

## Engaging VET Practitioners Forum RPL – Done Well

### Key concepts

#### PRACTICE

The RPL – Done Well forums are fundamentally about influencing and improving VET practice, and in particular the practice of recognition of prior learning (RPL).

Professional practice is defined simply as the habits, customs, techniques, approaches and beliefs of VET practitioners (based on Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, pp.38-39).

#### PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT

Exercising professional judgment is part of practice. Pro-Vice Chancellor Anne Jones from Victoria University, at the Reframing the Future 2005 Professional Judgment in VET Forums, and based on her research, noted that VET professionals when making judgments:

- Start with a base of vocational and educational knowledge
- Learn more on the job, especially through specific cases
- Incorporate publicly available knowledge with their personal practice
- Use tacit knowledge to read a situation
- Reflect on practice as a basis for making difficult judgment calls
- Make sound judgments based on experiences of similar cases
- Do the best they can.

Dr Jones concluded from her research that the assessment judgments of VET educators are complex, and are characterised by “preparedness, collegiality, working to rules, seriousness of purpose, dealing with predicaments and obligations and pragmatism”. (see her paper and other papers on professional judgment at <http://www.reframingthefuture.net>)

#### INNOVATION

Williams (1999, *Creativity, Invention and Innovation*) defines innovation as the implementation of new *and improved* knowledge, ideas, methods, processes, tools, equipment and machinery, which leads to new and better products, services, and processes (p.17; italics added).

Williams also points out that the word innovation is derived from the Latin *innovatio* (renewal or renovation), based on *novus* (new) as in novelty.

Note that innovation is about the implementation of not just new ideas and knowledge, but also of improved ideas and knowledge. (from Mitchell et al. 2003, *Emerging Futures*)

#### CATALYSTS

“Catalysts are elements or chemicals that can cause or accelerate reactions that do not, themselves, get used up.

They are, in this case, people who make things happen by their presence and by what they do. They don’t necessarily do everything themselves but they bring out the best in the rest of us. They connect the rest of us, and facilitate our interactions so that we all can do great things.” (Dr Gregg Vanderheiden, in his presentation of the first Catalyst Award to Dr Henry Murphy)