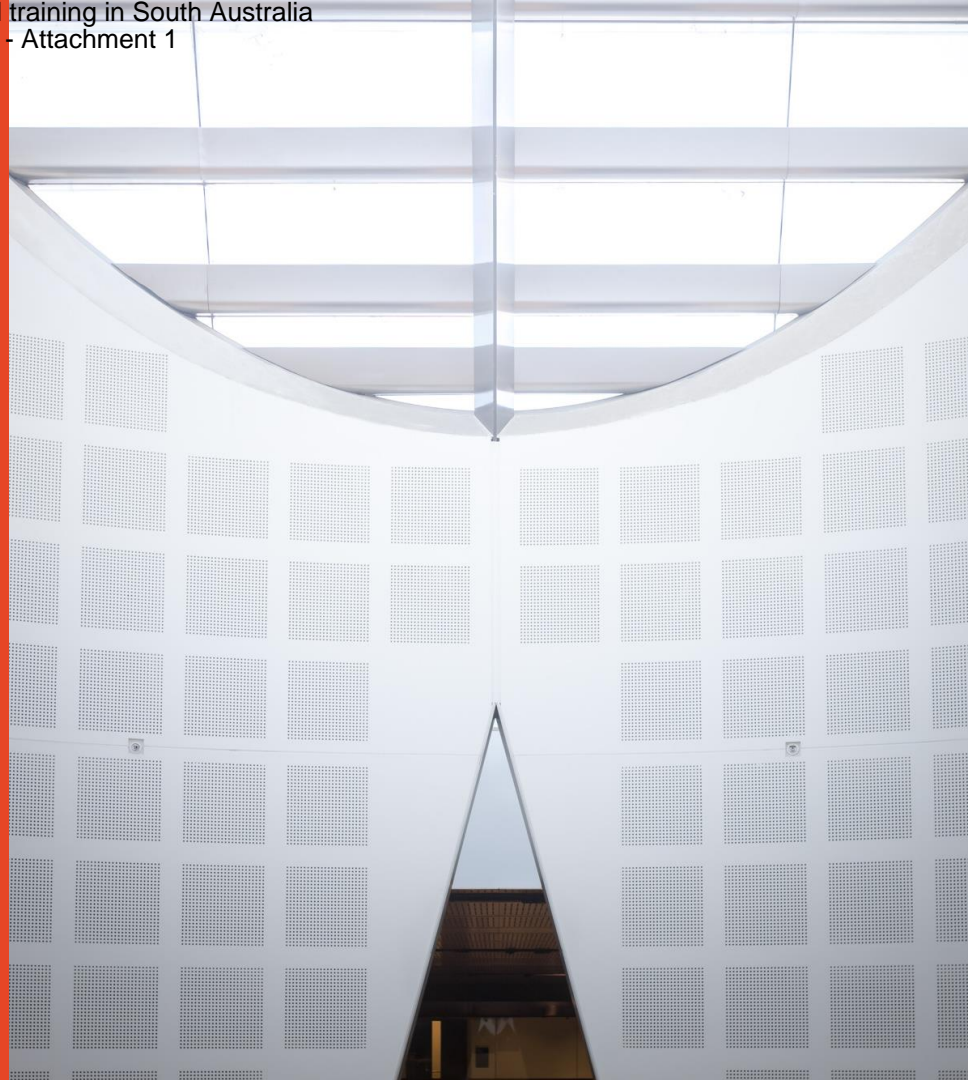


From VET to Vocational Education – 'Saving TAFE' vs TAFE as anchor for economic and social renewal

Professor John Buchanan
Business Analytics,
Business School



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- This work has been prepared jointly with Serena Yu and Leesa Wheelahan
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The key ideas

The greatest power a sovereign can have is to define the terms of debate.

Thomas Hobbes

The formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution...

Albert Einstein + Leopold Infeld

Overview

1. The problems
2. Getting the questions right
3. Next steps

Conclusion

- The choice: VET crisis management or renewal of vocational education?
- TAFE: recipient of 'community service obligation' funding or anchor to quality vocational education?

