Marketization within education

An exploratory study of the effects of educational reforms on TAFE teachers

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The author would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the land on which The University of Sydney now stands, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

It is on their ancestral lands that this research was conceptualised, undertaken and written.

ABSTRACT

The continual reforms implemented in the vocational education and training sector over the past two decades have posed challenges for teachers in the sector. This thesis attempts to gain a broader understanding of the effects these reforms have had on teachers and their professional identity. A survey was completed by 79 TAFE teachers, and semi-structured interviews conducted with six additional teachers. Through this research process is was found that teachers felt reforms in TAFE had substantially altered the way they do their job, as well as how they conceive of their identity. This research has demonstrated the importance of understanding the opinions of teachers when considering educational reforms as well as utilising a theoretical framework that allows for the analysis of the underlying principles in education.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

The role of TAFE teachers in education is changing. Reforms focused on deregulation, restructuring, privatisation and marketization within education have altered the relationship between education and society (Shor 1986; Down 1994). While these changes have been implemented differently in different national contexts, similar reforms have happened globally in both oriental and occidental, socialist and capitalist countries of both the north and south (Taylor et al. 1997). Australia has gone further in its implementation of these marketization reforms than most other countries, particularly in its Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector (Wheelahan 2014a). Technical and Further Education (TAFE) is the public provider of vocational training and due to persistent reforms to the sector, TAFE as an organisation has been undergoing substantial change since the 1990s (Chappell 1999). The most recently proposed of these changes are the *Smart and Skilled* reforms set to be implemented in 2015. These reforms alter the public funding of the sector to be based on portable student entitlements that students can use in any public or private educational institution (a voucher by any other name). Based on this, and frequent reforms over the past two decades, TAFE teachers have been negotiating the effects of educational reforms for a sustained period of time.

The study of reform in education has typically tended to macro-scale, economic changes, rather than examining the perspective of those tasked with implementing the reforms. Focusing on teachers perspectives is important as their attitudes substantially impact the effectiveness of reforms (Smyth 1995). These educational reforms and the

discourse surrounding them have resulted in the professional identity of teachers being reconstructed. Teachers are not only experiencing policies and discourses that are changing the educational institutions they work for, these changes have challenged their understanding of their educational roles, privileged new pedagogic practices and altered teachers relationships with students and employers (Chappell 1999). Within the Australian context the lack of examination of how reforms effect teachers' work and worth has been a consistent theme in education literature since the 1990s (see, for example, O'Donaghue 1994 and Smyth 1995). Based on this, the current study aims to explore teachers' perspectives on changes and how they negotiate the effects of these changes. TAFE teachers will be the focus of the study due to the significant and ongoing reforms of vocational education and training (VET) over the past two decades. The study focused on two primary research questions:

- How do teachers view changes that are occurring in VET?
- How are these changes affecting the identities of teachers in the VET sector?

As this study is exploratory in nature a mixed-methods approach was utilised to both capture a broad range of views of teachers and provide depth to their perspectives on reforms. TAFE teachers participated in both semi-structured interviews and a larger-scale survey as part of the research.

The thesis is divided into five major sections that I shall now briefly outline.

Chapter 2 – Literature review

This chapter discusses the existing literature on recent educational reforms, both in Australia and internationally. The literature is primarily divided into academic commentaries of the issues and empirical studies, with little cross-over between these two types. Through a review of the current literature within the field, this chapter demonstrates that to date there has been little focus on the effect of educational reform on teachers and that there is a disconnect between the theory and data in the literature. It establishes the need for research which applies a conceptual framework to the issue of teachers' perspectives of reforms.

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This chapter will outline and examine the findings of both the semi-structured interviews and the surveys in regard to teachers' conception of how reforms have affected their professional identity. This chapter initially focuses on teachers' self-perception of their identity before examining how they perceive how other groups see them as a result of the reforms.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

The final chapter outlines conclusions of the research in the context of the wider research field. The results suggest that teachers have been substantial effected by the changes, resulting in changes in their professional identity. The chapter then outlines the limitations of the study and suggests potential areas of future study based on findings of the project.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The vocational education and training (VET) sector within Australia is undergoing rapid change. Due to this, the academic literature focusing on this area attempts to analyse these frequently changing policies. TAFE, as the primary VET provider, is also trying to keep up with the substantial reforms whilst maintaining its position within the sector. Reforms throughout the 2000s leading up to the current *Smart and Skilled*[1] proposals have caused TAFE to substantially alter its internal organizational goals and mean that TAFE employees are situated within a rapidly changing working environment. Analysing how teachers and their occupational identities change in times of governmental reform is a commonly examined topic on a global scale due to the far-sweeping public reforms that became popular in the 1980s and 1990s (Down 1994). However, within the Australian vocational sector this analysis is somewhat limited due to the prevalence of academics focusing on tertiary, rather than vocational, education. The small volume and fast change of the sector has resulted in a field of literature which while vibrant does tend to surface-level analysis of changes rather than examining underlying structures.

On a wider scale there is a substantial body of literature surrounding broader contemporary education reform and how teachers deal with these changes. Within this field of literature a number of terms are used to characterize changes and their effects.

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[1] These reforms are opening up the vocational education market to private providers by altering the public funding model to provide portable student entitlements that students can use at any public or private educational provider.

