



Assessment Issues in Commercial Cookery Education: A Finnish Perspective

Rajiv Gulshan

An International Specialised Skills Fellowship

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i. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fellowship 'Assessment Issues in Commercial Cookery Education: A Finnish Perspective' focuses on challenges faced by assessors when judging a dish cooked by a student undertaking commercial cookery qualification. Assessment in commercial cookery needs to be driven by the need for quality improvement; primarily to address changes and improvements in our understanding of the assessment processes themselves, and also to respond to industry and student expectations for valid and consistent assessment decisions.

Finland with 5.4 million people, a population similar in size to Victoria's, has set a bench mark in the field of competency based vocational education. The Fellow, Rajiv Gulshan, visited and interacted with commercial cookery assessors, Directors of training, head of vocational teachers training in Helsinki and Oulu. Gulshan also got an opportunity to judge 'bread' made by a student with the assessor from Oulu Vocational College and an industry chef to explore the relationship which the Finnish department of education system encourages between the training organisation and the workplace when assessing student's competency.

To this end, there is a strong case for strengthening assessment by revisiting some fundamental principles. These include underscoring the need for trainers and assessors to have a good grounding in assessment theory and practice, tools and techniques and providing regular professional development to ensure that these sets of skills and knowledge are maintained. Another crucial finding is the involvement of industry stakeholders in the validation of assessment tools and the implementation of regular and systematic processes for the moderation of assessments.

The Fellow has observed some of the practices followed in the centers of excellence in Finland and recommended changes that can be implemented in Australian VET sector both at a local level, through his workplace MCIE and at a national level, through collaboration with Executive Chef Committee, Les Toques Blanches and Australian Culinary Federation. Gulshan has been invited to present his findings at QIET Network Conference in 2017. This will allow for further knowledge transfer and exchange of ideas on maintaining the integrity of assessment judgement.

The findings from this Fellowship are an aperture in to improving the understanding of the intricacies of judgement while assessing competencies in commercial cookery qualification.

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ii. ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AQF	Australian Qualification Framework
CBC	Competency Based Completion
COAG	Council of Australian Government
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
EFQM	European Quality Award Model
EQARF	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training
ISC	Industry Skills Council
ISS Institute	International Specialised Skills Institute
L&D	Learning and Development
LLN	Language, Literacy, and Numeracy
MCIE	Melbourne City Institute of Education
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
QuiET	Quality in Education and Training Network
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SSA	Service Skills Australia
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training

iii. DEFINITIONS

The definitions set out below apply specifically to assessment as being used in this research Fellowship. They outline the requirements of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, set by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in September 2014.

Assessment

Means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed by the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards of a Training Package or by the learning outcomes of a VET accredited course.

Assessment Tools

Include the following components: context and conditions of assessment, tasks to be administered to the student, an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the student and evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance (i.e. the assessment decision-making rules).

Confidence

While there is no absolute definition of the term 'confidence' which could be found in the training packages, for the purpose of this project, it represents a sense of trust in the quality of the information provided to learners, the validity of assessment tools, and reliability and fairness of assessment procedures.

Moderation

The process of bringing assessment judgements and standards into alignment. It is a process that ensures the same standards are applied to all assessment results within the same Unit(s) of Competency. It is an active process in the sense that adjustments to assessor judgements are made to overcome differences in the difficulty of the tool and/or the severity of judgements.

Training Package

Means a nationally endorsed, integrated set of competency standards, assessment guidelines and AQF qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

Quality Assurance

A planned and systematic process of ensuring that the requirements of the assessment systems, competency standards and any other criteria are applied in a consistent manner. Quality assurance mechanisms or procedures are an integral part of an assessment system.

Validation

Involves checking that the assessment tool produced is valid, reliable, sufficient, current and contained authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgements to be made as to whether the requirements of the relevant aspects of the Training Package had been met. It includes reviewing and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes.

1. ABOUT THE FELLOW

Name: Rajiv Gulshan

Employment: Director - Policy, Growth and Strategic Relations

Qualifications:

- Post Graduate in Educational Research, Monash University, 2015
- Bachelor of Adult Learning and Development, Monash University 2014
- Certificate IV in TAE, 2011
- Diploma of Hospitality 1987
- Bachelor of Commerce, University of Delhi, 1984.

Memberships:

- Member of QULET network Victoria
- Member of Australian Culinary Federation Victoria Chapter
- Member of Les Toques Blanches Executive Chef Club.¹

Short Biography

Gulshan has opened some of the best hotels in the world as Executive Chef including Udaivilās and Wild Flower Hall. Both hotels are ranked in top three positions in the world by Condè Nast and Gallivanter's Guide U.K. He was also Executive Chef of Veda in Hong Kong which was mentioned in the Time Magazine as one of the three best in Asia. Since 2002, Rajiv has been involved in vocational training initially in Mauritius and then in Melbourne. He has also been active in the amplification of dialogue between industry and training bodies. He was nominated by Les Toques Blanches executive chef committee to be on the panel to give its recommendation before the finalisation of SIT12 hospitality and commercial cookery training package.

Since 2013, Gulshan has been exploring the challenges faced by assessors when deciding competence in commercial cookery qualification. Some of his recent published conceptual and research papers are:

- 'Exploitation of information and communication technologies to enhance learning, communication and hence self-advocacy for those with learning disabilities'. Published in September 2014 ATITHI
- 'Changes to the Delivery Strategy for Inclusive Education: A Case Study of a Training Organisation in Melbourne'. Published in IJOHAT July 2015 edition. Volume 5, number 2. ISSN: 2249-5037.

¹ <http://www.les-toques-blanches.com.au/rajiv-gulshan/>

2. AIM OF THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Assessment against competency standards involves collecting evidence and then forming a judgement about whether or not competence has been achieved. Several factors impact on these judgements, including the skills and experience of the assessors, clarity of the particular competency standards and moderation of assessment processes in the training organisation.

The Fellow aimed to explore whether assessors working in training organisations delivering commercial cookery qualifications have sufficiently sound grounding in assessment theory and practice and related tools and techniques. In particular, do training organisations in other countries that follow the competency based training system have clearly defined and documented standards for assessing a dish cooked by a student? And, is appropriate professional development afforded to assessors to ensure that students doing commercial cookery qualifications judged in an accurate and reliable way?

3. THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

Although considerable research and improvements have taken place in Competency Based Training (CBT) in Vocation Education and Training (VET) sector in Australia, over a number of years, we also need to rethink and explore many fundamental concepts of assessment, including the notions of reliability and validity. It is essential to examine procedures for ensuring the development and use of high quality assessment procedures and tasks which result in valid and reliable judgement of competencies. The Council of Australian Governments (2012) has recently declared that one of its key reform targets will be to 'improve the confidence of employers and students in the quality of training courses, by developing and piloting independent validation of training provider assessments and implementing strategies which enable TAFEs to operate effectively in an environment of greater competition'.¹ According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), there were close to two and a quarter million students enrolled in VET course in Australia in 2010.² Unless the assessments are strong and reliable, there will always be doubt of whether these students will be able to perform to the expected standards at workplace.

Significant themes have emerged within the recent findings of research project on commercial cookery assessments:

1. The lack of documented standards for assessing a dish in commercial cookery qualifications
2. Inadequate moderation activity for the practical assessment by training organisations
3. Absence of professional development, mentoring and training afforded to assessors concerning 'how to judge competence' evidenced by training organisations.

Standards for Practical Assessments

The participants of the study conducted by the fellow prior to his visit to Finland, concurred that there was significant ambiguity in the competency standards of commercial cookery qualifications. While all the interviewees are clear on the definition of effective assessments, their learning around the competency has been haphazard. The main areas of ambiguity were the performance criteria and the evidence guide provided in the commercial cookery training package. Few participants believed that the competency standards are of reasonable quality and the main issue is the way in which they are being interpreted by the users. This also brought forth the question of whether the perceived indistinctness was due to inadequacies in the competency standards or due to inadequate training of assessors and moderations of their activities, which is discussed in the third theme of professional development below. The interviewees also pointed out that commercial cookery competency standard have deficiencies, and that the performance criteria are broad and the underpinning knowledge is not specific.

When asked to comment on making an accurate judgement of a student's competence, one of the interviewees commented, 'taste is so subjective'. Although taste is subjective and individualised a commercial cookery assessor needs to be objective when judging the dish cooked by the student. This is only possible when the parameters are set and defined by the RTO's. This will better allow the assessor to judge the dish neutrally, to see how well prepared, well thought out, and how well the ingredients complement each other. The criteria for judging should include questions such as, is it too oily? Salty? Is it complex or overly complicated? Does the cooking bring out the essence of the ingredients? Even if the individual parts of the dish may fail, is the dish better as a whole than the sum of the part? To judge it objectively without bringing in one's own prejudices, assessors will need to maintain a distance from the food. Knowledge of different cultures, cooking styles, guest preferences will all have to be taken in consideration by the assessor to pass an impartial judgement on the taste.

Commercial cookery assessments in Australian VET sector are complex and the training package gives

¹ Council of Australian Government 2012 "Skills and Workforce" Development"<http://www.coag.gov.au/sites/default/files/2012-13-04.pdf>

² Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010 International Students and the VET Sector Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics

3. THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

very little guidance on how to assess taste, texture, aroma and other attributes commonly associated with acceptable standards. The assessment training at Cert IV in TAE level does not address these complex issues in any depth, and training at the diploma level is oriented towards assessment systems and procedures. Thus many assessors have learned on the job ways in which to approach and manage the complexities of assessment. Assessment measures are needed that are capable of determining achievements across a wide range of content and skills, in many different contexts and at a great variety of levels.

The impression gained from the responses has been that Registered Training Organisations approaches to assessment varied from constructing a restricted set of procedures and processes to manage assessments of practical cooking skills, to situations where the major decision was to limit these assessments to a chef who might be a subject matter expert but with limited assessment conducting experience.

The data reviewed from the interviews indicated that there are some providers using people with minimum assessment training and experience. There is greater emphasis on industry experience and developed tacit knowledge rather than any formal 'assessing' experience on the part of assessors. All the interviewees felt that the Training and Assessment Qualification (TAE) qualification was too broad in its intent. While the delivery aspect is covered to some extent, not enough emphasis is placed on assessments.

Moderation of Practical Assessments

An important aspect of moderation is that commercial cookery assessors need to interact with one another and share judgements of students' work samples. This will involve an openness to making available information about interpretation of the standards; disclosures that may otherwise remain concealed and unarticulated. In order to achieve high reliability while preserving validity, it is important for a chef assessor to develop a common understanding of stated standards and reach a similar recognition of performances that demonstrate those standards.³ The standards in training packages for commercial cookery are written as verbal descriptors and as such are open to interpretation. Sadler (1989) argued that exemplars or samples of student work provide concrete referents that can be used to illustrate standards that otherwise remain abstract mental constructs.⁴

All the participants interviewed had mixed views on the benefit of the quality assurance mechanism, such as moderation and validation. None of the training organisations had clear standards on how to assess the taste of the dish produced by the students. All the participants though agreed that such standards will help newly qualified assessors in commercial cookery.

Review of Assessors Knowledge and Judgement

The findings clearly suggested that chef assessors need more skill and knowledge (and possibly experience) to manage the more complex role of assessing competencies based on the 'taste' of the dish. Assessment methods therefore may need to be context-specific and appropriate to the students' work role if they are to deal effectively with these complexities. A few assessors commented on the need to vary workplace assessments.

A preliminary review of a student's work environment and expected work outcomes may be necessary to assess whether an existing assessment instrument is appropriate or needs to be modified, or whether

³ Maxwell, Graham 2001. *Moderation of assessments in vocational education and training*. Brisbane, QLD Australia: Department of Employment and Training.

⁴ Sadler, D. Royce 1989. "Formative Assessment and the Design of Instructional Systems." *Instructional Science* (Kluwer Academic Publishers) 18 (May 1989): 119-144.

a new assessment plan and different set of dishes need to be assessed for students depending on the type of establishment a student is training in. The role of place within professional judgement was discussed by respondents, with one respondent asserting that the use of professional judgement in an assessment context should be viewed as a positive, whereas others saw dangers in relying on it.