1 The problems

- Current system failing on its own terms (COAG)
- Quality (financial scandals, critical not isolated incidents)
- Relevance (huge level of VET in agricultural, no change in educational attainment)

1. Problem (a) – system failing on own terms (COAG)

Benchmark: Halve Australians without quals at Cert III + above 2009 – 2020	47.1% (2009)	42.5% (2014)	Not on track
Benchmark: Double higher level qual completions (Dips + Advanced Dips) 2009 – 2020	53,974 completions (2009)	74,091 Completions (2014)	Not on track
Indicator: % of VET graduate with improved employment after training	67.6% (2008)	59.7% (2014)	Negative change

1. Problem (b) – Quality – Private provider scandals

Provider	Earnings before interest and tax (EBIT) (%)			
	2011	2012	2013	Last reported status on Web
Vocation	6	18	21	Collapsed 2015, Dawkins in court
Ashley Institute of Training	35	35	35	Trading halt 2016
Intuerei	29	31	35	Quits Australia 2017
Australian Careers Network	46	40	51	AFP Raid + in administration 2016

1 Problem (c) – Relevance (and churn)

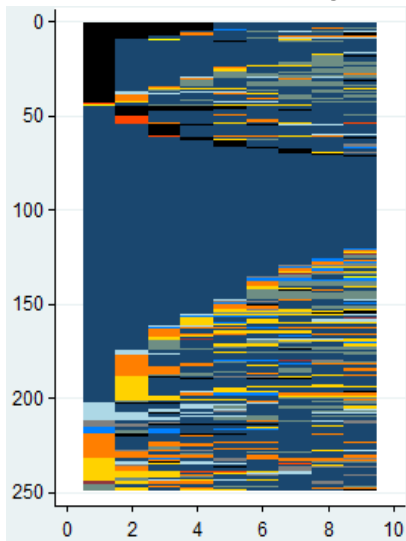
Employment, VET Training + Attainment, Aust Agriculture 2005-2011

Average Employment	Average Annual enrolments	Total VET completions	Educational Attainment: VET (+Bachelors)		
			2005	2011	2015
323,000	85,000	160,000	29.2	30.4	29.5
–			(8.4)	(12.4)	(15)
353,000					

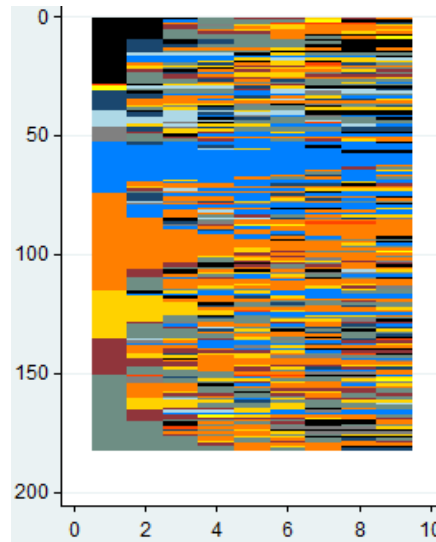
The rise in Bachelors degrees is not coming from career progression – but people come straight from Universities.

– Example: Agriculture

Farm managers



Manual workers in agriculture



2. Getting the questions right

- Where do we want to get to?
- What are the options for tertiary education?
- What are the implications for TAFE?

2. Getting the questions right:

(A) Where do we want to get to? (a) Objective

(i) maximising returns on human capital

=> priority on infinitely flexible labour

vs

(ii) Nurturing people living a lives they have reason to value

=> flourishing, productive citizens

2. Getting the questions right

(A) Where do we want to get to?

(b) Reference point for skills

(i) Competencies derived from current jobs

vs

(ii) Capabilities to adapt to an uncertain future

=> focus on job clusters + vocational streams

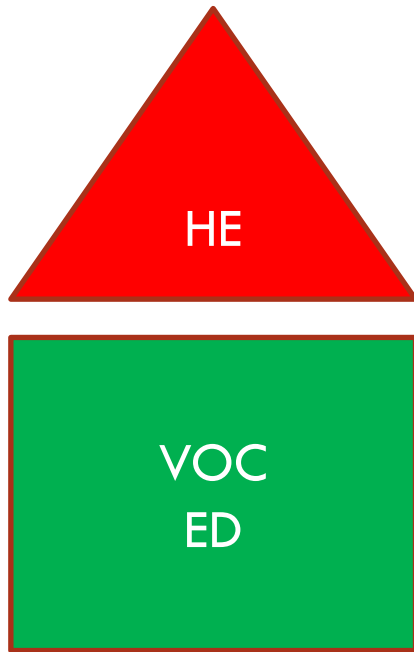
2. Getting the questions right?

(B) What are the options for vocational education?

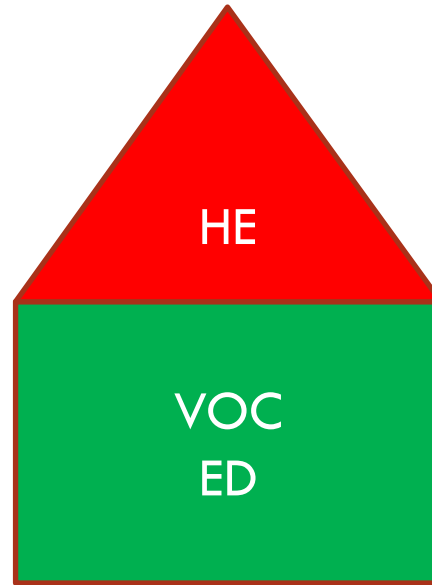
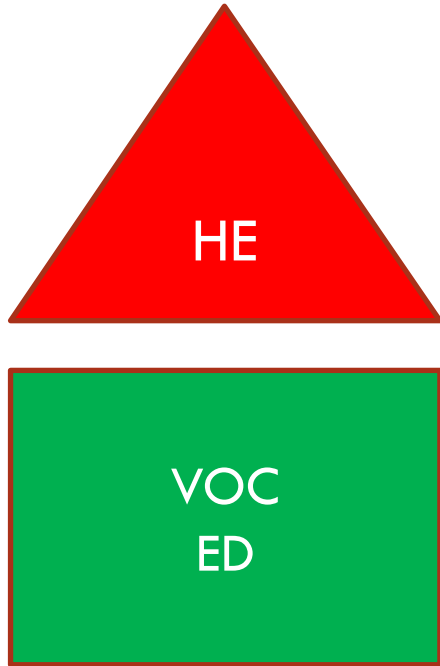
1. 'Ground hog day' (ie muddle through with TAFE as public sector rump)
2. University + labour market programs (eg Sweden)
3. Universities + TAFEs as integrated offerings (eg dual sector model)
4. Universities + TAFEs as parallel offerings (eg Ontario, Germany, Denmark)

WAYS OF ORGANISING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SECTORS

HIERARCHICAL



(DUAL SECTOR INSTITUTES)

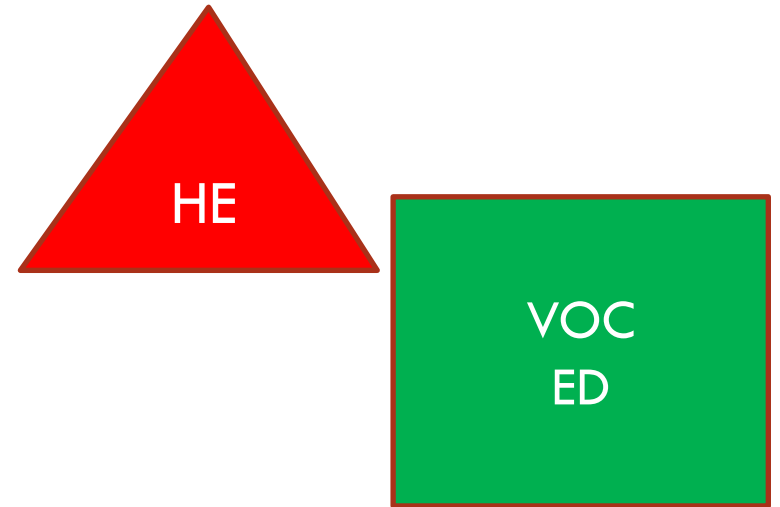
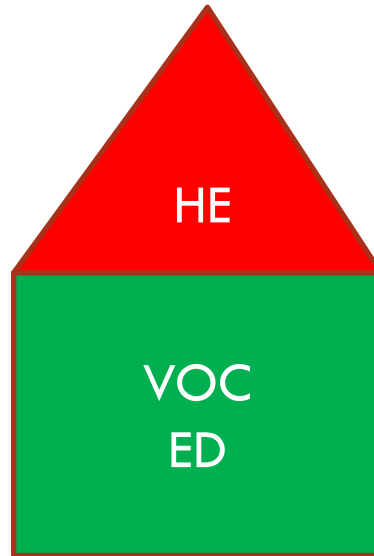
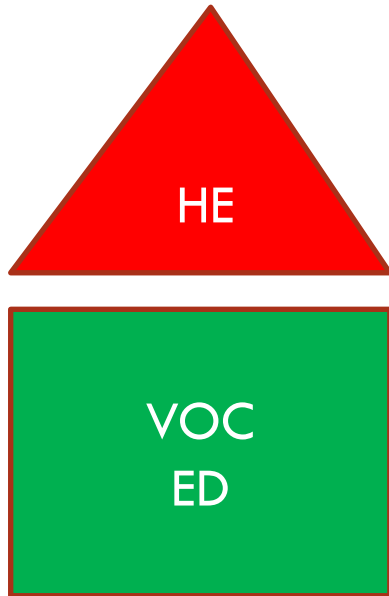


HIERARCHICAL

INTEGRATED

PARALLEL

(DUAL SECTOR INSTITUTES)



2. Getting the questions right

(C) What is the role of TAFE?

(i) Just another RTO with CSO payments

vs

(ii) Anchor for quality vocational education

3. Next steps

1. Stabilise TAFE as prelude to renewal of vocational education
2. Qualifications rationalisation: beyond administrative rationalisation => foundation for new relevance + respect
3. Kangan Style consensus building Commission (and recent lessons from Gonski Commission)
4. Intermediary structures: don't just restore old AWPA/Skills Australia/Industry Skills Council model
 - Take tertiary education to the next level – lessons from Health policy (eg Aust's bipartisan, nationally lead, community based response to AIDS Crisis and emergence of bipartisan commitment to universal health insurance).

Conclusion

‘The Emperor has not clothes’

– system is broken

The choice: VET crisis management or renewal of vocational education?

Vision for TAFE: recipient of ‘community service obligation’ funding or anchor to quality vocational education?

Remember Hobbes: time to change the terms of debate.

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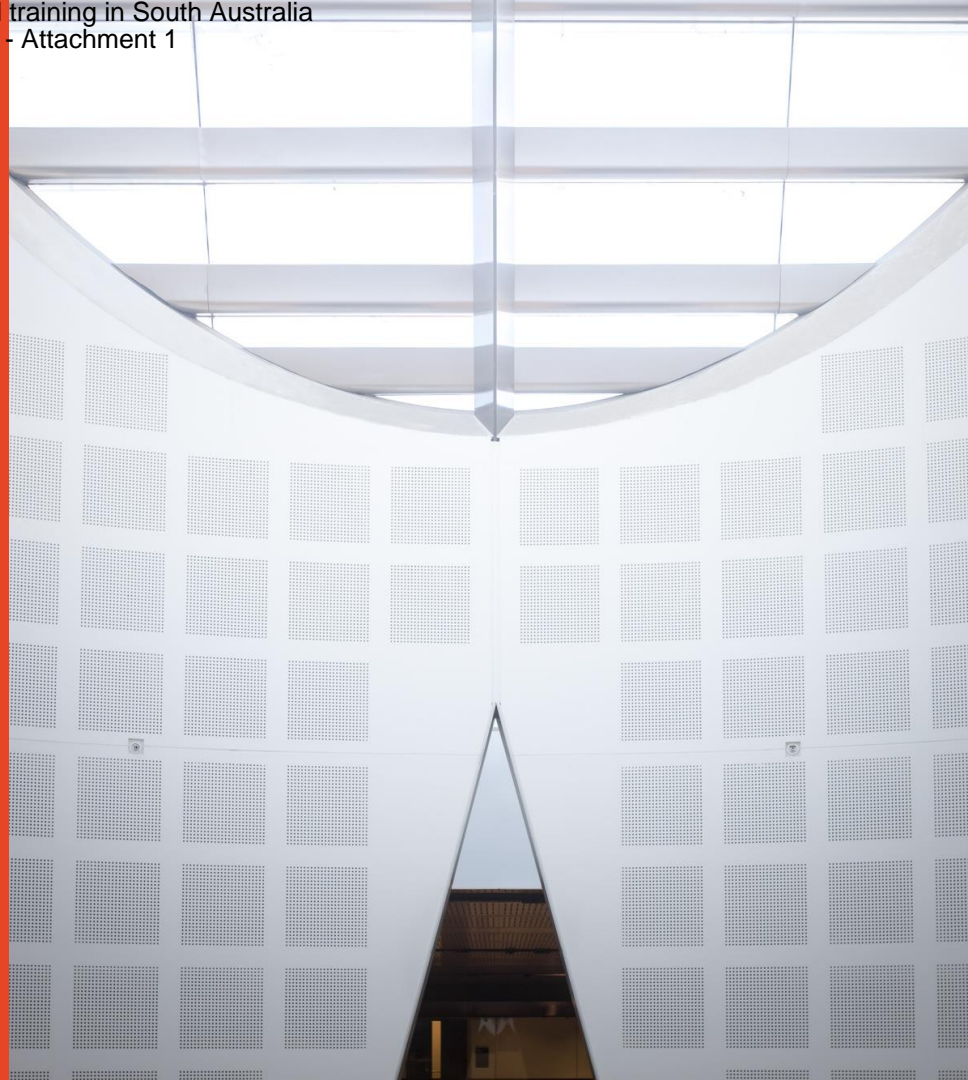
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**Supplementary
powerpoints – material
used at recent ILO Asia-
Pacific Workshops on
Skills and Inclusive
Growth (Oct 2017)**



Context – ILO Asia Pacific Policy Research Agenda

– Question of immediate interest:

What approaches to skill development are best for assisting young people navigate the future of work?

Skills for the 21st Century – Solution or problem?

Foundational literacies	Competencies	Character qualities
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Literacy2. Numeracy3. Scientific literacy4. ICT literacy5. Financial literacy6. Cultural + Civic literacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Critical thinking/problem solving8. Creativity9. Communication10. Collaboration	<ol style="list-style-type: none">11. Curiosity12. Initiative13. Persistence/Grit14. Adaptability15. Leadership16. Social + cultural awareness

Problem 1: 'The impossible dream...'

Australia: pursued 'employability skills' for 30 years. Is integral to competency based VET system. The design flaws are now manifest

- System fragmented and rigid
- Poor connection to the labour market
- Recent financial scandals have highlighted system design faults

Problem 2: Assumption about humans

21st Century skills may seem comprehensive, but they are not.

Compare with 4 **validated frameworks for human development:**

1. International Classification of Functioning (WHO/Medicine)
2. PERMA (Positive Psychology)
3. Non-cognitive factors (OCEAN) impact success at work
(Heckman from Economics)
4. Capabilities Approach (Sen and Nussbaum)

Gaps in 21st century skills framework

Characteristic of human development	Where 21 st century skills line up (or are absent)
Physical	Absent
Psycho-social <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cognition- Affect- Social- Meaning	Narrow (eg 'capabilities' on critical thinking) Absent Narrow (eg 'PERMA' on relationships) Absent
Personality characteristics	Covered: Openness and conscientiousness Absent: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Mental Stability

Problem 3: Assumption about skills

It is unhelpful to define these skills as 'generic' and assume they can be acquired in the abstract.

⇒ Paradox noted in diverse literatures

More often than not the development of specialised expertise is essential for developing employability skills.

Authorities

- Cognitive psychology
- Sociology of Education (eg Bernstein, Young, Wheelahan)
- Implications in practice:
 - Rise of the 'T' professional
 - Job clusters in the German and Swiss apprenticeship system (eg watchmakers)



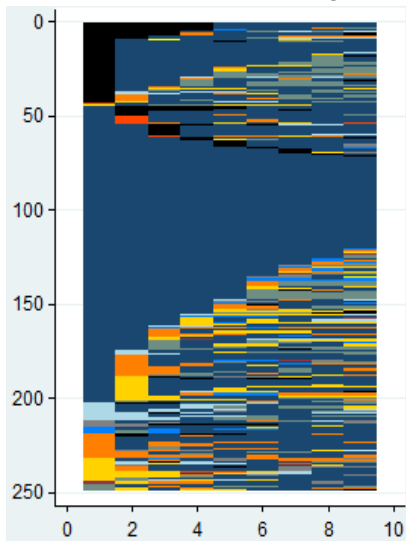
**Foundation for Young
Australians
New Work Mindset
7 job clusters**

There are combinations of skills and attributes, or capabilities, that are common across many different jobs.

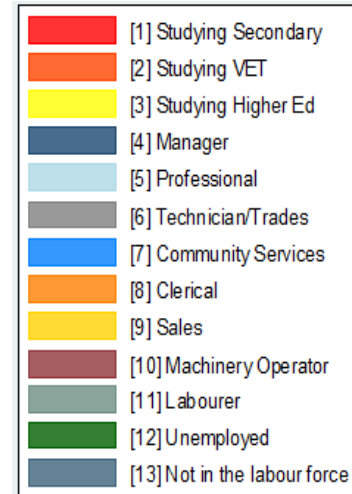
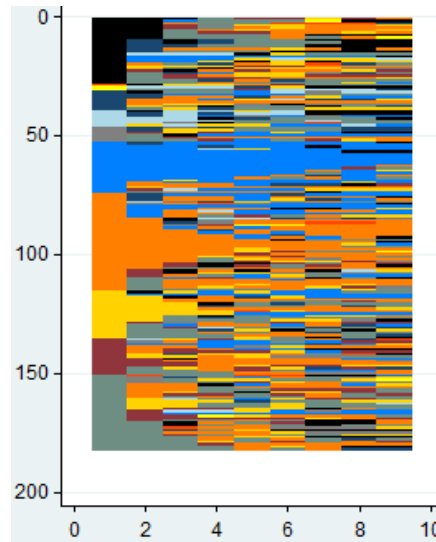
We see clustering in the flows of workers as they move between job, at least in some industries.

– Example: Agriculture

Farm managers



Manual workers in agriculture



The choice: competencies vs capabilities

	Assumptions about humanity	Assumptions about skills
21 st Century skills model	Ininitely flexible individuals are always deployed today => higher labour productivity	Ad hoc aggregations of competencies => just in time skills (but chronic failure to achieve this)
Capabilities approach	High functioning individuals => flourishing productive citizens now and in the future	Ensembles of related skills (job clusters/ vocational streams) => adaptive capacity to navigate the unanticipated

Where next?

- In local labour markets (eg Narrabri NW New South Wales)
 - Qualifications to support adaptive capacity (eg ‘rural operations’)
 - Support movement between agriculture, construction, local government and mining
- In systems operations
 - Vocational Education Reform Research Collaboration (VERRC)
 - Three year program with voc ed and data science researchers working with government officials and researchers
 - Three strands
 - Qualifications rationalisation
 - Predictive modelling for service management
 - New framework for anticipating and responding the skills changes

Conclusion: learning from Chinese history

- Australia been trying to make employability skills + competency based training work for 30 years. The system is in lower standing now than it has ever been
- Time to call an end to the experiment and work with not against reality
 - Capabilities and job clusters/vocational streams offers a way forward.
- In realm of voc ed, Australia is at cross roads like China was in political-economic policy in the early 1960s. Remains to be seen whether we'll be subject to a VET cultural revolution – or whether reason will prevail => work with reality.

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More details about frameworks for understanding human development and new ways of approaching vocational development

Human Development Framework 1: International Classification of Functioning (ICF) [from health]

- Physical functioning
 - Body structure/function
- Psycho-social functioning
 - Mental
 - Cognitive
 - Affect
 - Social
 - Communication
 - Interpersonal relations
 - Social functioning
 - Learning and applying knowledge
 - Self care

Human Development Framework 2: PERMA (from positive psychology, and some overlap with ICF)

- **P**ostive emotion
- **E**ngagement (flow)
- **R**elationships (positive)
- **A**ccomplishment/Achievement
- **M**eaning

Human Development Framework 3: Non-cognitive factors shaping labour market success (Economic, Heckman)]

Openness to experience

Conscientiousness

Extraversion

Agreeableness

Neuroticism/Mental Stability

(ie the OCEAN categories for defining and measuring character)

Human Development Framework 4: Human capabilities approach (social sciences/humanities)

Sen: ‘... human capital ... concentrates on ... human being augmenting production possibilities. human capabilities focuses on the ability ... of people to lead lives they have reason to value.’[2007:99]

Nussbaum:as applied to education this means in particular:

1. ‘the capacity for critical examination of oneself + one’s traditions’
2. The ability to appreciate deeper connections with humanity, not just your immediate reference group
3. ‘narrative imagination’ the ability to understand another’s situation and experience of life

Skills for the 21st Century – Solution or problem?

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Alpha Beta + Foundation for Young Australians ‘job clusters’

- ‘when a person trains or works in 1 job, they acquire skills for 13 other jobs’ (FYA/Alpha Beta 2016: 4)
- There are seven job clusters
 - ‘The Informers’ (142 occupations within this cluster)
 - ‘The Carers’ (131)
 - ‘The Artisans (118)
 - ‘The Designers’ (70)
 - ‘The Generators’ (65)
 - ‘The Coordinators’ (59)
 - ‘The Technologists’ (10)

Source: Foundations for Young Australians/Alpha Beta, The New Work Mindset: 7 new job clusters to help young people navigate the new work order, November, 2016
<https://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/The-New-Work-Mindset.pdf>

Compare to current policy in Agriculture: too many qualifications?

– In agriculture for example:

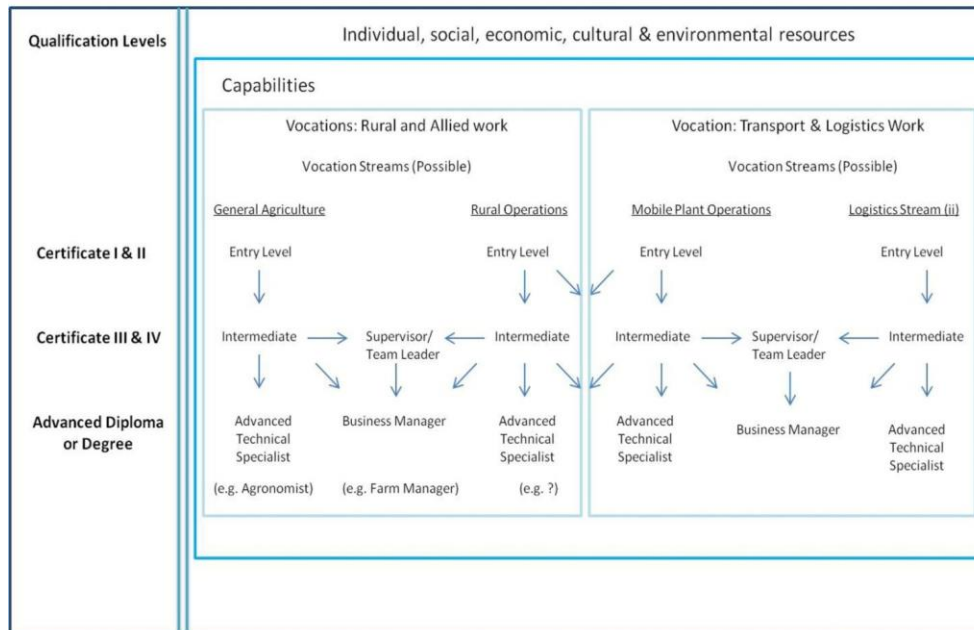
Qualification level	No. Available
Certificate I	13
Certificate II	36
Certificate III	70
Certificate IV	38
Diploma	33
Advanced Diploma	5
Vocational Graduate Certificate	1
Vocational Graduate Diploma	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>197</i>

Rethinking the question: Vocations and the capabilities approach

Elements of capability/ domains of expertise	Qualifications				
	Common Core	Certificates II, III + IV		Diploma	
	Foundations knowledge + skills at intermediate level	General Agriculture	Rural Operations	Agriculture	Business Management(Agric ulture)
Agribusiness (eg financing, marketing, economics)	Structure of ag sector + basic clerical + HR skills	Common core	Common core	Common core	More advanced (to articulate into Business/managem ent degree
Sustainability practices (eg water, land, carbon management)	Basic principles + standard operating procedures	Common core	Common core	More advanced core	More advanced
Operations of machinery + technology	Advanced operational + routine maintenance principles	Common core	- Operation, transport + maintenance of mobile plant + specialiste machinery - operation + recovery of 4 wheel drives - cleaning machinery of plant, animal + soils - welding using manual + gas metal arc welding - traffic controls	Common core	Common core
Production systems (eg irrigation + fertiliser use)	Understanding farm production systems	Common + specialism relevant to chosen area	Common + specialist knowledge re chemical application, transport + storage	More advanced	More advanced
Animal science + husbandry	Animal performance nutrition + breeding	Common + specialism of either: - intensive animal production - extensive animal production	Basic/common – ie working knowledge to help with how deploy equipment	More advanced (to articulate into a Ag Science degree)	More advanced – but not necessarily to articulation level with HE
Land, plant + crop science	Land, plant + crop production/ management	Common + specialism of either: - intensive production of horticulture for food - amenity horticulture	Basic/common – ie working knowledge to help with how deploy	More advanced (to articulate into an Ag Science degree)	More advanced – but not necessarily to articular level

Rethinking the question: Vocations and the capabilities approach

Relationship between capabilities, vocations, vocational stream & qualification levels; potential examples from Rural and Logistical Work



New categories – a summary

How a capabilities approach enriches notions of labour supply and labour demand and how they interact