Firstly, Naidoo and Jamieson (2005) examine the impact of the rise of 'consumerism' within education policy and how it affects different levels of education. Consumerist reforms are defined as attempting to provide more choice for students, while changing the role of students to 'educational consumers' who need to be satisfied by educational institutions in order to ensure their continued patronage. Secondly, other papers characterize reforms in terms of the 'marketization' of educational benefits (eg. Kårhus 2012; Kwong 2000; Lim and Tan 1999). Marketization involves the creation of a 'quasi-market' within education with student choice of educational institutions being expanded and government funding being provided based on the students choice of institution. This encourages the adoption of business practices by educational institutions as they compete to attract students. Thirdly, contemporary educational reforms are sometimes characterised in terms of 'decentralisation' (eg. Mok 2003) as power over educational decisions is supposedly transferred from central educational departments to individual educational institutions. Lastly, educational changes are often classed by the aspects of New Public Manangement (NPM) they contain. A number of studies (eg. Hoggett 1996; O'Brien and Down 2002) focus on the aspects of performance management, monitoring and competition that make up NPM within education.

While a wide variety of terms are used to describe current reforms there is substantial crossover in the thrusts and goals of these various changes within education. Despite the differences in the terms used by different authors within the field there is a general consensus on the key issues surrounding these reforms. Ultimately, the literature suggests that the reforms act to create a system where education's purpose is more

utilitarian in aiming to improve the economic competitiveness of nations in a globalizing world, rather than valuing the intrinsic benefits of having a more educated society (Bartlett et al. 2002; Martin 2012; Robertson and Woock 1989; Wheelahan 2014b). These reforms are also suggested to have drastically altered the role of teachers by routinizing their role, resulting in disillusionment amongst them and causing society to value teachers less (Bartlett et al. 2002; Down 1994; Hoggett 1996; Martin 2012; O'Brien and Down 2002). These reforms have also been criticised for exacerbating existing inequalities within education by further limiting access (Haycock 2009; Lim and Tan 1999; Naidoo and Jamieson 2005; Smyth 1995). Finally, these educational changes have been suggested to result in diminishing the quality of education provided by both public and private educational institutions (Natale and Doran 2012; Naidoo, Shankar and Veer 2011; Smyth 1995). As such, while a range of contemporary educational changes may be characterized in a variety of ways within the literature, the similarities of their intended purposes and results suggests that they are all of a common type and can be grouped within this economic period as 'neoliberal' reforms within education. In a local context, TAFE has been affected by aspects of all these types of contemporary reforms in recent years and as such this study will examine and analyse the literature surrounding these reforms in a general context as well as when they have been specifically related to VET in Australia.

The literature on education policy change can be defined into two primary types: academic commentaries and critiques; and empirical studies of their effects. This acts as a neat point of division in the literature as due to the focus of each type, they often incorporate different methodological tools. Both forms of literature have their own

limitations in examining teachers' perceptions in times of reform such as undertheorization, a lack of deeper analysis and a misuse of data.

In examining the literature, this study will firstly focus on academic commentaries as these act to characterize contemporary reforms and will thus provide insight into the nature of these educational reforms. The commentaries are grouped by how the reforms are characterized: as marketization, as consumerism or as New Public Management (NPM). Secondly, this study will examine the various types of primary research done which examines teachers' attitudes towards reforms before finally looking at the cases where theoretical knowledge and empirical study have been effectively combined. Both the commentaries and empirical studies will initially examine the broader global context of reforms before focusing on the Australian context.

ACADEMIC COMMENTARIES

The academic commentaries are focused around describing and analysing reforms that have occurred in the educational sector. Many of these commentaries focus around changes which they characterize as 'marketization'. Natale and Doran (2011) provide a broad overview of the potential dangers of marketization for teacher's role in their commentary on educational policy changes. From a business ethics perspective they analyse the effects caused by these policy changes upon teachers. Their fundamental point, which is echoed by a large portion of the literature, is that the goals of public education contradict those of market economics which provides the basis of many contemporary education reforms (Natale and Doran 2011). Ultimately, the consensus in these commentaries is that the logic of profit inevitably subverts social justice

imperatives (Kenway, Bigum and Fitzclarence 1993). Furthermore, Natale and Doran (2011) expand upon this by arguing that the traditional egalitarian goals of education for the benefit of the collective fundamentally clash with the economic rationalist perspective of education as a commodity to be sold to individual consumers in a cost-effective manner. In particular they outline how the goals of social inclusion, the formation of an informed citizenry, the expansion of social mobility and the creation of a more socially just society are difficult to justify when profit-making is the ultimate goal. Other academics come to similar conclusions in other commentaries (Hood and Jackson 1991) and have proceeded to examine how this concept has affected teachers as academics "seek to maximise the attainment of mutually incompatible values" (Rosenbloom 1983: 219). While this argument has been made in a number of research papers (eg. Kenway, Bigum and Fitzclarence 1993; Natale and Doran 2011; Rosenbloom 1983) there is little actual research data to back up this clash of values due to these academic commentaries rarely utilizing empirical evidence from the field. This limits one's ability to accurately determine whether substantial changes have occurred in the education sector.

Another major type of reform identified by academic commentaries has been the encouragement of 'consumerism' within educational policies. Naidoo uses Bourdieu's 'field theory' to examine how consumerist mechanisms are integrated into education (Naidoo, Shankar and Veer 2011; