gained from simulated experience. Morrison (2001) calls this ‘actionable learning’. To keep cases ‘alive’, the context and scenarios must reflect the constantly shifting workplace and dilemmas that teachers and learners experience in a real classroom. In this instance, industry partners can assist and benefit by actively participating in co-designing high quality and relevant cases for learning and assessing competencies, which meet workplace expectations. One of the main distinctive characteristics of cases is describing the workplace context in which action takes place. Through context, cases add to theory and help interpret and apply theory to practice. Expanding knowledge base is another feature of cases. By capturing possible workplace events, cases can demonstrate “how culture, experience, readiness, and context influence how people learn and develop” (Darling-Hammond & Hammerness, 2002, p. 12). In addition, case-based assessments enhance learning by making it more authentic, current, and relevant. They effectively address competencies while helping to bridge the commonly reported gap between classroom instruction and workplace expectations.

The use of cases in teacher education and TESOL is a promising instructional method for creating authentic learning environments and an effective pedagogical strategy because cases provide an opportunity for understanding the multifaceted nature of teaching and learning and thus enables students to think like teachers (Shulman, J.H., 1992).

2.3 The Fellow's own personal and professional developments

Since 2017, the Fellow has been teaching the 11021NAT Certificate IV in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at Kangan Institute Bendigo TAFE by providing training to those who want to become English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. This certificate is an Australian

vocational TESOL qualification recognised by employers locally and internationally. This vocational qualification attracts a wide range of adult learners whose inspiration in doing this course varies from changing a career path to obtaining recognition of prior teaching skills in Australia or as an educational pathway.

The Fellow's own personal and professional developments have been enhanced immensely because of the Fellowship research, engaging with colleagues across the globe and international travel undertaken. The opportunities to explore the history and the current ways of case-based method and liaise with overseas experts from the VET and HE sectors who offer TESOL courses and engage in teacher education more broadly have provided new insights into a search of ways of student engagement on the one hand and teacher/assessor professional growth on the other. The Fellowship trip has highlighted the uniqueness of the Australian vocational sector and its continuous passion and pursuit into innovating the sector and developing a future workforce. As part of this Fellowship, the Fellow travelled to the UK to exchange ideas on teacher training and delivery of English as an Additional Language in the context of another English-Speaking country and the country which drives a lot of innovation in English Language teaching and maintains tradition in teaching ESL through courses such as CELTA and Trinity Certificate in TESOL. In addition, the Fellow met with colleagues from the Case Center, UK with a future opportunity to participate in a range of workshops on case writing. The visit to Italy allowed to see how Europass Teacher Academy operates and explore examples of short face-to-face courses available for teachers. Another organisation which the Fellow was interested in getting in touch with was the European Training Foundation (ETF) (<https://www.etf.europa.eu/en>), an agency of the European Union (EU) helping EU neighbouring countries to reform their education and training systems as part of EU external relations policies. By supporting human capital development, the ETF contributes to social and economic development and long-term stability in EU neighbouring countries. The ETF is based in Turin, Italy. This organisation's mission is to help transition and developing countries harness the potential of

their human capital through the reform of education, training, and labour market systems, in the context of EU external relations policies. This visit has also allowed to get acquainted with initiatives which are proposed by the European Training Foundation, specifically the Creating New Learning (CNL) initiative. CNL collects insights on the conditions for fostering innovation in teaching and learning and identifies and analyses innovative trends focussing on VET and skills development in the ETF's partner countries in a lifelong learning perspective. CNL aims to encourage the development, implementation and dissemination of innovative teaching and learning practices in the ETF partner countries, in order to develop more effective and inclusive education and training systems. CNL supports innovation in teaching and learning across five thematic domains such as new educators' qualifications, innovative learning environments, personalised learning, curriculum and key competence, digital and online learning. The ETF is working at the moment on four partnership projects: 1. Partnership for Innovation in Adult Learning (PIALE); 2. Creation of authentic and engaging learning environments; 3. Digital formative assessment; 4. Model for the 21st Century educator (READY).

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2.4 Formal training completed and selected webinars and conferences attended:

- Fundamentals of Case Teaching, Harvard Business Publishing Education 2025
- PRME Case Teaching Workshop, The Case Centre, UK, 2025
- PRME Case Writing Workshop, The Case Centre, UK, 2025

2.5 Fellowship learnings

1. Completing a course, attending a range of workshops and disseminating findings
2. Developing an overview of a case-based pedagogy applicable for the Australian VET context
3. Proposing entry requirements considerations applicable for 11021NAT Certificate IV in TESOL and broader for other vocational qualifications
4. Proposing a VOCASE model of utilising cases and promoting a case-based pedagogy among vocational providers and dual sector universities.

2.6 Personal, professional, and sectorial impact

The Fellowship has been a profoundly enriching experience, allowing the Fellow to align her professional journey with a passion for advancing teaching and learning innovation. It has deepened her expertise, broadened her professional network, and revitalised her sense of professional purpose. Through rigorous applied research and international collaboration, the Fellow has elevated her professional standing and enabled her to make meaningful contributions to both policy and practice. At a broader level, there is an opportunity to strengthen teacher professional development by collaborating with practitioners, fostering innovation, and building research capacity across the sector.

03

Fellowship Background

3.1 Fellowship context

3.1.1 Workforce development

Industries across Australia are facing an urgent need for specialised workforce training in response to emerging trends such as rapid AI integration, digital transformation, technological advancement, sustainability, and evolving social challenges. As demand for a highly skilled workforce grows, education providers are playing a pivotal role in bridging these capability gaps. In response, they are expanding their offerings through flexible formats such as short courses, masterclasses, curated dialogues, and micro-credentials—designed to deliver targeted, job-ready skills to both businesses and individuals (Billett & Dimmock, 2020). Australia's transition to a technology-driven, diversity-oriented economy has made digital literacy and adaptive skillsets essential across all sectors. In this evolving landscape, traditional education pathways are being tested. While universities continue to provide valuable theoretical and research-based knowledge, they often fall short in delivering the practical, job-ready skills demanded by today's dynamic labour market.

Historically, vocational education and training (VET) providers - including TAFEs and registered training organisations (RTOs) - have bridged this gap by offering hands-on, industry-aligned programs. However, despite their crucial role, the VET sector faces systemic challenges that hinder its ability to meet emerging workforce needs. These include

fragmented governance structures, inconsistent quality assurance, inequitable funding models, and a sluggish response to rapidly evolving digital and technological competencies. As a result, a misalignment persists between the skills taught in many VET programs and those increasingly required by modern industries. Government initiatives, such as the promotion of micro-credentials, expanded industry partnerships, and targeted reskilling programs, mark important steps toward modernising the sector.

Despite these efforts, teacher education at all levels remains largely unresponsive to the linguistic diversity of Australian classrooms. The Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA), in its submission to the Department of Employment, Education and Training on the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review (2021), expressed deep concern over the lack of structured support for English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) learners. With more than 600,000 EAL/D students in Australian schools and significant growth in enrolments in recent years, particularly in New South Wales and Victoria, the absence of coherent national policy, consistent teacher qualifications, and effective workforce planning is alarming. ACTA advocates for national teaching standards that reflect the needs of linguistically diverse learners, mandatory EAL/D training for all teachers, clearly defined accreditation requirements for teacher education programs, and robust national workforce planning. Similar challenges are echoed in other parts of the adult learning sector, including private language schools

and Learn Local centres, which also face mounting pressure to upskill their workforce amidst increasing learner diversity and shifting societal demands. To respond effectively, Australia's education and training systems must embrace more inclusive, agile, and future-focused approaches that prepare learners not only for current demands but also for the complexities of tomorrow's workforce.

According to the VET Workforce Study 2024 (Jobs and Skills Australia, n.d. - a), a TESOL vocational qualification remains one of the key teaching credentials within the VET sector. This is understandable, as it is uniquely tailored to the Australian vocational education context, caters to a wide range of adult learners seeking a new career path, and provides a strong alternative to traditional tertiary-level courses. The 11021NAT Certificate IV in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) combines essential academic knowledge with practical experience, covering a range of contemporary topics that reflect local contexts and learner needs through a well-structured system of assignments. Graduates of this program can continue their professional development by progressing to the 11020NAT Diploma in TESOL (LTi, 2025), offering a clear and accessible educational pathway. TESOL certificate and diploma qualifications are commonly delivered alongside the Training and Education, and Foundation Skills Training Packages. While the education sector is recognised as 'critically important in underpinning the entire VET sector, particularly in supporting foundation skills and the VET workforce more broadly' (Jobs and Skills Councils, n.d.), it currently lacks a dedicated Jobs and Skills Council and is awaiting the introduction of an alternative governance arrangement.

Considering the above - and in light of ongoing changes across the sector - VET professionals, including TESOL ones are experiencing greater challenges to their professional knowledge and identity than ever before. The evolving demands of the workforce, increasing focus on foundation skills, and shifting policy and governance landscapes all contribute to a redefinition of what it means to be a VET educator today. The question of professional identity is central to this transformation. It is closely

tied to how educators perceive themselves as professionals, how they interpret their roles and responsibilities, and ultimately, how they engage with and perform their everyday tasks. Identity shapes not only what VET practitioners do, but also how they do it - impacting their confidence, professional judgment, and capacity to adapt to new expectations. In a time of transition, the ability to reflect critically on professional identity becomes essential for sustaining effective practice, fostering resilience, and ensuring alignment with the broader goals of the VET sector. According to Koski-Heikkinen et al. (2014, p. 86), the identity described as follows:

- *The construction of identity is always connected with the social, cultural, political, and historical development and environment.*
- *Identity is formed within social relationships with the contribution of emotions.*
- *Identity changes according to situation.*
- *Identity is re-constructed through narratives.*

The final feature of identity as co-constructed through narratives highlights the importance of narratives and teacher reflection in becoming a language teacher which is of particular interest in the context of this project. Identity construction is discursive in its nature and take place within a context of specific local, policy influenced and institutional paradigm and through various forms of expression such as life stories, professional stories, reflections, media posts and others. In the complex landscape of vocational providers, changing nature of jobs and requiring a professional place it can benefit vocational staff present and capture their professional space, knowledge, skills and continuous professional development through written cases.

3.1.2 Vocational teacher education

The context of this Fellowship covers Teacher Education by ASCED Qualification or Course Field of Education Identifier 0701Teacher Education in the vocational sector, specifically in 11021NAT Certificate IV in TESOL. Terms such as teachers, VET teachers, trainers, VET practitioners, facilitators, educators, instructors, industry experts are used

interchangeably and means qualified educators who engage in the delivery of training and assessment in VET, either in an education or training institution, or at the workplace.

One of the fundamental focuses for any vocational course is quality of training and readiness of teacher graduates for a future occupation in the context of constantly changing educational context. Recent examples are adjustments to teaching and learning due to COVID-19, capping on international students and impact on the ELICOS sector and move to pathway options in the Learn Local context. Apart from developing essential aspects of the profession, prospective teachers need to be prepared to be flexible, adaptable, and quick in making decisions and navigating through often complex problems. Career options for graduates of this course are diverse as they depend on a range of factors which will be discussed further. One of the potential jobs could be to become an Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) teacher at a Learn Local provider or an EAL teacher in the ELICOS centre (VicTESOL, n.d.)

To meet the above requirements, the vocational course 11021NAT Certificate IV in TESOL uses a combination of a range of pedagogical tasks and case studies, supported by theory and practical activities. The course content and course assessments stipulate the focus of training (LTI, n.d.) as follows:

We start with using guided tasks and case studies to teach you the theory around lesson planning, classroom management strategies, English language and teaching techniques, resource selection (and so much more!). We then work with you to develop your skills as a teacher through the practical placement program. This combination of theory and practical is the perfect balance to give you the knowledge, skills and real experience to teach English to speakers of other languages anywhere in the world, regardless of what language is spoken. (p. 4).

Case studies are listed as one of the distinctive features of not only course content but also assessment strategy. To take this idea further, the Fellow decided to take a step further, beyond case

studies, and examine case-based pedagogy in application in vocational teacher education.

3.1.3 TESOL education in Australia: Competition, confusion and possibilities

TESOL education is a dynamic and rapidly evolving field, increasingly in demand as global mobility and multicultural communities grow. Becoming a TESOL teacher is a popular professional pathway that offers graduates the opportunity to teach diverse student populations, support the development of essential communication skills, engage in meaningful cultural exchange, and often, travel internationally. Skilled specialists - particularly those experienced in adult education and responsive to shifting job market demands - are highly sought after. Teachers with strengths in student engagement, evidence-informed teaching, curriculum evaluation, educational technology, and strong interpersonal skills can make a significant contribution to the profession. Their subject-matter expertise and cultural awareness are crucial in developing the reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities of non-native English speakers. As an English-speaking nation, Australia offers broad opportunities - and notable challenges - in meeting the demand for qualified English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers. To be qualified for employment as a TESOL teacher in Australia, one needs to complete a TESOL qualification in combination with other qualifications including a degree and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (whenever it is applicable). However, to navigate through a tapestry of international and local, standalone, vocational and higher education TESOL qualifications, undergraduate and postgraduate courses and specialisations in language teaching is far from being easy (Filipi & Turner, 2019; Liyanage et al., 2015).

One of the most popular qualifications recognised in Australia is a Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA), a foreign qualification which has been used in Australia since 1962. CELTA is a qualification for teaching English as a foreign language. According to Cambridge University Press and Assessment (2025) division, it is presented as 'the gold standard teaching qualification' and is the most

widely recognised English teaching qualification in the world and the most often requested by employers. Three out of four English language teaching jobs in the world require a CELTA qualification. CELTA is run by Cambridge English, a not-for-profit department of the University of Cambridge. CELTA forms part of a suite of qualifications for language teachers, including the more advanced DELTA diploma and the modular Teaching Knowledge Test. Initially CELTA was designed as Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults, however in recent year the abbreviation is used in a slightly different way and promoted as Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. It is rated at Level 5 on Ofqual's Regulated Qualifications Framework (UK) and covers a minimum of 130 hours of delivery (face-to-face, hybrid and online) including 6 hours of a placement. The list of topics covered in the CELTA course are presented below and can be covered within 5 weeks of intensive studies (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2025; RMIT, 2025).

Syllabus overview

Topic descriptions

- Topic 1 Learners and teachers, and the teaching and learning context
- Topic 2 Language analysis and awareness
- Topic 3 Language skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing
- Topic 4 Planning and resources for different teaching contexts
- Topic 5 Developing teaching skills and professionalism

Figure 1. CELTA topics as shown by Cambridge University Press & Assessment (2025)

Another foreign qualification, less known but becoming more popular in Australia, is a Trinity Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CertTESOL). This is a TESOL or TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certificate designed for people with little or no experience of teaching English, and for those with experience who require an internationally recognised initial teacher education qualification. It introduces the theory and practice of English teaching and an insight into the challenges facing the learner and the role of the teacher. The CertTESOL is a Level 5

qualification according to the UK Ofqual's Regulated Qualifications Framework, a comparable level to the second year of an undergraduate degree, and comprises a minimum of 130 hours, with an expected minimum of 70 hours further study required (with a total qualification time of 200 hours) (Trinity College London, 2025). A list of topics and assessments are listed as follows:

Assessment units

- ▶ Unit 1: Teaching skills
- ▶ Unit 2: Language awareness and skills
- ▶ Unit 3: The learner profile
- ▶ Unit 4: The materials assignment
- ▶ Unit 5: The unknown language

Figure 2. CertTESOL topics as shown by Trinity College London (2025)

Alongside these foreign qualifications, Queensland-based Language Teaching Institute (LTI) offers a local vocational teacher qualification 11021NAT Certificate IV in TESOL which was offered first in 1996. The volume of learning in this qualification is up to 950 hours including 12 hours of placement (6 hours of observation and 6 hours of teaching in a real language classroom). This qualification is rated at Level 4 of Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and requires having the following units to be completed in a full-time mode over 12 months (with a total of 580-650 course hours):

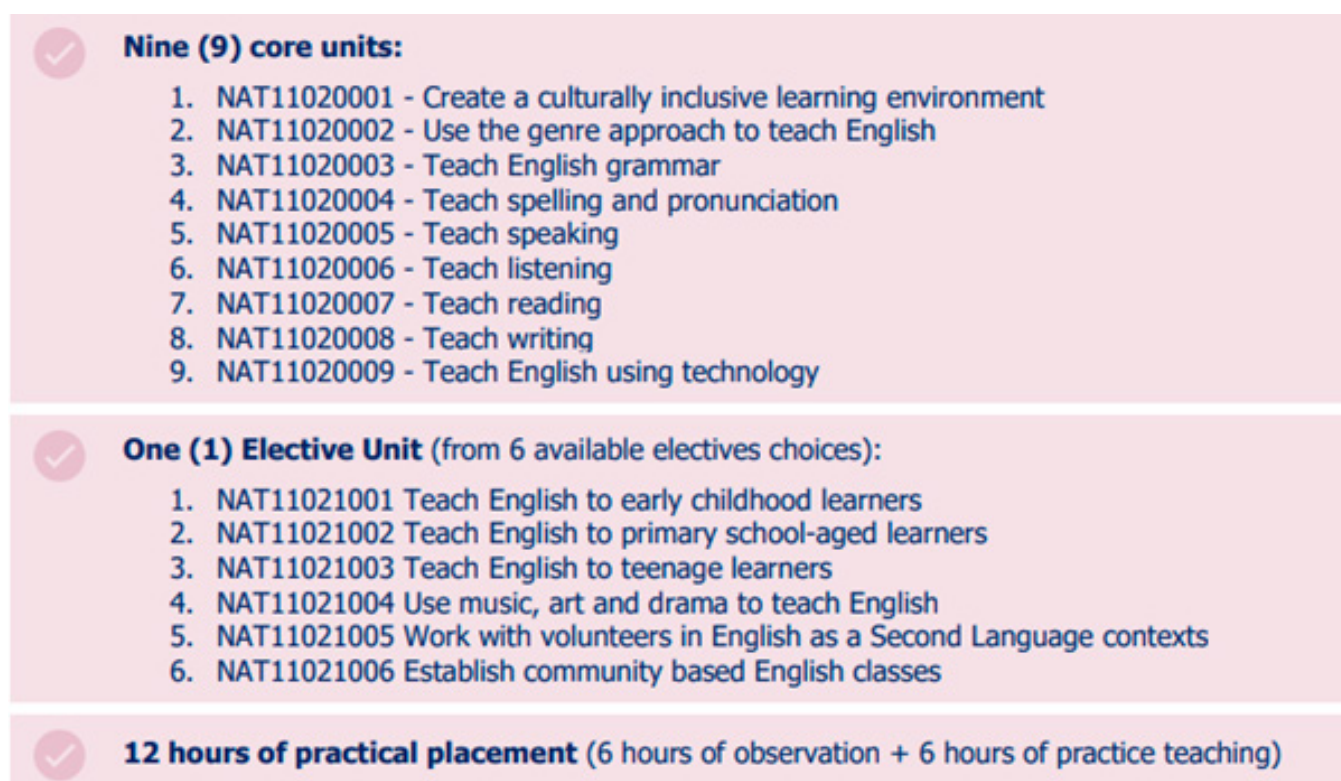


Figure 3. A list of units in 11021NAT Certificate IV in TESOL (TESOL Course Information, LT_i (2025))

At the same time, EAL/D (English as an Additional Language or Dialect) specialisation in Australia is taught at universities. Teachers can enter the specialised EAL/D field through both pre-service and postgraduate pathways: through pre-service programs such as a Bachelor of Education or a Master of Teaching, as well as through postgraduate studies in TESOL. The EAL/D teaching specialisation can be also integrated into degrees such as literacy or linguistics and may or may not include a practical teaching component.

Vocational competency-based TESOL qualifications as well as competency-based teaching have been criticised 'for its focus on technical competence, leading to the neglect of other skills areas in emotional, social and intellectual realms'. (Murray, 2009, p. 18). It is understandable as providers highlight the importance of practical learning. For example, Kangan Institute presents a 11021NAT Certificate IV in TESOL course (Kangan, n.d. & n.p.) as follows:

This nationally recognised qualification provides people with practical skills in teaching English to speakers of other languages. The course aims to develop candidates' language analysis skills and awareness of cultural factors in language learning. It also addresses the skills and knowledge requirements for designing and delivering an English Language training program for learners from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds (CALD). Upon graduation, candidates will be able to plan lessons for learners at different levels, in a variety of contexts, design and adapt classroom materials, conduct lessons effectively and analyse language for teaching purposes. This course may lead to employment in teaching English in Australia or overseas. Certificate IV in English Language Teaching (TESOL) is recognised by the National English Teaching Accreditation Scheme (NEAS) as a minimum TESOL qualification for teaching in an English Language program in Australia. Please note that employment requirements may vary according to institute type, program and level.

Vocational education training refers to hands-on courses that teach the necessary skills for a specific profession or trade. It equips students with the expertise and qualifications to secure employment, upskill in their current job, change careers or re-enter their industry as an older worker, TESOL courses attract a wide range of students from a range of professional, educational and age backgrounds who seek shorter courses which would allow them to meet their career needs.

All qualifications are framed as initial teacher education with varying descriptions, entry requirements and learning outcomes. Teaching hours, modes of teaching and learning, learning volume and practical requirement might differ, however common themes: second language acquisition, cultural awareness, grammar, phonology and skill-based topics remain similar and are shared among providers regardless of level and/or belonging of a qualification. It seems that all these qualifications co-exist well and are accepted by local employers and recognised by membership organisations.

In the current educational context, complexities of teacher education and TESOL specifically go beyond one factor – whether it is competency-based or not, and its effectiveness should be viewed from multiple angles: purposefulness, entry requirements, learning outcomes, hours of classroom learning, placement allocation and many others. It is a well-recognised fact that learning to teach is a difficult task. The profession should discuss openly what is required to prepare a good teacher and whether a certificate level qualification is sufficient for preparing a language teacher for quality teaching. This report seeks to stimulate debate about what is required to prepare a good language teacher and how to realistically link the classroom learning and realities of teacher preparation and life-long career development and add to the existing research about vocational educators' qualification in the VET sector (Smith & Grace, 2011).

In addition, there is a certain level of confusion between what it means to be EAL qualified teacher and what it means to be employable. In Australian ELICOS centres, employment eligibility and

conditions for teachers and certain other English language college staff are regulated by the federal government through the Department of Education and it clearly shows that certain qualifications such as a degree or equivalent is required for employment (Refer to Appendix 1). This information does not correspond well with neither of the above TESOL certificates as neither requires a degree or equivalent as an entry requirement. If the profession requires a certain level of preparedness to progress through learning and gain employment, then it should be reflected in qualifications adopted for teacher education. In centres, where the EAL Curriculum Framework (2023) is taught (Refer to Appendix 1), teachers and assessors must meet higher standards and complete a teaching qualification or obtain a postgraduate qualification in TESOL with 60 hours of placement (Department of Jobs, Skills, Industries and Regions, 2025).

3.1.4 Diverse vocational TESOL classroom

To further understand the goals of TESOL teacher training within the VET sector - and how this Fellowship contributes to that - it is important to consider the unique nature of vocational classrooms and the learners who participate in them. The learner stories (using pseudonyms), collected at the beginning of one of the intakes and included below, highlight the wide range of experiences, motivations, fears, and aspirations that adult students bring to the classroom. Some are returning to study after long gaps, others are newly arrived migrants or refugees adjusting to life in Australia, and many have professional or academic experience from overseas. These stories reflect the complex realities that pre-service TESOL teachers must learn to navigate.

Maria

After several years teaching science in mainstream classrooms, I started to realise something important - while I was confident in my teaching skills, I wasn't fully prepared to support students learning English as an additional language. As my classroom became more culturally and linguistically diverse, I found myself wanting to do more. This sparked a genuine interest in language education and made me rethink where I could make the greatest impact.

Although I don't have a background in linguistics, I've always been passionate about inclusive teaching. My experience in mainstream education has given me a solid foundation in lesson planning, student engagement, and differentiated instruction - but I'm ready to explore this new discipline - TESOL. Going back to a university is not really an option for me, but a vocational course should be fun. For me, this next step is about more than professional growth; it's about making sure every student, no matter their language background, has the chance to succeed.

I won't lie - I'm nervous. English has never been my strongest subject, let alone teaching it to others. But I'm ready to give it my best shot.

Tom

After retiring from engineering, I wanted to stay active and give back to my community. Volunteering at my local library started as a small commitment but quickly became life changing. Working with refugee and migrant families to improve their English skills, I witnessed firsthand the power of language. Each conversation felt meaningful, and I realised how much I enjoyed helping others find their voice in a new country. Though I've never taught in a formal setting, these volunteering experiences showed me I have something valuable to offer - and much to learn. That's why I have enrolled in a vocational TESOL course. I want to build the skills and confidence to teach English effectively. For me, this is more than a career change—it's a chance to make a real difference in the lives of people starting fresh in unfamiliar places.

I often think language learning is like engineering - it's all about structure. But standing in front of a class, with so many eyes watching, feels daunting. Will I be able to handle it? I'm ready to find out.

Laura

For much of my career, I've held leadership roles in Registered Training Organisations, focusing on program development, compliance, and quality assurance. While I enjoyed shaping the bigger picture, I increasingly found myself drawn to the human side of education - especially the experiences

of adult learners from non-English speaking backgrounds. It's become clear I want to be more directly involved in the learning process. That's why I'm pursuing a TESOL qualification and planning to transition into teaching. Though I haven't spent much time in front of a classroom, my understanding of vocational education and adult learner challenges gives me a solid foundation.

I'm excited to move from managing programs to delivering them, focusing on what really matters: supporting learners to build skills, confidence, and a sense of belonging through language. This is both a professional shift and a personal commitment to making education more inclusive and accessible. I see myself as a patient and thoughtful leader - now I just need to see if that's enough to make a great educator. We'll see!

Peter

After many years teaching English abroad, I've recently returned to Australia, bringing with me a wide range of classroom experiences. From large urban schools to small community centres in rural areas, I've worked with learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. These experiences have shaped my teaching approach and deepened my understanding of the cultural and emotional journeys involved in language learning. Now, I'm eager to build on that experience by enrolling in a Certificate IV in TESOL. I want to better understand the Australian TESOL context - its learners, policies, and professional standards - so I can grow as an educator at home. I feel confident in the classroom but know there's always more to learn. This next step is about refining my skills, grounding my international experience locally, and staying connected to what I find most rewarding: helping people communicate, connect, and thrive through language.

After returning to Australia, I was confident I'd easily find a teaching position. I hadn't expected so many language providers to require local experience - it's been a challenge to navigate.

Helen

After dedicating many years to raising my three

children and stepping away from formal work, I'm ready to start a new chapter professionally. Although I don't have much recent work experience, I hold a Master's degree in English literature from overseas and have always loved language and learning. Over the years, I've stayed connected to education informally - through volunteering, reading widely, and helping community members improve their English. Gradually, I realised how much I enjoyed supporting others in this way, which led me to seriously consider teaching English as a second language.

For me, this is about more than re-entering the workforce - it's about finding meaningful work that aligns with my passions and values. I'm excited to begin this journey and help others grow in confidence as they learn a new language.

I've never studied in Australia before, and I've heard from my children that group work and sharing opinions in assignments are common here. I wonder if I can cope with that. I also feel a little embarrassed about forgetting how to be a learner. But I'm ready to face those challenges.

Susan

After more than a decade working as a nurse in Australia, I've decided to change my career path and return to my home country to teach English. Nursing has been a rewarding profession, but I've always felt a pull toward education - especially language learning. Having supported many patients from diverse backgrounds, I saw firsthand how important effective communication is. This inspired me to think about how I could make a different kind of impact. Although I don't have formal teaching experience, I've informally helped friends and family improve their English skills over the years. Now, I want to turn that passion into a career. I plan to enrol in this TESOL course to build the skills and knowledge I need to teach confidently and effectively.

Returning home is a big step, but I'm excited to contribute to my community by helping others improve their English, opening doors for education and employment. It feels like the right time to combine my care for people with a new purpose—empowering learners through language.

According to NCVER (2025), VET students typically pursue a range of goals: gaining employment, accessing further education or training, fulfilling a personal interest, or building self-confidence and self-esteem. These varied outcomes reflect the diverse motivations behind adult learners' decision to study English - and call for flexible, responsive teaching strategies. For TESOL pre-service teachers, this means learning to recognise and support a wide spectrum of learner needs in a single classroom.

Such diversity demands differentiated instruction (Compen et al., 2024) and diverse approaches to teaching and learning. Pre-service teachers in TESOL need explicit training not only in language pedagogy, but also in how to assess and respond to these individual differences in culturally sensitive and pedagogically sound ways. In this light, the Fellowship offers a valuable opportunity to develop and model inclusive, learner-centred teaching practices that reflect the reality of vocational TESOL classrooms.

3.1.5 Employment landscape - the English language sector in Australia

The English language education sector in Australia is both diverse and complex, encompassing a wide range of providers and learner contexts. It includes standalone ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) institutions, language schools that operate within Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and universities, as well as English as an Additional Language (EAL) programs in primary and secondary schools and community-based settings. This shows that the English language education sector in Australia is far from uniform.

ELICOS refers to a broad array of full-time English language programs accredited by the Australian Government for international students studying on a Student Visa. According to English Australia (2025), ELICOS is a significant contributor to the country's international education profile, supporting many providers and course types. In fact, the delivery of English language programs to international students is a key component of Australia's international

education industry and one of the largest export sectors. Students enrol in ELICOS programs for a variety of reasons. Some aim to improve their English in order to gain admission to Australian high schools, vocational colleges, or universities. Others seek enhanced employment or educational opportunities in their home countries or hope to better integrate into global communities where English is the lingua franca.

Australia's English language teaching industry is internationally recognised for its high standards, cohesion, and professionalism (English Australia, 2025; NEAS, 2025). Public and private providers collaborate through strong national associations, and the ELICOS National Standards (Federal Register of Legislation, n.d.) - widely regarded as among the best in the world - ensure consistent quality across the sector, including clear requirements for teacher qualifications. ELICOS programs cater to both adult learners and younger students, further broadening their impact and reach.

A range of English language courses in Australia is offered to migrants, refugees and CALD citizens by AMES (Adult Multicultural Education Services), another significant provider of settlement, education, and employment services in Australia which forms a part of Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE). AMES Australia delivers pre-accredited training and other programs that support learners to return to study, improve their core skills (literacy, numeracy, English language, employability, digital skills) and, as other members of the Learn Local sector, contributes to a Victorian government-funded initiative that aims to provide accessible education and training for people in the community.

Victorian State Government Department of Jobs, Skill, Industry and Regions supports vocational education and training (VET) in Victoria and oversees adult community and further education. The Department's main focus is to protect the quality of Victoria's training sector, with TAFEs at the centre of the market including Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE), Higher Education and Workforce branch which works with industry and community to ensure Victoria has a pipeline of skilled workers in

the sectors that need them. Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) provides adult education in local community settings known as Learn Locals. Learn Locals are not-for-profit community organisations offering a wide range of courses including literacy, numeracy, English language, employability and digital skills (Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (2025). It is sometimes referred to as the fourth education sector in Australia after schools, vocational education and training, and universities (Billet & Dimmock, 2020). Bowman (2016) argues ACFE is a discrete sector of education in Australia with up to 2,500 providers nationally, all of which provide personal interest learning. Most ACE organisations provide some form of adult basic education or foundation studies in literacy, numeracy and technology skills, and a significant minority of these providers (300-500) also provide formal education training through Vocational Education and Training (VET). The ACFE sector has always played an important role in adult education and is renowned for its flexibility, inclusive pedagogy and curriculum that reflects adult learning principles and practices (Bowman, 2016).

3.2 Fellowship methodology

The Fellowship research has been performed in several phases:

- a. Long standing professional interest in case-based pedagogy in teacher-education. Between 2020 and 2023, the Fellow designed and led a Higher Education unit which was built around writing cases by pre-service teachers and for teacher professional growth and initiated an ongoing research project titled Exploring case pedagogy in teacher education.
- b. Consultation with industry and research experts in Australia. This phase of the research involved contacting and liaising with a number of experts in teacher education and case-based pedagogy across educational institutes and industry. These meetings (mostly online) and networking opportunities were undertaken to determine directions in approaching overseas interviews and meetings and obtain suggestions on institutes to visit and individuals to contact in Europe.

c. Initial desktop research. The desktop research was conducted to identify gaps and possibilities for further steps and directions.

d. Online meetings throughout the Fellowship. These meetings were used to expand conversations on the topic.

e. Meetings and interviews in Australia and Europe. The Fellowship started long before a trip overseas and resulted in meetings and interviews in Australia. The actual trip to Europe was undertaken in the month of February and March 2025 and resulted in visits to a range of institutes and organisations across the UK and Italy. The visits provided an opportunity to meet, observe, and discuss with a range of stakeholders – teachers, coordinators, institute heads, project managers, industry experts, government officials – their perspectives and strategies on engagement and collaboration, with a view to attaining best learning outcomes. Upon Oksana's return to Australia and while drafting the report she continued to meet with educators, leaders and researchers from Victorian and other states to consolidate the findings and frame them within the local context.

f. Qualitative research. Ongoing qualitative research has been undertaken throughout the entire Fellowship by engaging in extensive reading on the topic of case-based pedagogy in various teaching contexts. The Fellow started with broader questions on current trends in teacher education and narrowed it down to the case-based pedagogy. A noticeable chunk of questions was linked to professional experience of teacher and cooperation with the industry.

3.3 Fellowship period

The Fellowship took place from May 2024 to May 2025

3.4 Fellow biography

The Fellow, Dr Oksana Razoumova, educated as a secondary teacher has been involved in formal education and training in various teaching and non-teaching roles, locally and internationally for over 30 years. Her current professional activities are informed by extensive leadership and mentorship experience in ELICOS, vocational and higher education sectors, both local and international, private and government and substantial work on collaborative projects with industry partners. Oksana has a strong interest and understanding of compliance in the VET and ELICOS sectors and serves as a NEAS Quality Assessor and has worked in roles that require preparing and leading, HE and vocational qualifications through accreditation and re-accreditation, design and management of training programs, preparing and leading audits. Her professional interests - centred on the value of capability building through active and authentic learning, the imperative for assessment to be both meaningful and aligned with professional purposes, and the cultivation of reflective practitioners through work-integrated learning - are intrinsically connected to a broader philosophical inquiry into the purpose and nature of education, knowledge and language. Over the last 10 years, Oksana has been largely involved in leading and teaching TESOL programs in the HE and the vocational contexts and serving as a convenor of a WIL unit engaging with industry partners and collaborating with supervising teachers with a growing emphasis on pre-service teachers' hand-on and experiential learning. She specialises in qualitative research methods including narrative inquiry and case-based perspectives. One of her latest publications, a co-authored book, *Making Sense of the World* (2024) proposes that human knowledge arises from an integrated physical and metaphysical experience involving the continuing social acts of personal and community cultures and languages. Oksana holds a BA in Secondary Education, PhD in Philosophy, Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Education and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

The Fellow is a member of several peak educational bodies, networks and working groups in Australia and internationally, including WIL Australia, English Australia (EA), NEAS, VicTESOL, Cultural Inclusion Advocates and Research Action Group for Equality and Inclusion of Gender and Diversity, European Association for Language Testing and Assessment, the Association of Language Testers in Europe.

Abbreviations/Acronyms/Definitions

ACFE	Adult Community and Further Education	NEAS	National English Language Teaching Accreditation Scheme
AI	Artificial Intelligence	Ofqual	The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (UK)
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program	PACADI	Problem, Alternatives, Criteria, Analysis, Decision & Implementation
AMES	Adult Multicultural Education Services	PIALE	Partnership for Innovation in Adult Learning
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework	READY	Reference model for Educators' Activities and Development in the 21st-century
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	RTO	Registered Training Organisation
CELTA	Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults	SEE	Skills for Education and Employment
CNL	Creating New Learning	SLA	Second Language Acquisition
EA	English Australia	TAFE	Technical and Further Education
EAL/D	English as an Additional Language / Dialect	TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
ETF	European Training Foundation	TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students	TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
ELT	English Language Teaching	VDC	VET Development Centre
ESL	English as a Second Language	VET	Vocational Education and Training
EU	European Union	VicTESOL	A Victorian professional association
IELTS	International English Language Testing System	VRQA	Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority
ITE	Initial Teacher Education	WIL	Work-Integrated Learning
HE	Higher Education		
LL	Learn Local		
LTi	Language Training Institute		
NACRA	North American Case Research Association		

04

Fellowship Learnings and Findings

This Fellowship focuses on Priority Area 1: ‘Developing quality training with deep and meaningful connections to emerging or ongoing industry needs’ with a view that co-designed case-based pedagogy by a training provider with input from industry partners and experts can enrich training processes and assessments by offering scenarios for problem-solving and collaborative learning that are recognized as key outcome skills in students’ future professional lives (Morrison, 2001). If co-designed well, it results in the purposeful application of knowledge and skills and assessed through meaningful, engaging and relevant tasks that resemble the actual workplace. In broad terms, a case is a story or a narrative, often told as a sequence of events in a particular place and context (Shulman, 1992). The context of a case is intended to enable learners to put themselves in the role of being an actor in the situation. In this way, they are more likely to engage in the learning and try to relate what they are learning to their previous experiences. “The case method combines the power of storytelling with critical discussion, shared experiences, and rigorous academic practice and theory.” (Courtney et al., 2015, p. viii). Through context, cases add to theory and help interpret and apply theory to practice. One of the main distinctive characteristics of well-designed cases is describing the workplace context in which action takes place. By capturing possible workplace events, cases can demonstrate ‘how culture, experience, readiness, and context influence how people learn and develop’ (Darling-Hammond & Hammerness, 2002,

p. 12). Similarly, assessments that are designed around cases expand learning and become more authentic, current and relevant. These assessment characteristics need to be considered in order to assess a competency effectively and to reduce a gap that is often reported between a classroom delivery and potential workplace expectations.

4.1 History of case-based pedagogy and case types

The use of cases traces its roots in Socratic dialogue and in Aristotelian logic with a long history over more than two thousand years, which “is indisputable evidence of the case method’s staying power and its enduring value and irreplaceability” (Courtney et al., 2015, p. viii).

It can be assumed that cases are used in education more than in any other disciplines, however the reality is that cases are predominately used in law, medicine, business and marketing and go beyond realms of a story – it includes instructional development of teaching guides or teaching notes, instruction manuals and designed to propose business solutions which in return becomes a space for research and even competition for facilitators and cases developers. Case teaching is highly popular in Higher Education and many universities and organisations around the world develop, promote, collect and share/exchange and/or sell teaching cases. Case teaching is also an opportunity for extensive networking among likeminded educators

who realise the potential which case teaching offer as an innovative approach.

One of organisations which contains a large collection of cases and offers a range of services associated with writing and using cases is the Case Centre in the UK. It was set up in 1973 as the result of a joint initiative by 22 higher education institutions who wanted a reliable facility for sharing case materials among business teachers. Since then, the centre has been expanding their activities in promoting the use of cases. Case teaching is quite popular in other parts of the world, for example North America. NACRA, North American Case Research Association is another professional association that describes its mission to promote excellence in case research, writing and teaching in business and other academic disciplines.

However, case-based teaching is predominately associated with the Harvard Business School. This teaching approach was developed into a method of higher education delivery by Harvard University more than 100 years ago. In 2021, Harvard University celebrated a centennial milestone in using the case method (<https://www.hbs.edu/case-method-100>). The origins of this method can be traced to Harvard University Law School where in 1870 it began using cases to teach students how to think like lawyers using real court decisions. This was followed by the Business School in 1920. The Harvard Business School (HBS) is often credited as one of the first, if not the first, major institutions to adopt the case method across its curriculum. It meant that lecture mode of instruction was seen as insufficient to teach critical professional skills, and that active learning would better prepare learners for their professional lives. Founded in 1908, the case method was adopted in 1920 and is still used today. HBS's website (n.d.) states:

Dynamic, immersive learning Here, exciting new ideas are discussed, debated, and explored through case-based teaching, participant-centered learning, and structured interactive engagements.

In 2013, Harvard Business School Professor David Moss introduced a case-based course titled *The History of American Democracy*, designed for both

undergraduate and MBA students and known as the Case Method Project (Harvard Business School, n.d. - b). The course quickly became one of the highest-rated at Harvard College, with students describing it as highly engaging and crediting it with significantly improving their ability to learn and retain material. As enthusiasm for the course and its case-based approach grew, high school teachers began expressing interest in adapting the cases for their own classrooms. In response, Professor Moss launched a pilot program at Harvard Business School in 2015 to test the case method's effectiveness in secondary education. The outcomes of the pilot program were exceptionally positive. Surveys consistently showed that both students and teachers found the case method to be a highly effective teaching strategy, leading to increased student engagement across a wide range of history, government, and civics classrooms. Teachers reported notable improvements in students' critical thinking, evidence-based argumentation, classroom participation, and the quality of written work. They also observed enhanced performance on both course-specific and standardized assessments. Importantly, educators discovered that with appropriate scaffolding, case materials originally written for college students could be made accessible to learners at various reading levels. Students, in turn, expressed a strong preference for the case method over traditional textbook-based instruction. Many reported that it deepened their understanding of historical events and issues, improved their ability to consider diverse perspectives, and made classroom discussions more meaningful and engaging. Recognising the success of the pilot program and its potential for broader impact, Professor Moss and his colleagues established the Case Method Institute for Education and Democracy in 2020—an independent, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting the expansion of case-based instruction in secondary schools and promoting civic education nationwide.

The use of cases in education is not new either, however, its first formal introduction is linked to the article *Case Writing as a Site for Collaboration* by Judith H. Shulman and her colleagues published in 1990. According to Shulman et al. (1990):

A serious problem for the teaching profession has been the absence of opportunities to communicate what has been learned from experience via a recognized literature that can be shared with colleagues within and beyond school boundaries. In contrast to professions like law, medicine and social work, a teacher's own account of teaching has no official place in the discourse of teaching (p. 63).

Unsurprisingly, since the 1990s, case-based teaching has attracted a large body of literature, seeing the use of cases in teacher education as an effective pedagogical strategy. Cases provide an opportunity for understanding the multifaceted nature of teaching and learning and develop higher order thinking and reflection skills by reading and discussing complex, real-life scenarios (Butler et al., 2006; Shulman, 2005).

Using cases in vocational sector is less common. It might be partially explained by a narrow perception of cases as an approach to apply theory into practice or it might be because it is believed that utilisation of cases requires a higher level of preparation among students and substantial research by teachers/facilitators.

Case types

There are various types of cases depending on purpose (see below). They should not be confused with case studies that also have a range of purposes, for example explanatory, reflective, descriptive. A case is always 'a case about something,' usually an episode of social or educational practice, whereas case studies are usually longer and more detailed about the circumstances in which practice occurs. Case studies and cases can be written and compiled in various ways and are both designed to inform practice and pedagogy for improved outcomes. Researchers can of course innovate and adapt usual understandings to suit the issues they face. Case context could be:

Legal: Practitioners study the lengthy cases that judges, or legal practitioners write, and which outline in detail the conditions and precedents together with explanation of decisions related to each court deliberation.

Medical: Notes regarding medical history of a particular patient written by medical doctor outlining diagnosis, treatment, progress, medication and recommendations. Communicated amongst practitioners.

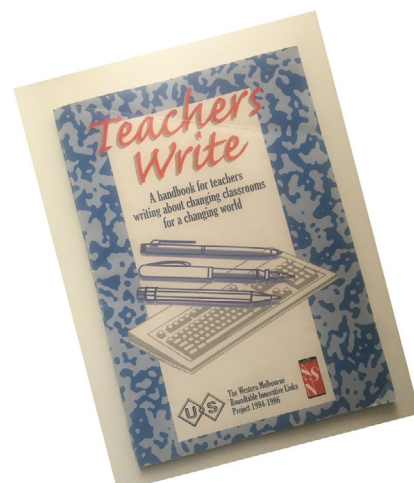
Business: Collection of materials by course providers relating to a particular situation to provide background and studied by students and researchers regarding business performance.

Teaching Cases

There are teaching cases which are written outline of particular situations, crafted and edited by course providers to illustrate particular points for study. They be reasonably lengthy and contain a variety of detail and a number of different issues.

Case Writing

Another type of case use is case writing. These are brief descriptions of event of teaching practice, written by practitioners without reflection or judgements, to be followed by small group or learning circle case reading and discussion. They intend ultimately to express practitioner knowledge that can then be subject to further investigation (Hooley, 2015). One striking example of such work began with the Western Melbourne Roundtable Innovative Links projects, undertaken by Victoria University in Melbourne nearly two decades ago. These projects showcased how classrooms evolve to meet a rapidly changing world, highlighting relevant teaching and learning cases that demonstrate how collaborative inquiry can spark meaningful educational transformation.



This work ultimately resulted in the important publication *Teacher Write*.

In this Fellowship, the main focus is on not selecting one approach over the other, but to explore ways of utilising the best practices of all approaches – rich cases and their application in vocational teacher education classroom encouraging more active students' participation. As Darling-Hammond and Hammerness (2002) mentioned:

Cases add context to theory. Whether they take the form of case reports (first-person narratives of personal experiences of teaching) or case studies (third-person analyses of situations or students), cases allow the exploration of precepts, principles, theories, and perennial issues as they actually occur in the real world. (p.125)

4.2 Writing a good case

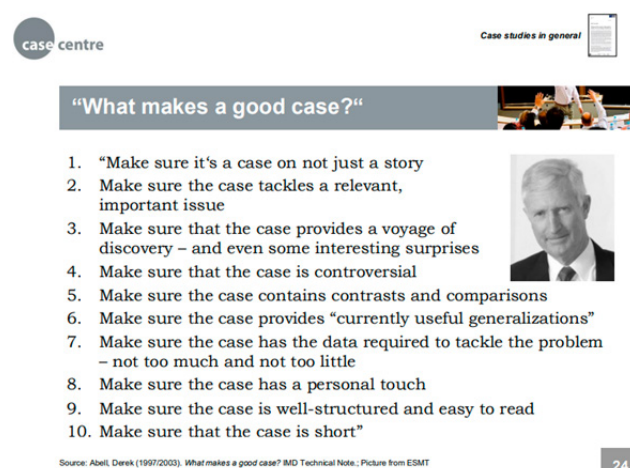
Learning and teaching with cases invite students into the lively, unpredictable world of decision-making by immersing them in situations that reflect the complexities, tensions, and cultural nuances of their future occupations, workplaces and people they are going to work with. At their best, these cases do more than tell a story; they challenge students to think, argue, and decide. A teaching case places learners directly in the centre of a dilemma where choices must be made, consequences imagined, and competing priorities weighed. Students are expected to read the case closely, prepare a reasoned position, and articulate what they believe the protagonist should do.

For educators supporting case teaching, writing a strong case and developing an accompanying teaching note provide essential pedagogical scaffolding. Together, they help bridge classroom theories and frameworks with the lived realities of the jobs, organizations, and colleagues portrayed. A well-crafted case brings narrative tension, authentic complexity, and situations rich with ambiguity, while the teaching note offers intellectual structure, clear learning objectives, and practical guidance on facilitating discussion. The combination creates a powerful vehicle for experiential learning - one that not only deepens students' understanding but also

prepares them to navigate real-world challenges and to craft innovative, non-trivial solutions to the complex problems they will soon encounter.

Writing such a case begins long before the first sentence takes shape. The process starts with discovering a compelling catalyst - perhaps a teaching need that demands up-to-date, compelling material for a particular topic, or perhaps an intriguing organisational situation that offers rich storytelling potential. Case experts often recommend keeping a running list of potential leads, because inspiration can come from unexpected places: a news story about an emerging industry, a conversation with an entrepreneur, or a fascinating teaching challenge observed firsthand. When a teaching objective intersects with a strong narrative lead, the case writer has proliferating ground from which to work. Identifying this starting point is only the beginning, however, because writing a teaching case requires patience, reflection, and an ability to build a narrative that is both structured and open-ended.

During one of the case writing courses - the *PRME Case Writing Workshop* organised by The Case Centre in 2025 - the Fellow learned from Dr. Urs Mueller, who emphasised the importance of viewing cases as multifaceted tools designed to meet a variety of pedagogical and practical objectives. As illustrated below, numerous factors must be considered when preparing a high-quality case; the ten most important are highlighted below.



casecentre Case studies in general

“What makes a good case?”

1. “Make sure it's a case on not just a story
2. Make sure the case tackles a relevant, important issue
3. Make sure that the case provides a voyage of discovery – and even some interesting surprises
4. Make sure that the case is controversial
5. Make sure the case contains contrasts and comparisons
6. Make sure the case provides “currently useful generalizations”
7. Make sure the case has the data required to tackle the problem – not too much and not too little
8. Make sure the case has a personal touch
9. Make sure the case is well-structured and easy to read
10. Make sure that the case is short”

Source: Abell, Derek (1997/2003). What makes a good case? IMD Technical Note. Picture from ESMT

24

Figure 4. Mueller, U. (2025). *PRME Case Writing Workshop*, 6 May, 2025, sl. 24. *The Case Centre*.

To build a robust case, the writer must gather information that captures the protagonist's experience authentically. Field-based research often provides the richest material because it involves interviewing key actors who lived through the dilemma. It is good to get involved with industry partners at this stage. Speaking directly with a decision-maker reveals not only facts but emotions, motivations, and internal conflicts - the elements that transform an organisational scenario into a relatable human story. When field access is impossible, desk-top research can still produce powerful material if approached with careful curation of sources and thoughtful interpretation of events as close as it could be to realities of the workplace. Most successful cases blend both types of data, balancing factual accuracy with narrative depth. Collecting all necessary materials before the writing begins ensures that the work can progress smoothly and allows the writer to focus on crafting the storyline without constant interruptions to hunt for missing pieces.

At the heart of every strong case lies a compelling protagonist. Students must be able to enter the protagonist's world, see through their eyes, and feel the weight of the choices before them. A protagonist who is too simplistic, heroic, or villainous will disconnect students from the emotional nuance of real decision-making. Instead, the protagonist should be relatable, flawed, and human - caught between conflicting priorities, constrained by organisational realities, and uncertain about the right decision forward. Case experts often describe the case as half a story because its purpose is not to show how events concluded but to suspend the protagonist at the moment of choice. Students should be left wondering what will happen next, not because the writer withholds information arbitrarily, but because the essence of the case is the tension between multiple possible paths.

During the *PRME Case Writing Workshop* organized by The Case Centre in 2025, one of the Fellow's most memorable learning moments while discussing case writing was when the presenter Dr. Urs Mueller compared a case to an iceberg, emphasising that the most valuable insights often lie hidden beneath the surface until the case is thoroughly unpacked

and discussed - a process that reveals multiple perspectives for discussion and reflection (as illustrated in the image below).

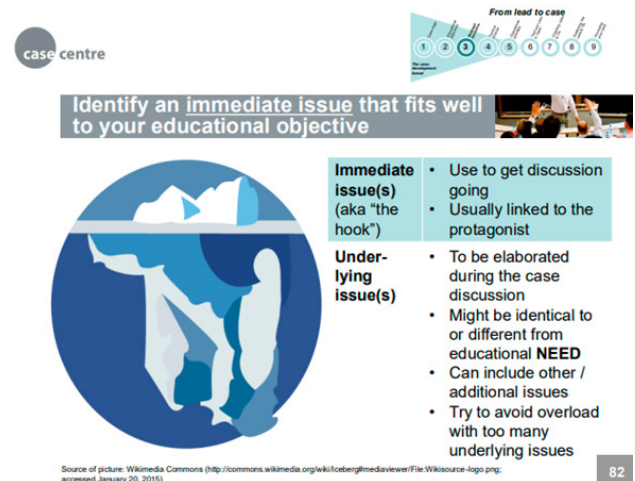


Figure 5. Mueller, U. (2025). *PRME Case Writing Workshop*, 6 May 2025, sl. 82. The Case Centre.

Producing this storyline is only one part of the writing process. Behind the scenes, the writer must secure permissions from and negotiate copyright with organisations and individuals featured in the case, especially if the material draws on primary data or includes proprietary information. Maintaining a strong relationship with industry partners helps ensure that the case release process is smooth, respectful, and aligned with organisational expectations. If the case is based entirely on secondary sources, formal permission is not required, though accuracy and responsible representation remain essential. When educators collaborate, they must also agree on authorship order and ensure that the final manuscript presents a unified voice. Each contributor may bring a different strength - analysis, writing, editing - but the end product must feel seamless, without stylistic inconsistencies that pull readers out of the narrative.

While the case tells the story, the teaching note shapes the learning experience. Many experienced case authors argue that the teaching note is as important as the case itself, and some even draft it first to clarify their conceptual intentions. A comprehensive teaching note begins with a concise overview of the case context, highlighting the organisation, industry, geography, time frame, and

the protagonist's challenge. It identifies the academic domain of the case, specifies the intended audience, and outlines where the case can be taught - from vocational and undergraduate classes to graduate courses on leadership, marketing, or organisational behaviour. The teaching note spells out learning objectives that define the intellectual journey the instructor wants students to take. These objectives typically encompass foundational comprehension, deeper analytical tasks, evaluative judgement, and sometimes even creative problem-solving.

To further support the instructor, the teaching note describes the research methods used in compiling the case, explaining how data was gathered and whether any details were disguised for confidentiality. It usually offers a detailed 90-minute teaching plan, types of questions and potential feedback, outlining how the discussion might open, unfold, and conclude. The plan often anticipates student reactions, highlights potential misconceptions, and suggests strategic moments to introduce theory or concepts or challenge assumptions. Assessment questions arise from the core dilemma, encouraging students to examine the situation from multiple angles. Strong teaching notes go a step further by offering exemplary responses that demonstrate analytical rigour and theoretical and/or conceptual grounding without implying that a single correct answer exists. Supporting materials - a video interview, a spreadsheet, an organisational chart, or even a curated reading list - help facilitators deepen the classroom experience and enable students to explore the case beyond its written boundaries.

Once the draft is written and the teaching note assembled, the case must be trialed in the classroom. Such trialling reveals how students interpret the narrative, where they struggle, and which moments ignite discussion. A case may read well on the page but fall flat in discussion if the dilemma lacks tension or if the narrative timeline fails to reveal critical information at the right moment. Classroom testing allows the writer to refine pacing, tighten the narrative, clarify details, or reshape the teaching plan. Many case authors describe this stage as the moment when the case either "sings" or remains stubbornly flat. Honest feedback from students and

colleagues becomes invaluable in polishing the final version.

Teaching cases differ from research papers in that they are not written to advance theoretical arguments but to blend practical understanding with conceptual insight which makes them ideal for the vocational context. They operate like detective stories, presenting a scenario with multiple potential outcomes and inviting students to investigate, hypothesise, and debate. A successful case identifies a managerial or a teaching issue that demands an informed decision, immerses students in contextual detail, and structures the narrative so they can analyse the situation through the lens of theory. The case method shifts learning away from passive knowledge absorption toward problem-based engagement. Students must identify the core question before they attempt to solve it. This process stimulates critical thinking and encourages learners to confront ambiguity, work collaboratively, and navigate the messy realities of organisational life.

Writing a teaching case also requires the author to consider how students might react to the material. Will they find the dilemma interesting and appropriately challenging? Does the narrative include enough contextual detail to trigger debate about culture, personality, strategy, or interpersonal dynamics, or a teaching choice? Does the dilemma generate dynamic tension that surfaces conflicting viewpoints? The writer must anticipate how the case might be used pedagogically, whether through discussions, role plays, simulations, debates, or reflective assessments. Thinking through these elements ensures that the case will not only convey content but also create opportunities for deeper engagement and learning and offer practical solutions.

Publishing a case and exchanging ideas with like-minded peers offers a meaningful way to extend your impact and contribute to the broader teaching community. Doing so not only contributes to the collective knowledge of the teaching community, but also invites dialogue, feedback, and collaboration. Your insights may spark new ideas, inspire fellow

educators, and influence how future learners engage with complex, real-world issues. As the case moves toward publication, the case writer must make strategic decisions about case format. The traditional written case remains the cornerstone of a case example, but new formats - video cases, multimedia modules, comic-style narratives, and even virtual reality simulations - offer creative ways to engage today's learners. Multimedia components can immerse students in the case content, allowing them to interpret visual cues, body language, or operational dynamics that text alone cannot convey. Some instructors and authors find that combining written and multimedia elements creates a richer, more immersive experience. In addition, the use of multimodal formats for case presentations makes them more accessible and effective in diverse learning environments, such as vocational courses. Learners in these settings may struggle with text-heavy materials but are often highly engaged by interactive, problem-solving approaches. Case-based learning, when presented through a combination of visual, auditory, and interactive modalities, not only reduces the cognitive load associated with dense textual content but also encourages critical thinking, collaboration, and practical application of knowledge. This approach allows learners to actively explore real-world scenarios, making the learning experience both enjoyable and impactful.

As the case nears dissemination, the writer must handle the final steps of polishing, publishing, and promoting. Publishing allows the case to reach educators locally and often internationally, expanding its impact far beyond the classroom where it was first conceived. Promotion ensures that educators who need material on a particular topic can find the case and adopt it. None of this would matter, however, without the central mission: to design an experience that brings complex managerial or teaching dilemmas to life and allows students to practice the art of decision-making.

In the end, a teaching case is far more than a narrative about an organisation. It is a carefully crafted learning instrument that challenges students to think critically, engage collaboratively, and move

beyond theoretical understanding toward practical wisdom. Its success lies in its ability to create a space where learners confront uncertainty, articulate their reasoning, and explore the consequences of their choices. When executed well, a teaching case becomes a dynamic, thought-provoking, and unforgettable experience - one that is student-centred and mirrors the real world. Its power comes from its narrative, structure, and tension, and especially from its ability to place students at the centre of the action, urging them to ask not just what happened, but what they would do next - and why.

There are many excellent books on case writing available for further exploration. Here are a few noteworthy examples:

The Ultimate Case Guide: How to Successfully Teach and Write Case Studies by Martin Kupp and Urs Mueller (2024, Ubiquity Press)

A newer guide that covers both case writing and case teaching.

The Case Writing Workbook. A Guide for Faculty and Students by Gina Vega (2022, Routledge)

A very hands-on workbook with exercises, worksheets, and step-by-step guidance for developing cases and teaching notes.

The Case Study Companion by Scott Andrews (2021, Routledge)

Focused on both writing and teaching business cases. Very practical, covering case structures, teaching notes, assessment, use of technology, and more.

The Case for Cases: Teaching with Cases: How to Teach Using the Case Method by Philip Zerrillo (2019, Singapore Management University)

The book is a practical 'how to' guide for faculty setting up and delivering a case-based class.

Tips and Tools: A Guide to Effective Case Writing by Havovi Joshi (2018, World Scientific)

This book is an essential guide for anyone intending to write effective case studies for educational purposes.

The Case Writer's Toolkit by June Gwee (2018, Springer)

A reference book that guides writers in developing case studies for teaching, research, and knowledge-capture.

The Art and Craft of Case Writing by William Naumes and Margaret Naumes (2012, Routledge)

A classic, multidisciplinary guide that walks through designing and writing both teaching and research cases.

4.3 Enhancing case-based pedagogy in vocational teacher training – a VOCase Model

To support the upskilling of vocational educators in teacher education—from both the trainer/assessor perspective (as case writers) and the trainee perspective (as case participants)—this Fellowship proposes a VOCase Model. This framework is built around five interconnected domains that demonstrate how case-based pedagogy can effectively enrich vocational learning.

These interconnected domains include:

- Advancing Teaching and Learning (T&L) with industry- and AI-linked case pedagogy
- Scaffolding professional experience
- Modelling learners' employability skills
- Collaborating on professional development
- Increasing provider visibility and branding



Figure 6. A VOCase Model developed by Razoumova (2025).

4.3.1 Advancing Teaching and Learning (T&L) with industry - and AI-linked case pedagogy

Cases are real or invented stories that include ‘an educational message’ or recount events, problems, dilemmas or a conceptual issue (Andersen & Schiano, 2014) that requires analysis and/or decision-making in a context of a specific situation. Not every story can become an educative case. Developing cases encourages educators to think about how they can present complex information of a classroom or a workplace in an accessible and engaging way (Bayona & Duran, 2024; Golich, 2000; Heath, 2025; Hatcher et al., 2028; Herreid, 2007; Krain, 2016; Kupp & Mueller, 2024; Puri, 2020; Swanston, 2011). By translating real-world issues into teaching tools, teachers learn to simplify and contextualise content while still preserving its complexity. The process of structuring a case with clear learning objectives, challenges, and decision points enhances a teacher's ability to design curriculum, facilitate discussions, and guide students through problem-solving exercises. Teachers also become more aware of the different learning styles and the types of questions that provoke deeper thinking, enabling them to better assess and support their students' learning journeys.

Case writing demands that teachers view problems from multiple angles and consider various potential outcomes. The ability to develop nuanced scenarios with multiple stakeholders, each with different goals and perspectives, sharpens a teacher's own analytical abilities. By writing cases, teachers model the type of reflective, multi-dimensional thinking they want to cultivate in their students, reinforcing the idea that complex problems often require solutions that aren't immediately obvious or straightforward. When teachers prepare cases that reflect real-world challenges and the dynamic nature of their field, they are better equipped to create learning experiences that engage students and promote deeper understanding (Schon, 2002; Sifakis & Kordia, 2025). By drawing on personal experiences, professional encounters, and industry insights, case educators make the content more relatable and relevant to students. Additionally, as teachers

use their own cases in the classroom, they can observe how students approach problems and tailor future cases to better address student needs and learning gaps. Case writing presents an opportunity to educators, teacher educators and industry partners to embark on exchanging their expertise by capturing their experience through cases which is an important aspect of identity formation (Naumes & Naumes, 2012).

The case method can take multiple shapes and forms, offering a highly adaptable approach to teaching and learning across different disciplines and contexts. In the Australian vocational education sector - where digital literacy and technological transformation are increasingly central - case-based teaching can provide a powerful way to make classroom learning applied to the practical context. Cases can be tailored to reflect authentic industry scenarios, encouraging learners to apply critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills that mirror real-world professional demands. Moreover, technology can greatly enhance the effectiveness of case discussions. Live, interactive sessions can be conducted through video-conferencing platforms such as Zoom or Teams, enabling regional, rural and geographically remote learners to engage in real-time collaboration. Alternatively, asynchronous discussions can be facilitated through digital platforms and learning management systems, allowing participants to reflect more deeply before contributing to dialogue (Lundberg, 2011). This blend of synchronous and asynchronous engagement not only supports flexible learning but also builds the digital competencies essential for success in today's evolving vocational landscape and address a matter of delivering core skills to those who have not been able to gain these skills in other settings. This in turn can impact on education and labour force outcomes (Jobs and Skills Australia (n.d. - b).

A recent example of bringing case methods and technology closer has been proposed by Harvard Business School as a modified version of the PACADI Framework releasing a new version PACADI 2.0 when 'students could use AI as a supplemental aid rather than a replacement for their critical thinking skills' (Weinstein et al., 2025, n.p.).

Before assigning a full case analysis using AI and the PACADI framework (PACADI 2.0), a three-part assignment that gradually incorporates the use of gen AI has been introduced. For the first part of the assignment, students analyse a case using the full PACADI method without gen AI assistance. Analysing the case first without AI requires students to rely on their own critical thinking and analytical skills. Next, students are assigned the same case to analyse, but allow them to use gen AI in the following way: First, they should write a three- to five-paragraph case summary and upload it into a gen AI tool of their choice along with the PACADI overview document. They should also include a prompt asking the tool to identify both the problem in the case (the first step in PACADI) and several potential solutions to that problem (the second step in PACADI). Students can use the below prompts:

- Can you break down your reasoning step by step?
- How did you arrive at the alternative solutions?
- Can you identify any areas where you might be uncertain?
- How might someone from the Finance Department define the problem?
- Are there any other problems that might be considered?

In Step 3 students are asked to evaluate gen AI's responses for accuracy and usefulness and submit written reflections or share their critiques via in-class presentations. In assessing the AI's results, students address the following questions:

- Does the AI response contain any inconsistencies or nonsensical results? For example, one alternative solution calls for being more price competitive, while another alternative calls for raising prices.
- Are there any gaps or missing steps in the answer? For example, the problem is defined as a shortage of computer engineers, but none of the alternative solutions deal with hiring more staff.
- Based on the results, would you use any of the AI's output if you had to resubmit your case analysis?

Through this three-part assignment, students get experience with both traditional and AI-integrated case analysis. It is believed that ‘when used responsibly and effectively, gen AI can improve students’ case analyses while strengthening—not diminishing—their critical thinking and analytical skills’ (Weinstein et al., 2025, n.p.)

Even though cases can be seen as less applicable in vocational training settings due to their focus on theoretical and critical relevance, cases demonstrate a strong relevance to developing practical knowledge. As it is shown above, case teaching is an active form of instruction that focuses on a case and involves students learning by doing (Bonney, 2015; Garvin, 2003) Case-based teaching simulates real world situations and asks students to actively grapple with conceptual and practical problems and can be adopted to a range of courses and learners, including the vocational context.

4.3.2 Scaffolding professional experience

Alongside classroom learning, professional experience (professional practice, practicum or placement) is the next fundamentally important aspect of learning for trainee teachers. Depending on various factors, it can be a smooth experience for some pre-service teachers and quite challenging for others. For example, one of Fellow’s former TESOL students from Kangan Institute Bendigo shared his placement experience saying:

No amount of effort, or activity or planning can adequately prepare one for that moment. When the shift from the relative safety of the classroom, gives way to the demands of the first practicum. Nerve wracking! An hour seemed like an eternity yet flashed by in a blur. All in all, it was a harrowing experience... (Former TESOL student)

There are many considerations for an effective practicum. One of the most obvious matters is the duration of a practicum and a volume of professional experience learning. If hours assigned for a placement is converted into a fraction of the entire course, it might raise some questions. For example, if a 130-hour course expects students to complete a 6-hour placement, it represents only 5% of the entire course. Added observations could be effective

or not, depending on whether students know what they observe and how to interpret what they see in the classroom. In this case students might need additional assistance to tackle an observation activity.

This complicates by a fact that some pre-service teachers do not have any prior experience in teaching and require additional support and a level of professional maturity, emotional resilience and a capacity in matters of judgment. Some external factors such as financial planning plays a role; neither pre-service teacher nor vocational ESL supervising teachers who are assigned to provide guidelines for mentees are not reimbursed for supervision hours.

The case method can be effectively introduced through pre-placement workshops or simulated learning environments, serving as a valuable placement induction and a bridge between coursework and practicum experiences. For instance, teacher trainees might engage in case discussions that present realistic classroom dilemmas - such as managing diverse learner needs, integrating digital tools into lesson planning, or addressing behavioural challenges and even approaching a colleague for support. These scenarios allow students to analyse complex teaching situations, explore multiple perspectives, and trial potential solutions in a safe and supportive setting before stepping into real classrooms. Cases are usually based on actual events, which adds a sense of urgency or reality and have elements of simulations, and as such, cases can be incorporated into the practicum preparation before pre-service teachers start teaching (Jossberger et al., 2015; James et al., 2005). Cases can cover classroom situations and scenarios in which pre-service teachers are likely to encounter difficulties. Case simulated learning activities, such as role-plays or digital classroom simulations, further enhance this process by immersing trainees in authentic teaching contexts where they can practise decision-making, classroom communication, and professional reflection. When linked to practicum learning and classroom observations, case-based teaching helps trainees connect abstract pedagogical principles with the realities of everyday practice. This approach not

only strengthens their professional confidence and readiness but also cultivates development of the reflective and problem-solving mindset essential for continuous development in the teaching profession.

To reflect reality of and capture a real classroom in the fast-changing English language context in Australia in cases teacher educators can cooperate with supervising teachers to generate ideas for cases. Cases could be created by teacher trainers and supervising teachers collaboratively. This cooperation between ‘a provider and the industry’ could be seen as unique especially if vocational providers serve as both training providers and industry. In today’s evolving skills economy, TAFE institutions are increasingly stepping beyond their traditional role as educators to become active participants in the very industries they train for. This dual identity—functioning simultaneously as training providers and industry operators—creates a dynamic model of vocational education that blends classroom learning with real-world application. From running commercial kitchens and hair salons or foundation courses to managing construction projects and digital studios, TAFEs are offering students hands-on experience through fully operational businesses embedded within the curriculum. In the TESOL sense, Kangan Institute, for example is a training provider and an industry simultaneously and students who undertake Certificate IV in TESOL are offered placements in ELICOS or Adult Migrant English programs with the same provider.

This hybrid model not only improves student learning by replicating real-world industry settings but also enables TAFEs to better align with market demands and support regional economic growth. Nevertheless, it brings up critical concerns around governance, quality assurance, ethical considerations, and maintaining a balance between educational goals and commercial interests. As TAFEs evolve and deepen their engagement with industry, it’s crucial to examine how this dual role can be managed responsibly to enhance student success and positively impact Australia’s teaching workforce and education community.

4.3.3 Modelling employability skills

National Foundation Skills Strategy 2025-2035 (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, n.d. - c) outlines the importance of developing strong foundation skills. According to the Strategy, foundation skills are the core skills or competencies that underpin workforce participation, productivity, and social inclusion. Employability skills form a part of foundation skills and defined as

Employability skills – a set of non-technical skills, knowledge and understandings that underpin successful participation in work, such as initiative and innovation, planning and organising, problem solving and teamwork. (p. 3)

These are core ‘learning to learn’ skills, which give people access to an education system, providing opportunities to develop careers and engage in lifelong learning. (p. 3)

It is known that the case method bridges theory to practice, and promotes the development of such skills as communication, active listening, critical thinking, decision-making, and metacognitive skills, as students apply course content knowledge, reflect on what they know and their approach to analysing, and make sense of a case which in turn can improve students’ ability to participate in learning and get job ready (Fawcett et al., 2023; Popil, 2011). This can be extended to the following:

- engages students in own independent search of information and research
- involves reflective discussions that are vital for proactive practitioners
- creates an opportunity for students to learn from one another.
- facilitates creative problem solving
- allows students to develop practical solutions to complex problems
- enables students to apply previously acquired skills

The article *The Reimagining adult learning in community-based contexts: A framework for social justice education in Australia* (2023) by Tracey Ollis and Annette Foley proposes a comprehensive

framework for the delivery of pre-accredited training in Australia, founded on social constructivist theory, learner-centred pedagogy introducing four capabilities and three dimensions. Four capabilities cover the core of employability skills and promoting critical thinking when “being critical is seen as a good thing ... It means a person is not simply accepting something as true because it is said to be so. Being critical, therefore, takes independence of thought and a certain degree of intellectual courage, as you may find that you are not in agreement with the way you are expected or supposed to think about something” (Holliday et al., 2016, p. 232).

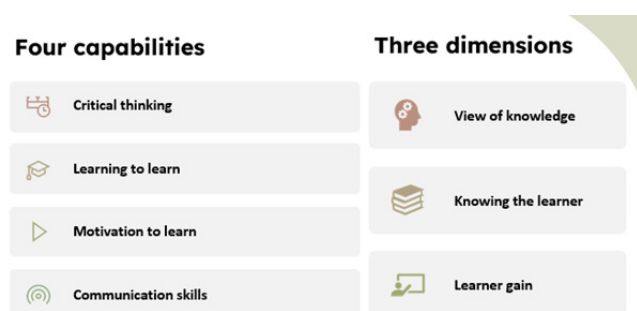


Figure 7. A framework for social justice education in community-based contexts in Australia as proposed by Ollis and Foley (2023)

Filienttaz (2010) echoed the above idea and insisted on making teaching and learning languages as a more critically framed process:

a renewed approach to language in vocational education, an approach in which language is not narrowly regarded as a disciplinary ‘content’ of teaching and learning, but also as a lens through which critical reflection about training practices and efficiency in vocational education can be carried out. (p.47)

The case method as a participatory, discussion-based and problem-based way of learning aims to prepare students for critical thinking, communication, and unpredictable group dynamics. To activate case teaching educators can incorporate a range of teaching and learning techniques such as offering teaching scenarios, jigsaw learning and role playing as collaborative means of learning. Writing a story combined with different activities is not enough to make a case a learning tool. One of the important aspects of case method is preparing questions

which encourage discussion and participation. As mentioned by Christensen (1991, n. p.), “The three essential skills of questioning, listening and responding are the backbone of discussion-based teaching”. Different types of questions can be employed at various points of discussion in the class to guide the trajectory of the discussion toward student discovery and learning. Educators can prepare certain questions in advance of the class - particularly questions designed to start each discussion segment and to probe for analysis specific to the assigned case. Other questions are formulated in the flow of discussion in response to student contributions in real time which support authentic learning in real time and context. In broader terms, such approach to learning allows to maintain content of teaching and learning and educators’ response to curriculum as relevant, engaging, dynamic and responsive.

4.3.4 Collaborative professional development

Continuous teacher upskilling is an important factor in the industry growth and there is a call for diversifying professional development options (Smidt, 2019). In Maclin’s (2020) final report of the Skills for Victoria’s Growing Economy Review it has been indicated:

A revitalised suite of teacher professional development options would inject fresh thinking and practice into the Victorian skills sector. These options should involve not only traditional models of professional development, such as courses or workshops (either online or face-to-face). They should also involve opportunities for teachers to learn from each other and from industry, and to share their own expertise. (p. 199)

According to Maclin (2020), examples of such professional development activities (with an emphasis on co-designed professional learning) include joint creation of professional development programs; working together to enhance curriculum; pursuing collaborative projects; or placements where the VET teacher reciprocates the learning by training industry staff.

Case-based method can encourage upskilling into many directions. It offers teachers a unique opportunity to deepen their understanding of the subject they teach, enhance their pedagogical practices, and develop new approaches to student engagement. By preparing cases, educators step into the role of both the creator and the learner, exploring complex issues, analysing real-world situations, and framing them in ways that challenge students to think critically. Case writing is not just an academic exercise - it is a transformative tool that helps teachers refine their teaching methods, engage with contemporary issues in their fields, and become lifelong learners. By writing cases, educators can continue evolving in their practice while enriching the learning experience for their students.

Writing cases requires teachers to engage in thorough research and critical analysis of current industry trends, best practices, and real-life scenarios. This deep dive into specific topics or challenges helps educators stay up-to-date with developments in their field and reinforces their expertise. As teachers and teacher educators explore diverse perspectives within a case they gain fresh insights that may not have been clear through traditional teaching methods. This process not only improves their knowledge but also keeps them intellectually curious and responsive to changes in their discipline.

Case writing follows a structured process that includes gathering information, shaping a compelling narrative, developing a central character or protagonist facing a problem, and defining a clear teaching objective (Andersen & Schiano, 2014). Authors may need to obtain permissions or cite sources where necessary, and a crucial final step is preparing a teaching note with focused discussion questions. The case can emerge from teaching needs - addressing specific topics, theories, or industries - or from a content lead, such as an engaging real-world scenario or character. Writers also choose between field-based cases, developed through collaboration with real businesses, and desk-based cases, which are research-driven and useful when access to companies is limited.

Another decision in case writing is whether to base the narrative on real or fictional events. Real cases offer authenticity, complexity, and relevance, though they may raise ethical concerns and can sometimes be too narrow or difficult to generalize. Fictional cases provide flexibility, creativity, and the ability to tailor learning objectives, though they might lack realism. Cases can be written around international or local events. If written about local events, it intensifies their role in bringing the cultural context closer to learners. The example below *Integrating Financial Literacy in TESOL for CALD Women* can lead to a range of valuable discussions.

Case for discussion: **Integrating Financial Literacy in TESOL for CALD Women**

Andrew, a dedicated TESOL teacher known for weaving practical life skills into his curriculum, was preparing for his next class. His students—mainly adult women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds—had shown steady progress in their English proficiency. Yet Andrew had observed a consistent gap: many struggled with financial literacy. This lack of understanding posed real-world challenges, from managing household budgets to navigating basic banking systems.

Recognizing how vital financial literacy was for empowerment and community integration, Andrew set out to design a lesson that blended language learning with essential money management skills. His aim was to create an engaging and supportive space where students could build both their English and financial confidence.

As the class began, Andrew greeted the group with a warm smile. “Today, we’re going to learn about managing money,” he said. “This is a very important skill that can help you feel more confident and secure in your daily lives.”

He introduced fundamental concepts such as budgeting, saving, and reading bank statements, using clear, simple language and visual aids to ensure accessibility. To make the session interactive, Andrew introduced role-playing activities. He divided the class into small groups, giving each a scenario related to personal budgeting. One group had to

balance a monthly income with various household expenses, while another created a savings plan for a future goal.

As the groups got to work, Andrew moved around the room to offer guidance and answer questions. He found that the role-playing encouraged lively conversation, with students using new vocabulary to reason through their scenarios.

During one activity, Amina—typically quiet and reserved—approached Andrew with a worried expression. “Andrew, what if I don’t have enough money to cover my expenses this month?” she asked softly.

Andrew responded with care. “That’s a great question, Amina. When money is tight, it’s important to prioritise essential expenses like rent and food. You can also look into local services that offer help or speak with a financial counsellor. Budgeting isn’t just about planning for the good times—it helps us face challenges too.”

Amina nodded; her relief was obvious. Andrew gently encouraged her to connect with local community organisations that could offer more personalised advice.

However, not all students felt equally comfortable engaging with the topic. One student, Fatima, seemed noticeably uneasy during the group discussions. She participated less than usual and avoided making eye contact when the conversation turned to personal finances. Andrew, sensitive to the varied comfort levels in the room, made a mental note to approach the subject with care in future lessons. He later reminded the class that sharing personal financial information was entirely optional and that the goal was to practise language skills and explore general concepts.

To wrap up, Andrew introduced a final task: creating a simple personal budget. Each student filled out a template with sections for income, expenses, and savings, allowing them to apply the day’s learning in a structured way—without needing to share specific personal details unless they chose to.

By the end of the session, Andrew felt proud of what the class had accomplished. His students had not only learned foundational financial skills but had also become more confident using English in a meaningful, real-world context. The balance of interactive learning, cultural sensitivity, and practical relevance made the lesson both impactful and inclusive.

This case provides an excellent foundation for TESOL teachers to engage in a reflective and critical discussion about the integration of life skills—specifically financial literacy—into language instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse women. One of the first critical questions that arises is how teachers can effectively balance language instruction with the teaching of essential life skills without compromising the integrity of either. In Andrew’s lesson, financial literacy becomes both the content and the context for language learning.

Another important area for discussion is the pedagogical approach. What teaching strategies best support learners when the subject matter is not only cognitively demanding but also emotionally and culturally complex? The use of role-playing in Andrew’s class helped facilitate conversation and vocabulary development, but it also brought to light varied comfort levels among students. This leads to the question of how TESOL pre-teachers can learn to design inclusive activities that encourage participation while respecting individual boundaries. When a student like Fatima appears visibly uncomfortable, it invites reflection on how teachers can recognise and respond to signs of distress in culturally appropriate and supportive ways.

Pre-service teachers might also ask themselves what assumptions they bring into the classroom about financial knowledge and independence. For instance, how might gender roles, cultural norms, or prior experiences with money management in a learner’s home country shape their responses to lessons on budgeting or saving? The scenario prompts further questioning around how teachers can ensure that their content is not only accessible but also culturally relevant and respectful. The case also raises important questions about the ethical

boundaries of the TESOL teacher's role. When students like Amina disclose personal financial concerns, to what extent should a language teacher provide advice or refer students to external services? What support systems should be in place to ensure that teachers are not placed in positions beyond their expertise, while still acting as compassionate educators?

Assessment is another area worthy of critical inquiry. How can teachers evaluate learning outcomes in integrated lessons like this one? Should the focus be purely on language use, or should there also be an emphasis on practical understanding and application of financial concepts? Furthermore, how can teachers measure progress without requiring students to disclose personal information they may not be comfortable sharing?

Finally, the discussion can extend to the broader purpose of adult TESOL education. In what ways does integrating financial literacy contribute to learner empowerment, social inclusion, and long-term independence? How can TESOL programs better support teachers in delivering these types of holistic, real-world lessons while maintaining a safe, respectful, and empowering classroom environment? These questions invite TESOL educators to reflect deeply on the complexities of content-based instruction, cultural sensitivity, student well-being, and the transformative potential of language education.

A case preparation involving another important component is completing a teaching note (The Case Centre, 2025). A teaching note includes a concise case synopsis outlining the organisation, industry, location, time frame, protagonist, dilemma, and academic focus. It must clearly define the target audience and teaching strategies, along with specific learning objectives that reflect both foundational understanding and critical analysis. The note includes a structured teaching plan with discussion questions and sample answers. Finally, supporting materials like worksheets, readings, or videos can enhance the teaching experience and help achieve the learning goals. It enhances the case's utility in classrooms by clarifying its

educational intent, supporting effective instruction, and helping educators reflect on and refine their teaching practices. Some authors even begin with the teaching note to guide the overall case design.

Writing a teaching case can be as a collaborative effort between faculty, industry experts, or even students (Shulman et al., 1991). This collaborative process provides teachers with valuable feedback, exposes them to different teaching styles and perspectives, and strengthens connections between academia and industry and in broader terms shape teachers' own professional identities and those who are involved in the process. Through this collaborative experience, educators can broaden their own teaching practices and build a network of resources that can inform future work.

4.3.5 Increasing visibility and branding

In many countries, including Australia, VET systems are undergoing significant transformation as market-driven principles increasingly shape policy and institutional behaviour. Competition between providers is intensifying, pushing institutions to differentiate themselves not only through program offerings and outcomes, but also through pedagogical approaches that align closely with industry needs and learner expectations.

One powerful but underutilised strategy for differentiation among vocational providers lies in the adoption and promotion of the case method as an applied feature of teaching and learning. For academic institutions and professional training organisations, case-based teaching holds untapped potential as a marketing asset - a way to demonstrate value visibly and meaningfully to prospective students, industry partners, and other stakeholders. By amplifying the presence and impact of case teaching through targeted strategies, institutions can achieve a dual purpose: enhancing the learning experience while positioning themselves as thought leaders in educational marketplaces. Here are some examples to leverage case teaching as a differentiator:

- *Showcase impactful case studies on public platforms.* Publishing high-quality, original case studies on public websites, social media, and academic platforms can elevate an institution's reputation as a source of cutting-edge knowledge. Featuring cases that tackle current industry challenges or emerging global issues also signals relevance and agility. These platforms can act as showcases of faculty insight and institutional expertise, reinforcing a narrative of leadership in education and research.
- *Collaborate with corporate partners to co-develop cases.* Strategic partnerships with companies can lead to the co-creation of case materials that highlight real business challenges and solutions. These collaborations not only deepen industry ties but also serve as powerful marketing tools for both parties. They demonstrate that the institution is trusted by employers and capable of producing graduates who are ready to address authentic, complex problems.
- *Use student participation in high-profile case competitions as social proof.* Participation - and success - in national or international case competitions provides compelling, external validation of student ability and instructional quality. Sharing these achievements through newsletters, alumni networks, press releases, and social media platforms can strengthen institutional credibility and appeals to prospective students seeking a competitive edge in their careers.
- *Turn classroom experiences into shareable multimedia content.* Disciplined-led case discussions, student reflections, and panel-style debates can be transformed into engaging content such as videos, podcasts, and blog posts. These materials serve multiple functions: promoting faculty expertise, showcasing student engagement, and bringing the vibrancy of the classroom experience to a broader audience. Multimedia storytelling also extends the reach and accessibility of educational offerings.
- *Build a narrative around real-world problem-solving aligned with brand values.* Institutions can use case teaching to reinforce their core mission

and values - whether that's innovation, community impact, sustainability, or global leadership. By framing case discussions as opportunities to tackle pressing real-world challenges, institutions can craft a distinctive educational narrative that resonates with socially conscious learners and partners.

4.4 Limitations in using case method

Not all educators support case-based teaching, as it presents several challenges and concerns (Morrison, 2001; Puri, 2020). One of the main issues is that the process of designing, integrating, and facilitating case-based learning is inherently complex and time-consuming. It demands a high level of preparation to ensure that the case aligns with learning objectives, engages students meaningfully, and fosters critical thinking. Moreover, successful implementation relies on continuous collaboration and commitment from a range of stakeholders, including individual teaching staff, academic departments, and institutional providers. This ongoing involvement is necessary to maintain case quality, relevance, and consistency in delivery, which can be a deterrent for educators who are already managing heavy workloads or are less familiar with the case method approach.

05

Considerations and Next Steps

The learning from the Fellowship visits and findings generated some key considerations arising from the Fellowship. These are the practical steps which could be implemented by the sector or RTOs to ameliorate practice in teacher education in VET.

Proposing alignment entry requirements with employment realities

Qualification admissions requirements into 11021NAT Certificate IV in TESOL must be revised to reflect not only academic benchmarks and qualification levels (such as AQF levels) but also current and emerging employment conditions. This alignment ensures that qualifications remain relevant and accessible while supporting genuine workforce readiness. Entrants must have a bachelor's degree or equivalent alongside meeting other vocally relevant requirements.

Considering critically assessing current foreign qualifications

Implement stricter vetting of foreign qualifications, particularly those claiming to offer Initial Teacher Education (ITE) or operating primarily online. Regulatory bodies must ensure these programs align with not only Australian standards for academic integrity, and quality assurance but financial, cultural, geographical and practical relevance.

Recommending adding 11021NAT Certificate IV in TESOL to the Victorian Government's Free TAFE program

Including the 11021NAT Certificate IV in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) in the list of Free TAFE courses can significantly broaden access for individuals seeking to gain nationally accredited qualifications in English language teaching. By removing financial barriers, this initiative would support workforce development in the education sector and create new pathways for those aiming to teach English both within Australia and internationally. Furthermore, this could provide support to community-based education providers, such as Learn Local centres, by improving access to a pool of qualified TESOL - trained educators. In turn, this strengthens the capacity of local providers to deliver high-quality English language programs that respond to the diverse needs of migrant, refugee, and CALD communities, while also contributing to social inclusion, employment readiness, and lifelong learning outcomes.

Introducing practice (student) teaching supervision payments

The Commonwealth Government provides funding to Higher Education institutions for practice teaching supervision which in turn contract directly with individual schools for the provision of this supervision on a fee-for-service basis. The same system should be implemented in relation to TAFEs to cover practice teaching supervision and recognise effort and remunerate vocational teacher supervisors (either internally or externally) to ensure quality mentoring and professional oversight. Paid supervision improves accountability, attracts experienced educators, and fosters sustainable teacher development.

Proposing to expand professional learning by diversify course content offerings

Proposing the use a case method as a 6-hour placement workshop as part of 11021NAT Certificate IV in TESOL to better prepare pre-service teachers for their employment. (2026-2027 intake)

Developing a self-paced course

As a professional development opportunity for any vocational teacher training, there is an opportunity to develop a self-paced course for teachers and teacher educators which can be used to contribute to earning CDP (Continuous Development Points). (A timeline and implementation depend on interest generated by education providers)

Branching an Australian case centre for teaching and learning

Create a centralised Australian Case Centre focused on collecting, developing, and disseminating high-quality teaching cases. This centre would serve as a national hub for teacher education, research, and professional development. (A timeline and implementation depend on interest generated by education providers)

06

Impacts of Fellowship

Personally

At a personal level, this Fellowship experience has been invaluable, offering a profound opportunity to align my professional journey with my long-term passion for innovating teaching and learning. Through this experience, I have deepened my knowledge and broadened my expertise in both pedagogy and emerging educational technologies. The access to thought leaders and like-minded professionals significantly expanded my network, creating connections that continue to inspire and challenge me. Perhaps most importantly, the sense of personal satisfaction derived from contributing meaningfully to the evolution of education has been both motivating and rewarding. This journey has solidified my commitment to continuous personal and professional growth, encouraging me to remain curious, adaptable, and engaged in lifelong learning.

Professionally

At a professional level, this Fellowship has had a significant impact on my professional growth, providing a renewed sense of purpose in my work and affirming the importance of my contributions to the discipline. Engaging in this applied research project allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of my chosen topic, enriching my expertise and broadening my knowledge base. Importantly, the Fellowship enabled me to contribute meaningfully to policy and practice, translating research insights into actionable strategies that support educational innovation and improvement.

Organisationally

At the organisational level, this Fellowship - centred on case-based pedagogy and assessment in vocational teacher training - has sparked a meaningful dialogue and discussions around the quality of the 11021NAT Certificate IV in English Language Teaching (TESOL). By embedding and cultivating a case-based pedagogy, the Fellowship has proposed to revitalise curriculum design to better meet the shifting expectations of both pre-service teachers and industry. More than just a teaching innovation, the Fellowship has cultivated a culture of collaboration, reflection, and continuous improvement within a team. It has expanded professional development opportunities, equipping staff with forward-thinking methodologies and fostering peer-to-peer learning. Additionally, the Fellowship has inspired other colleagues to undertake this Fellowship.

Broader VET Sector

At a broader VET sector level, this Fellowship, focused on case-based pedagogy and assessment in vocational teacher training, offers a possibility to revitalise thinking what a vocational education is. By introducing real-world teaching scenarios, it potentially can generate useful, evidence-based insights of how to improve their own training programs. Through active collaboration with industry partners, the Fellowship has helped bridge the gap between classroom teaching and workplace expectations, making vocational education more relevant and responsive to current needs. The

initiative encouraged open conversations across sectors, sparking fresh ideas and flexible approaches to tackling new challenges. The VOCase model offers a practical roadmap for other organisations looking to update their programs and strengthen ties with industry.

07

Sector Engagement (Dissemination)

Influence Policy

The Fellow is actively planning a series of dissemination activities aimed at sharing the outcomes and insights of the Fellowship with the broader vocational education and training (VET) sector. These activities are designed to ensure that the innovations and best practices developed through the Fellowship are accessible, practical, and relevant to a wide range of education providers and stakeholders. The dissemination plan extends into 2026 and beyond, reflecting a long-term commitment to sector improvement and collaboration. Some examples of such activities are:

- ARI Community of Practice presentation, Holmesglen TAFE, 14 August 2025
- October VET AVETRA ISS Institute Fellowship Forum, 21 October 2025
- VicTESOL grant 2026 titled *Exploring the case pedagogy in the Australian English language teaching context*
- 11th Annual Conference on VET Teaching and VET Teacher Education, Canberra, 11-12th December 2025

Key strategies for dissemination include presenting at national and state-level conferences, facilitating sector-specific workshops, and delivering targeted talks to teacher training organisations, RTOs, and other VET professionals. A significant component of the dissemination strategy involves engaging

directly with policymakers, including presenting findings to the Victorian Skills Authority and other relevant government bodies. These engagements aim to influence policy directions and ensure alignment between frontline teaching practice and system-level goals.

The Fellow also recognises the growing role and significance of Learn Local providers in delivering community-based education and training. There is already a strong and emerging interest within this network to enhance teacher training and strengthen partnerships with industry. The Fellow plans to work closely with these providers to support their capacity-building efforts, encourage collaborative practice, and promote innovative, learner-centred teaching models that reflect local and industry needs.

Through these dissemination efforts, the Fellow aims to build momentum for sustainable change across the sector, fostering a more connected, agile, and future-ready vocational education ecosystem.

08

Conclusion

This Fellowship explored the value and potential of integrating case-based pedagogy into the Australian vocational teacher education context, with a particular focus on its application within 11021NAT Certificate IV in TESOL and proposed a VOCASE Model and identified five keyways in which case-based pedagogy can be effectively implemented to improve the delivery of 11021 NAT Certificate IV in TESOL and other teacher preparation courses. These include:

- Advancing Teaching & Learning with industry- and AI-linked case pedagogy
- Scaffolding professional experience
- Modelling learners' employability skills
- Collaborating on professional development
- Increasing provider visibility and branding

Collectively, these approaches aim to improve the overall structure, responsiveness, and competitiveness of 11021NAT Certificate IV in TESOL. By making the training more relevant to contemporary teaching challenges and expectations, the Fellowship supports a shift toward more dynamic, learner-responsive teacher education. This has the potential to better prepare graduates for real-world teaching environments and to position Australian vocational teacher training as a leader in pedagogical innovation.

Following a panel discussion dedicated to 100 years of case methods, Howard H. Stevenson (Harvard Business School, n.d - a) raised a question about an essence of different disciplines. He said:

Law is about justice.

Medicine is about healing.

Business is about getting things to be done together.

If we extend this statement rhetorically into defining a purpose of education and teacher education, it would be curious to see what the response from the profession would be:

Education is about...

Teacher education is about....

TESOL teacher education is about ...

09

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10

Appendices

Appendix 1

Teaching staff qualifications for Teaching English as an Additional Language

ELICOS Standards 2018

Specifically, the ELICOS Standards 2018 set out that ELICOS teachers must: Standard P6 – ELICOS specialist staff Registered ELICOS providers must employ suitably qualified specialist staff and provide them with ongoing opportunities for professional development. ELICOS Standards 2018. (Federal Register of Legislation, n.d.).

Teaching staff

P6.4 ELICOS teachers must have the following: a) a degree or diploma of at least three years full-time or equivalent (teaching or other) b) a suitable TESOL qualification or qualification that contains TESOL as a method c) appropriate TESOL teaching experience or are formally mentored by a senior staff member with this experience.

P6.5 Where the registered ELICOS provider offers courses of preparation for entry to Australian state or territory secondary schools, an appropriate percentage of the TESOL teachers must be registered to teach in the Australian state or territory primary or secondary system as determined by state or territory legislation or policy.

P6.6 Teachers of students of 12 years old or less must hold a TESOL qualification and a nationally recognised primary teaching qualification.

P6.7 The registered provider must verify the qualifications of all its teachers.

P6.8 The registered provider: a) must implement policies and procedures for the induction and ongoing professional development of its teaching staff b) must implement a program of professional development each year.

NEAS Standards

NEAS Quality Assurance Framework (Neas 2022 Version 7.0); Quality Area A: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

QUALITY PRINCIPLE A2: Teachers have appropriate training and experience for the courses they deliver and assess.

A2.1 Teachers hold the following minimum qualifications:

- a recognised degree or equivalent
- a recognised TESOL qualification

A2.2 Teachers are allocated to levels and courses based on their experience and training.

A2.3 Teachers plan lessons and activities appropriate to the course learning outcomes and the needs of students.

A2.4 Teaching strategies are appropriate to the objectives and level of each course.

The current EAL Framework states that (Further unit information is available in the EAL Framework curriculum document: VIC EAL Framework (education.vic.gov.au))

A qualified TESOL teacher is a person who holds an appropriate qualification that includes a supervised teaching practicum in TESOL. Appropriate qualifications include but are not limited to:

- A four-year Bachelor of Education, with TESOL as a method
- An undergraduate bachelor's degree plus a postgraduate TESOL qualification at AQF8 or above, such as:
 - Graduate Certificate in Education (TESOL) or Graduate Certificate in TESOL
 - Graduate Diploma in TESOL
 - Graduate Diploma of Education with a TESOL method or Master of TESOL/Master of Applied Linguistics/Master of Arts (TESOL) or Master of Teaching with a TESOL method

The supervised teaching practicum must involve at least 60 hours of class observation and supervised classroom teaching in TESOL. This will typically be a practicum taken over 22 days with an average of 2-3 hours teaching and observation each day. However, it could be a practicum taken over a longer or shorter period / over more or fewer days. The total number of hours of supervised teaching and observation must be at least 60. The ratio of teaching to observation may vary but there should be no fewer than 25 hours of supervised teaching. (p.60)

Teacher requirements for foundation courses cover:

15 Teacher requirements (Standard 8)

(1) A teacher who is primarily responsible for one or more academic subject areas must:

- (a) hold a minimum of a 3-year Bachelor degree in an area relevant to the subject being taught, and

(b) either:

- (i) hold a Bachelor of Education, Diploma of Education, Diploma of Education Studies or a 2-year Teaching Certificate; or
- (ii) have at least two years of senior secondary, vocational education and training college, or higher education teaching experience, including breadth of experience in delivering to students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

(2) A teacher who is primarily responsible for one or more academic English language subject areas must:

- (a) hold a minimum of a 3-year Bachelor degree;
- (b) hold an English language teaching qualification; and
- (c) have at least two years ESL/EFL teaching experience.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (2), an English language teaching qualification includes:

- (a) a Graduate Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language;
- (b) a Graduate Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language;
- (c) a Graduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics;
- (d) a Diploma of Education (English); or
- (e) a recognised Teaching English as a Second Language program.

Note: For the purposes of subparagraphs (1) to (3), qualifications may be from Australia or overseas. Overseas teacher qualifications must be equivalent to those of Australian qualifications.

(4) A provider must retain a copy of a Curriculum Vitae, together with certified copies of degrees and qualifications, of all teachers currently employed to teach on the Foundation Program.

(5) A provider must have written policies governing the recruitment, induction and ongoing professional development of teachers and communicate these policies to teachers as part of the initial employment process.

(6) A provider must implement a professional development program, to be delivered to teachers annually.

(7) A teacher must comply with all applicable state, territory and Commonwealth child protection legislation and child safety requirements.



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