Sixty per cent of the participants stated that commercial cookery assessments require advanced levels of professional judgement. Furthermore, it was pointed out that if professional judgement is the basis for a large portion of the assessment, and the candidates then appeals a judgement, there are fewer concrete facts on which to determine the appeal. In many cases, a second assessment would be required to achieve fairness. Twenty per cent of the assessors had higher education qualifications and industry training at higher levels. They also had an understanding of the complexity of practice from this training and their industry experience. It appears then that many assessors are addressing the assessment issue using their professional judgement that is based on their experience.

However all participants confirmed that this exercise of professional judgement does not necessarily lead to quality outcomes. There is significant responsibility being borne by individual trainers and assessors for the quality of the outcomes. Training organisations do not have a process in place where any new trainer joining the hospitality department is put through as an observer in any moderation activity. This does raise number of issues around lack of accuracy and skills deficiency around assessor's knowledge of student's competencies in commercial cookery qualifications.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- The findings from the employer surveys and consultation report employers to be generally satisfied with the quality of the skills training of VET graduates.
- Most trainers and assessors have maintained direct link with their industry sector. A number of VET assessors are currently working in the industry and have an opportunity to understand the industry needs.
- Employers through industry skills councils and their relationship with State training authorities and VET providers have already had a major input into the development of VET programs.

Weaknesses

- Inconsistent understanding of 'quality' by the commercial cookery assessors.
- Lack of clarity on what is expected for assessment to be of adequate quality, particularly with regards to the depth and duration of training.
- Readability of training package.
- Professional development afforded to VET practitioners is focused on training delivery and not on robust assessment practices.

Opportunities

- To set clear standards for delivery and the quality of assessments.
- To strengthen the current outcome based model of quality assurance by offering delivery measures.
- Make these quality improvements in a way that does not create barriers to flexibility and innovation or impose excessive costs and complexity.

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- Involve industry experts to be part of the moderation process along with the RTO nominated assessors.
- To develop a new platform to promote equitable assessments nationwide.
- To develop stronger bonds between assessors and chef-practitioners from the industry.

Threats

- A lack of systematic validation and moderation processes within and between providers and training systems is reducing the level of confidence in the comparability and accuracy of the assessments.
- The tendency on the part of the assessors to develop and implement their own assessment tools and materials contribute to a reduction in the accuracy of the assessments.
- The Certificate IV in Training & Assessment may require more explicit content in relation to assessment if it is to provide assessors with the level of underpinning knowledge and practice sufficient for undertaking quality assessments.
- Reluctance of RTOs to share their assessment strategies.
- Insufficient participation of industry chefs in the assessment validation and moderation activities.

4. IDENTIFYING THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ENHANCEMENTS REQUIRED

There are examples of areas in Australian industries where there are weaknesses in the innovation, skills, knowledge, experience, policies and/or formal organisational structures to support the ongoing successful development and recognition of individuals and the particular sector.

The focus of all ISS Institute Fellowships is on applied research and investigation overseas by Australians. The main objective is to enable enhancement and improvements in skills, knowledge and practice not currently available or implemented in Australia and the subsequent dissemination and sharing of these skills and recommendation throughout the relevant Australian industry, education, government bodies and community.

This Fellowship research targeted the learning necessary to address the following skills and knowledge enhancement areas:

Skills enhancement area 1: Information and direction provided by the Vocational education board to the assessors.

- Understand the critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in comparison to Australian Vocational assessment requirements.
- Investigate the required method and context of conducting assessment.
- Report how the best practices and recommendations learnt can be embedded in existing curricula or commercial cookery training package.

Action: *Examine and report the information and guidance provided by the Finnish National Board of Education for conducting commercial cookery practical assessments.*

Skills enhancement area 2: Documented standards in place by the training organisation for assessing a dish in commercial cookery qualification.

- Investigate the assessment plan and competency assessing documents used by the assessors.
- Look at feedback from the students, work place supervisors and employers on the quality of training provided to the commercial cookery students.
- Assess qualifications taken by professional chefs in order to become a trainer and assessor in vocational education sector.

Action: *Study and report the performance criteria and the evidence guide made available to the assessors by the training organisation to judge a dish made by students accurately.*

Skills enhancement area 3: Strategies used by training organisations to assess competency in collaboration with industry experts.

- How are students inducted into workplace to ensure maximum assimilation of knowledge and skills?
- What role is played by the workplace supervisor in guiding and assessing student's competency?

Action: *Evaluate and report the role of workplace supervisor in assessing competence.*

4. IDENTIFYING THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ENHANCEMENTS REQUIRED

Skills enhancement area 4: The assessment moderation strategies followed by the training organisations to ensure that taste of the dish is judged and assessed fairly and does not put student at a disadvantage.

- Understand who is involved in making the moderation plan.
- Understand the process flow chart of implementing the moderation.

Action: *Research and document the moderation plan followed for assessing practical cooking skills of the students enrolled in commercial cookery qualification.*

5. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Destination: Haaga-Helia University of Technology and Applied Sciences Helsinki, Finland

Contacts: Johanna Rajakangas-Tolsa, Principal Lecturer
Sami Rekola- Teacher Culinary
Taru Sipponen- Senior Lecturer, Restaurant Operations

Objectives:

1. To understand the critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in and investigate the required method and context of conducting assessment
2. To investigate the assessment plan and competency assessing documents used by the assessors and the involvement of industry in assessment of commercial cookery students
3. To assess how the system of maintaining vocational currency is practiced by the commercial cookery teachers.

According to Finnish Ministry of Education (2006), VET teachers in Finland are seen as being their own specific group within the teaching profession. This was reiterated by Rajakangas-Tolsa, who believes that, “education and qualification requirements for VET teachers are very different from those for general education teachers”. According to her, “difference in vocational teaching work and work context are not only recognised but specific traits in the work of VET teachers stem from the close connection between theory and practice and strong presence of the world of work within VET”.



Judging Competence with the Industry Experts

While talking to commercial cookery trainers at the Haaga Helia University of Technology and applied science, the message was that VET teachers must convey to their students the underlying theories and

5. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

principal, how to 'do the job' in practice as well as professional thinking, e.g. ethics. All the interviewees believed that this is made possible by the teacher's own professional background in the field. This background is imperative to successfully achieve the aims of the core commercial cookery curricula. In Finland, the dual professionalism of vocational teachers, particularly as it relates to teachers' work-life experience and vocational competence, has been highlighted as an integral part of vocational system.

According to Rajakangas-Tolsa, the Finnish National Board of Education has created two continuing training programmes for vocational teachers, one of which involves studies aimed at increasing vocational teachers' competence in the world of work. An investigation of vocational teachers' participation, in so-called working periods, showed that the teachers developed up-to-date knowledge about working life and initiated various changes in vocational education, such as developing teaching and learning materials. Furthermore, the participating workplaces learned more about vocational education.

The team at Haaga Helia University believes that vocational teachers' working periods strengthens the cooperation between school and working life and improve the quality of vocational education and training in the long term. Several vocational teachers participated in more than one working period. The University faced number of challenges when the concept of working periods was introduced. Some vocational teachers did not wish to participate in working periods because of a lack of knowledge of contemporary working life, concerns about their own vocational competence, difficulties finding replacement teachers, and restrictions in school schedules and teachers' working hours, among other factors. Over a period of time, these challenges have been overcome by making working periods an important part of employment contract for the vocational teachers.

All the participants confirmed that they assess the practical skills of the students along with the industry expert where the student is undertaking work placement. When assessors were asked if the practice of assessing practical assessments in their organisation was fair and did not put the students at a disadvantage, the respondents were confident about their assessment strategies as demonstrated in the comments below:

"I am not sure about the student at a disadvantage. The students get to know in advance what they will be assessed in. I follow the guidelines that are provided. Some time I feel overwhelmed with the responsibility of having to take a decision based on taste and presentation." (Rekola)

"The students do have a right to appeal if they feel that they have not been assessed appropriately." (Sipponen)

The same question when asked of the Principal Lecturer received a more certain response:

"No it is fine. Two to three assessors for each student is better. Also I think each student should be assessed by different assessors throughout the course. This way they can get different perspectives rather than mine only. It might though confuse them (the student) as I might teach them in a particular way but the assessor might assess them to his own standards." (Rajakangas-Tolsa)

This response clearly indicates that although each assessor might have his/ her own standards which may be different to the standards specified in the training package or practiced by other assessors, the use of panel comprising of industry chef makes the assessment practice fair for the students. Another sound practice followed by the assessors at the University is asking students to present a work flow plan of producing a dish and then testing them on whether they have followed the plan on the day the practical assessment as suggested in the comment below:

"I have my students submit a plan on how they will cook to industry standards. They are required to submit the indent for the ingredients and a brief workflow plan. Having them submit a plan in advance helps me to give them feedback before they start practical test." (Rekola)

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Others were using the industry experts to gather third party evidence. Getting the workplace supervisor to provide the evidence of student's competence is a great tool and good part of this strategy is that over a period of time encourages the work place supervisor to learn about vocational education requirements.

The team at Haaga Helia is mindful that each kitchen is different and has different busy service periods and that most successful kitchens will produce dishes liked by their clientele. The assessors should have the power to change the assessment depending on various factors such as menu or ingredient selection available at the kitchen. This allows the student to demonstrate exactly what she has learned at the workplace. The assessors have the power and authority to change the dish being assessed and able to ensure that despite the changes made in the assessment, the integrity of the qualification is not compromised and skills tested are within the guidelines prescribed by the commercial cookery training package. This is reflected in the following responses provided by the participants:

"Yes, I do understand that the student might be having a bad day and may be his/her soufflé collapses on the day of the test due to stress. I look at his performance and attendance in all the sessions throughout the term and mark them accordingly." (Rekola)

"As long as they are able to demonstrate the requirement of the training package, I am willing to adjust to the context and workplace. The integrity of the qualification has to be maintained." (Rajakangas-Tolsa)

"Yes. That is possible if we have enough reasons to make changes and show that we still are assessing all the elements in the training package." (Sipponen)

Similar deliberations over the practical assessments have been reported by the participants. Subjective preference or value in relation to the taste does open number of questions. There is no suitable language, or conceptual machinery for communicating the substance or meaning of a subjective assessment, and therefore, following on from this, there is in principle no way to compare or adjudicate subjective assessments in any reliable way. The panel of assessors moderating the practical assessment does make the process of assessing fair and just.

5. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Destination: Perho Helsinki Culinary School, Helsinki, Finland

Contacts: Gun Marit Nieminen- Director of Education
Pekka Selenius- Quality Manager
Johanna Westling- Head of Student Exchange
Marja Hemmi- Education Manager

Objectives:

1. To investigate the assessment plan and competency assessing documents used by the assessors and the involvement of industry in assessment of commercial cookery students
2. To assess the strategies expended by the training organisations to assist students to transition smoothly in to the work place.

Another interesting point which has been highlighted by the Perho commercial cookery trainers was that networking with the world of work is explicitly expressed in the legislation. According to the Vocational Education and Training Act, special attention should be paid to the working life needs in education. The most important channels through which social partners and representatives of business life can participate in planning vocational education and training at a national level are the training committees set up by the Ministry of Education, governing bodies and regional and local consultative committees. Commercial cookery assessors from both Perho and Haaga Helia are part of the local network of business owners and get involved in regional business life.



The building was designed by Jan Söderlund, professor of architecture, and the exterior of the building is decorated with the fruit and vegetable themed artwork of the famous Finnish glass designer Oiva Toikka.

5. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

The teachers and representatives of enterprises and institutions negotiate and agree on what students must learn during this period and how they should be assessed. The trainers have initially felt that this has been somewhat difficult and that it has increased their workload but have also seen the process as enriching their work. The head of campus of Perho, Nieminen, asserted that both skills demonstration and on the job learning plays a central role in continuing training for VET teachers. According to her, “teachers also cooperate closely with the world of work in anticipating future training needs and in drawing up school curricula where the regional and local needs of the world of work must be taken into account”.

Interestingly, in Finland, the initial vocational education had traditionally been organised by vocational institutes. Practical training and learning have been an element of vocational education, but the number and implementation of practical training periods have varied from one educational sector to another. Traditionally, in vocational education, the previous practical training-related learning model was behaviouristic or neo-behaviouristic, and school-based learning was seen as having a centre role in the process of learning vocational skills.

Accordingly, learning and guidance were frequently coincidental. The emphasis was on student’s good adjustment to the workplace and the carrying out of assignments as instructed. The assessment process focused on student’s external behaviour and working methods, rather than learning. In addition, the influence of context was not adequately taken into consideration

In the present model, on-the-job learning followed at Perho, is a learning method that builds on the objectives of the curriculum. It aims at taking the needs of both the student and the workplace into account as broadly as possible. The student can establish a personal contact with real work and, correspondingly, the workplace gets the opportunity to influence education and training and, guarantee vocational skills that stem from working life needs and to promote students’ employment opportunities, as well as to facilitate the recruitment of skilled labour into enterprises and other workplaces.

‘Efforts to achieve closer cooperation between VET and the workplace have also included the adoption of a new form of assessment, which has become known as vocational skills demonstration’.¹ This means that, at different points during their training in initial VET, students demonstrate the skills they have learned in tests arranged as either practical work situations or as practical assignments. These skills demonstrations assess how well the student has achieved the competencies needed in the labour market. Skills demonstrations also bring together workplace representatives and teachers. According to Anttila et al., 2010, their organisation has affected and enhanced the models of organising on-the-job learning not only by effecting the timings, contents, guidance, and student assessment, but also through demanding new forms of learning agreements and documentation.² Their adoption has thus also increased the demands for administration.

In sum, the system of on-the-job learning and vocational skills demonstration has contributed to the creation of closer links between education and work, closer collaboration between teachers and workplace instructors (e.g. in the assessment process) and closer integration of theory and practice.³ Although Finland has followed the current trend to shift part of the teaching and learning process from educational institutions to the workplace, on-the-job learning including vocational skills demonstration remains within the domain of formal education. The Finnish practice derives from the school-based nature of the VET system and the egalitarian educational principle that governs assessment.

1 Stenström, M.-L. (2009), Connecting work and learning through demonstrations of vocational skills experiences from the Finnish VET (pp. 221-238). Amsterdam: Springer

2 Anttila, P., Kukkonen, P., Lempinen, P., Nordman-Byskåta, C., Pesonen, K., Tuomainen, S., ... Räisänen, A. (2010). Työssäoppimisen arvioinnin seuranta [Follow-up evaluation of on-the-job learning]. (Koulutuksen arviointineuvoston julkaisu No. 44). Jyväskylä, Finland: Retrieved from http://www.edev.fi/img/portal/19/Julkaisu_nro_44.pdf?cs=127487380

3 Uusitalo, I. (2001), On-the-job learning and student supervision in vocational education establishments] (pp.13-27) Helsinki

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Destination: Oulu Vocational College, Oulu, Finland

Contacts: Katariina Walker- International Affairs Coordinator
Sami Puumakainen- Cookery Teacher and Assessor
Mrs. Leena Haataja- Restaurant Owner, Mentor and Work Place Assessor

Objective:

The assessment moderation strategies followed by the training organisations to ensure that taste of the dish is judged, assessed and the comments documented to ensure fairness.

An important aspect of moderation is that commercial cookery assessors need to interact with one another, and share judgements of students' work samples. At Oulu Vocational College, this is achieved by openness and making available information about interpretation of the standards; disclosures that may otherwise remain concealed and unarticulated. In order to achieve high reliability while preserving validity, it is important for a chef assessor to develop a common understanding of stated standards and reach a similar recognition of performances that demonstrate those standards. The standards in training packages for commercial cookery are written as verbal descriptors and as such are open to interpretation. According to Puumakainen, the exemplars or samples of student work provide concrete referents that can be used to illustrate standards that otherwise remain abstract mental constructs. He confirmed that he records a commentary while assessing a student at a work place.

Wyatt-Smith and Bridges (2008)⁴ have demonstrated how commentary could make available insights into teacher's cognitive processes in combining or trading-off strengths and limitations of the work relative to the required characteristics of the standards at various levels. Annotated exemplars and commentaries can show the processes of formulating an overall or on-balance judgement. Well written standards and commentaries can serve to make clear expectations of quality both for assessors and to the students. It is equally important that assessors make available for scrutiny to themselves and others the basis of their judgement practices, and their use of standards in those practices. The team at Oulu Vocational College had mixed views on the benefit of the quality assurance mechanism, such as moderation and validation.

The use of assessment panels comprising of commercial cookery teacher, workplace supervisor and the students' self-assessment, rather than a single assessor to assess practical assessments presently practiced at this training facility, is a good idea. The addition of industry in professional conversations around a range of matters, including planning for assessments; how assessment activities are designed; how evidence is collected, interpreted and recorded; what contexts are suitable for undertaking particular assessment activities; and what standards are in place to assist teachers in assessing quality, seems to work very well in Finnish vocational system. Such conversations enable judgement practices to be de-privatised and judgements made more valid.

⁴ Wyatt-Smith, Claire, and S. Bridges 2008. Meeting in the middle- Assessment, pedagogy learning and students at educational disadvantage. Brisbane, QLD Australia: Department of Education.

5. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Left: Tasting of bread baked by the student with Sami Puumakainen, right: assessing the texture of bread

The team at Oulu achieves this by involving a process of matching samples of dishes to stated assessment standards, with attention focusing on features such as taste, textures, mouth feel, aroma, presentation and portion size, as evidenced in the final product presented by the student. Chef Assessor judgement can therefore be understood as evidence-based with standards playing a useful function in informing, substantiating and making judgement defensible. The current model of on-the-job learning and assessment at Oulu Vocational College for Commercial Cookery Students is as below. Previous model of practical training as practiced in the past has been presented alongside to show the change in the approach to encourage industry involvement and ease of assimilation of information for the commercial cookery students.

5. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Main Differences between On-the-Job Learning and Practical Training in Commercial cookery Qualification as practiced by Oulu Vocational College.

	Present model of 'Learning'	Previous Model of 'Practical Training'
Duration	20 credits (each credit is 40 hours)	Varied depending on whether for 'adult learner' or 'in-school-program learner'
Target	Learning new things and applying one's learning in practice, discussed extensively on the level of the individual, enterprise and society	Gaining practical experience
Basis of Targets	Student-defined targets, targets based on the curriculum, targets linked with the menu and the dishes cooked in the kitchen, integration of different targets, for example in working-life projects	Targets based on the curriculum or no defined targets
Learning Model	Constructive-contextual, experiential and cooperative learning	Behaviouristic, neo-behaviouristic and coincidental learning
Student Role	Self-directed and interactive	Mainly other-directed
Teacher Role	Advisor to the work place supervisor in the kitchen	Supervisor
Sources of Learning	Work experience, the work environment and the work community, materials and equipment in the kitchen, work situations, discussions, learning from guidance, learning assignments and project work	Theory, work assignments, work performance and learning by observing other chefs in the kitchen
Learning Methods	Work-based learning, reflective discussions, learning through projects, team learning, learning diaries, essays and reporting	Performance in work assignments, observation, imitation, repetition, no written
Guidance Targets	Student-defined targets, motivation, planning of work-based learning, work performance, student experiences, fostering reflection, vocational growth and career planning	Phases of the work process, external performance in work situations, external performance models, little connection between guidance and learning targets
Forms of Guidance	Guidance in work situations, guidance discussions (individual students, student groups), mentoring and vocational skills demonstrations	Occasional guidance given by VET institution and workplaces, the apprentice-master model and discussion during work
Nature of Assessment	Continuous, affects the assessment of study units	Not regulated, can be agreed on between those involved
Evaluators	Workplace trainer, the student, chef-assessors	Chef-assessor

5. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Assessment Targets	Student's ability to define personal learning targets, self-regulation skills, performance at work, social skills, internal models and reflection skills, ability to grasp bigger picture	Adapting to the work community, mastery of work, work performance, external behaviour and external activity of student
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The strategy of involving an industry expert along with the lead assessor ensures that a student is not disadvantaged and that any corrective action if required can be ongoing within the parameters of the course and while the student is still active in the qualification. It is vital that students are given prompt feedback after a moderated evaluation is complete, and given the opportunity to cook up the dish again if required.

The Oulu Vocational College also looks at the services of external providers for moderation of assessments. Hatajaa, is a successful restaurant owner who not only allows the students from the Oulu Vocational College to be placed in her workplace but also assesses the students along with commercial cookery teachers. She confirmed that the partnership between a number of providers of commercial cookery qualifications, where training organisations can all assess and moderate across the partnership is a sound idea. Such a system facilitates greater assessor self-belief and sense of rigour. The use and involvement of external industry experts in technical cooking skills assessment also increases the confidence of perspective employers on the validity and reliability of the assessments being carried out by the training institution.

5. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Destination: Vocational Teachers Training College, EduLAB, Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Oulu, Finland

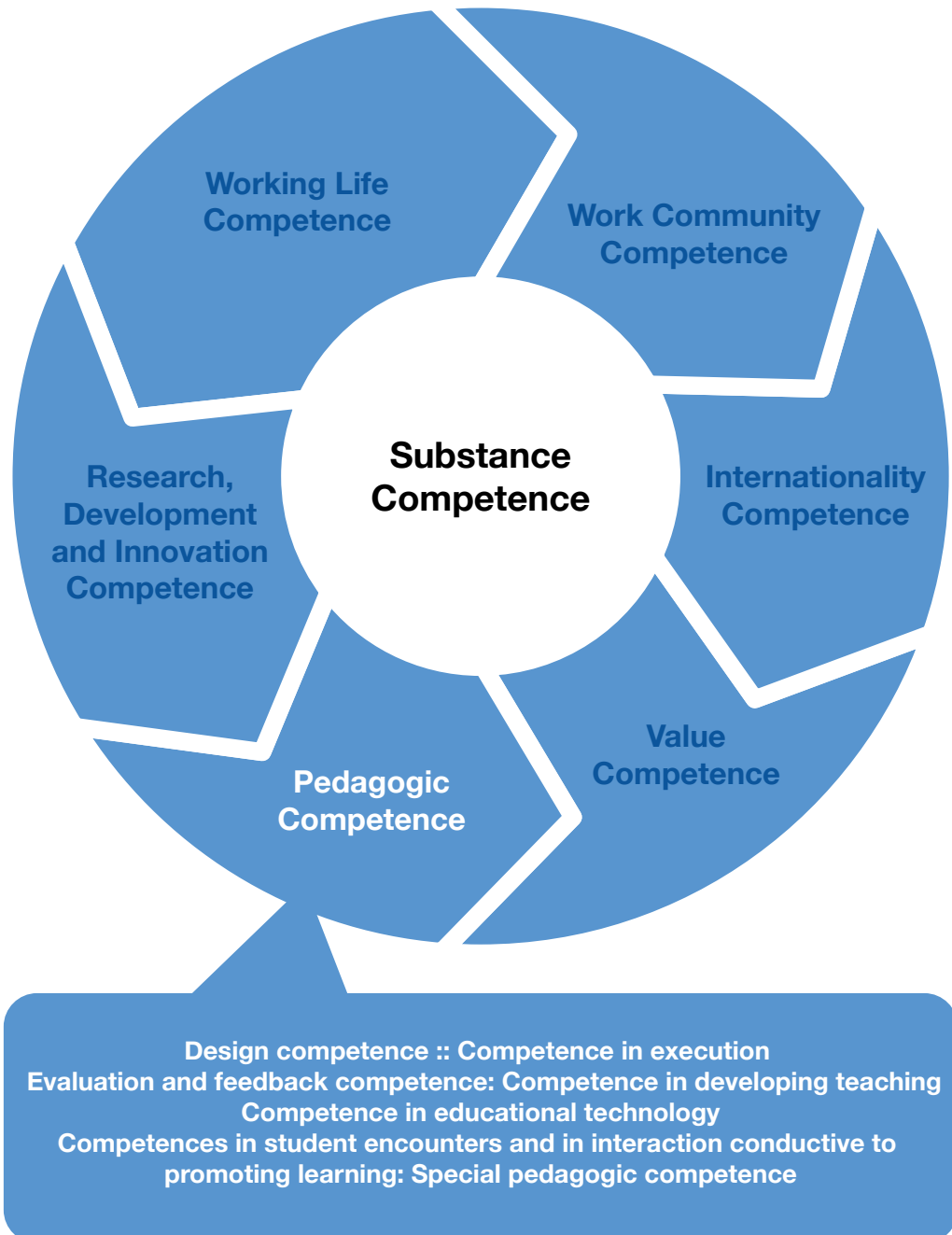
Contact: Blair Stevenson Lecturer/ EduLAB Master/ Coordinator, LAB international partnerships

Blair Stevenson (PhD in Education) is a lecturer and strategic adviser at the School of Vocational Teacher Education at the Oulu University of Applied Sciences in Finland. His current role includes work as a teacher trainer in topics such as educational psychology, global education and pedagogical use of technology in teaching and work on program development teams in the areas of educational product design, video pedagogy and virtual learning ecosystems. His research work and publications focus on multidisciplinary approaches to the interface between teaching, culture and technology. Additionally, since 2005, Stevenson has been Managing Director of an educational consulting firm based in Canada focusing on educational evaluation and research.

Objective:

To assess qualifications taken by professional chefs in order to become a trainer and assessor in vocational education sector allows the chef assessors to understand the intricacies of judging and encourages equitable outcomes to the students.

Training of teachers of Finnish vocational institutes and polytechnics has been more varied than that of teachers of general education institutes in Finland. Generally speaking, vocational teachers have first acquired a vocational qualification in their own subject field, later complemented by pedagogical training that may be completed in one academic year by studying full-time or in one to three years in flexible multiform education.



The core competence areas of vocational pedagogy

Stevenson believes that new skills and resources are needed for VET practitioners to take advantage of the options created by new digital technologies, such as broadband transmission and mobile telephony. In the teachers training program delivered by EduLAB, separate focus groups are formed each semester to understand the context in which teacher-student engagement is changing due to ever changing technology being used in the classroom when delivering commercial cookery education. Some of the highlights of what is covered in the teachers training curriculum is:

5. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Formulating clear and meaningful (for those involved in the mobility project) learning outcomes
- Providing the appropriate amount of detail in the formulation of learning outcomes
- Expressing the relevant level of knowledge, skills and competence the learners already possess and/or need to achieve; this requires particular effort, but it is necessary to identify the actual added value of the learning process abroad
- Identifying relevant and concrete knowledge, skills and competence to be acquired; during the stay abroad and taking into account that their acquisition in real working environments is usually embedded in carrying out complex work tasks and will probably also lead to additional learning attainments
- Differentiating between already acquired and to be acquired knowledge, skills and competence
- Defining appropriate methods.

Apart from this, since the introduction of compulsory work placement for the commercial cookery students in the last update of training package, the techniques for conceptual knowledge and skill base needed for work-based assessment have been added to the curriculum. This includes:

1. Educational consulting and supervision skills, including negotiating learning and fostering forms of support for worker-learners
2. An understanding of the culture and politics of workplaces
3. Helping learners with the identification of appropriate communities of practice
4. Helping others to judge worker's learning achievements and to document learning outcomes
5. Assisting others to plan and monitor and promote learning how to learn.



Use of Technology in Vocational Teachers Training

5. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Two units of competency, 'Digital Learning Competence' and 'Networking Competence', have been added to curriculum emphasising the importance of technology in the hospitality workplace. In addition to the two mentioned above, an elective of 'Video Pedagogy' is available to the students to undertake. There is evidence to prove that increasing capacity of digital technology to deliver large amounts of visual and text based information to consumer's at-home and on-demand raises the expectation of learners for these technologies to be incorporated into learning programs. According to Stevenson, "the incorporation of digital learning competence in the curriculum leads to collaborative and more independent learning among students". He believes learning for the student is self-paced and personalised. However, while commenting on skills needed to assess at the student's workplace, Blair contends that assessing of cookery skills at a restaurant or hotel is complex also because of the fact that not all places are technologically savvy.

6. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER: APPLYING THE OUTCOMES

Assessment in commercial cookery needs to be driven by the need for quality improvement: primarily to address changes and improvements in our understanding of the assessment processes themselves and also to respond to industry and student expectations for valid and consistent assessment decisions. To this end, there is a strong case for strengthening assessment by revisiting some fundamental principles. These include underscoring the need for trainers and assessors to have a good grounding in assessment theory and practice, tools and techniques and providing regular professional development to ensure that these sets of skills and knowledge are maintained. Also crucial is the involvement of industry stakeholders in the validation of assessment tools and the implementation of regular and systematic processes for the moderation of assessments as is practiced in vocational education system in Finland.

The following approach is being adopted in the dissemination of the findings and application of outcomes of the Fellowship.

Dissemination of findings:

1. Internal presentations to the Learning & Development team, Data & Quality Compliance teams, trainers and assessors
2. External presentations to members of Australian Culinary Federation, Les Toques Blanches Executive Chef Committee, members of QuiET network (Quality in Education and Training Network).

Dissemination - Internal Presentations

Presentations to the Learning & Development team at Melbourne City Institute of Education (MCIE) have assisted in immediate changes as recommended by the Fellowship findings. For example, a provision has been made to judge the commercial cookery unit of 'Work Effectively as a Cook' along with the industry experts and panel of assessors to allow the moderation of judgment on student's skills of making a dish is conducted simultaneously.

Bearing in mind that TAE qualification has little emphasis on teaching technology to perspective trainers, MCIE has incorporated some of recommendations from Oulu Vocational Teachers College into their induction program for current and new trainers across the qualifications.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

To Service Skills Australia

Learning from the Finnish model of engaging with the industry, encouraging providers to establish systematic collaboration between assessors, both within the organisation and externally, may assist in addressing the issue of validity of judgement when assessing a dish prepared by the student. Service Skills Australia, Australian Culinary Federation and other associations along with government quality assurance agencies, could join hands in conducting assessment 'road shows'.

Events like these will give commercial cookery practitioners an opportunity to take part in professional development activities and share sample assessment tasks with others. Perhaps the participation of industry experts, assessors and quality assurance professionals, will help to make the guidelines for assessing the dishes cooked by students more explicit. This in turn will give confidence to all stakeholders that the industry standards are understood and practiced consistently across the registered training organisations. Assessors will be encouraged to remain current and confident that the students passing out of their organisations are skilled as required by industry standards. A discomfited challenge in Australia is that workplaces are sometimes contested domains.¹ The rapport between employees and management in an organisation can influence the relationship with the training organisation and in turn the outcome of 'on the job' learning by the student at work placement. This contestation can result in the inequitable distribution of opportunities for learning.

To Training Organisations

As part of the Master's program thesis, the Fellow had conducted research on moderation activities in five of Australian TAFEs and RTOs prior to his visit to Finland. The responses given by research interviewees placed emphasis on the general absence of systematic processes for the moderation of commercial cookery practical assessments, despite the assessment guidelines for training packages stipulating the requirements for training organisations to have a systematic plan in place. This is a significant issue with the potential to compromise the consistency of assessments, especially as assessors are using a wide range of tools, methods and environments for judging competency. Further to the learning's from the Finnish experience, the training providers will benefit by having a robust induction program, which informs assessors of the processes in relation to validation and moderation schedules and requirements. An intensive professional development activity on moderation processes for current trainers will help to clear doubts about the concepts of validity and moderation.

Assessors will then be better able to ensure that their judgement of competence is valid, fair and based on reliable data. Another strategy that may work for commercial cookery departments would be to submit assessments that have been judged as a borderline pass to a panel for review. Such a panel could comprise of new trainers, the lead assessor, and an industry expert. Each of the RTOs in the industry could work closely with the Australian Culinary Federation (ACF) and use some of their members on panels to improve assessment validity. In this way, RTOs could have their commercial cookery assessments independently evaluated and confirmed, or otherwise get expert advice to adjust the validity, reliability and fairness of their assessments.

Some of the learning's from the Finnish vocational systems that can be applied by the training organisations with regards to commercial cookery work placement units are:

1. Professional development for the work placement supervisors on negotiating learning and fostering forms of support for worker-learners in commercial kitchen operations
2. An effort to understand the culture and politics of the workplace. Presently the focus is restricted on ensuring the menu items being cooked in the workplace are as listed in the unit descriptors and in the RTO's trainer guide

¹ Mitchell, J., C. Chappell, A. Bateman, and S. Roy. *Quality is the Key: critical issues in teaching, learning and assessment in vocational education and training*. Adelaide: NCVET, 2006.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Include the commercial cookery students in conversations around communities of practice that can provide culinary or mentoring support to the learner in the workplace
4. Working closely with the work place supervisors to judge student's learning achievement and to document learning outcomes.

The above strategies have been practiced at MCIE since July 2016 and have helped the chef assessors to focus on the construction of learning, of learners and of the workplace kitchens in which they operate. Some of the applications of outcomes have been:

- Changes in the Learning & Assessment strategies pertaining to commercial cookery with regards to
 - » Assessment moderation strategy
 - » Validation of cookery units
 - » Engagement with the industry experts
 - » Percentage of work- placement component
 - » Professional development of the commercial cookery assessors
 - » Structured consultation with the industry chefs

In the recently conducted survey, both assessors as well as the students are feeling better adjusted in the workplace and are more confident about the end of the term assessment activity.

To HESG, Department of Education and Training

All vocational education and training in Finland is based on learning outcomes. The units within a vocational qualification are formed in order to produce a competence for a set of tasks in the working life. The units can also be assessed and demonstrated independently. Vocational competences are defined as concrete working tasks describing what a student is able to do. Nevertheless, the terms knowledge, skills and competence are not used in the National Requirements. The Finnish Board of Education defines learning outcomes as:

1. Mastering of work processes
2. Mastering of tasks, working methods, tools and materials
3. Mastering of knowledge that forms the foundation for work
4. Life-long learning key competences common to all qualifications.

This approach provides clarity to the assessors and gives the power in the hands of the experts. The current Development Plan for Education and Research by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland mentions the need to enhance collaboration between vocational institutions. However, the focus of that collaboration has shifted from educational content to joint use of, "facilities, support services and teacher resources across institutional boundaries and with higher education institutions."² We have top notch training kitchens in TAFEs which could be used optimally if shared with private RTOs delivering commercial cookery qualification.

Another great learning is around integrating the concept of lifelong learning into education policy and other policy sectors relating to education and training. The principle of lifelong learning entails that everyone has sufficient learning skills and opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in different learning environments throughout their lifespan. The Fellow has attached a copy of Skills Demonstration Assessment Material (see Appendix 1) for one of the unit of competency from Perho Culinary School which demonstrates that a key skill of lifelong learning is present in every unit assessment target.

² Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland, 2011, p. 32

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

VET providers are obligated by law to carry out self-assessment of their own operations in Finland. They are also required to make the key results of these assessments public. The quality of vocational education and training is also assessed by means of external evaluations, in which VET providers are obligated to participate. The Finnish National Board of education maintains a national monitoring system of learning outcomes based on vocational skills demonstrations for the purposes of national follow-up assessments on learning outcomes. Based on the performance both in completions, job outcomes and quality indicators, the training organisations receive an incentive bonus payment at the end of the year. This strategy of rewarding quality needs to be explored and perhaps adopted by the Department of Education to recognise quality training providers in Victorian VET sector.

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The ISS Institute exists to foster an aspirational, skilled and smart Australia by cultivating the mastery and knowledge of talented Australians through international research Fellowships.

The International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute) is proud of its heritage. The organisation was founded over 25 years ago by Sir James Gobbo AC CVO QC, former Governor of Victoria, to encourage investment in the development of Australia's specialised skills. Its international Fellowship program supports a large number of Australians and international leaders across a broad cross-section of industries to undertake applied research that will benefit economic development through vocational training, industry innovation and advancement. To date, over 350 Australian and international Fellows have undertaken Fellowships facilitated through ISS Institute. The program encourages mutual and shared learning, leadership and communities of practice.

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- Preparing a detailed report for distribution to government departments, industry and educational institutions
- Recommending improvements to accredited educational courses
- Delivering training activities including workshops, conferences and forums.

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Government

- Higher Education and Skills Group, Department of Education and Training, Victoria

Industry

- Service Skills Australia

Professional Associations

- Les toques Blanches Exécutive Chefs Association
- Australian Culinary Federation
- World Association of Chefs Society (WACS)
- QUIET Network

Education and Training

- Benu Chatterjee, Manager Hospitality Studies, Holmesglen TAFE
- Bryony Dade, Director- Quality & Engagement, Melbourne City Institute of Education
- Explore English
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10. ATTACHMENTS

Document attached

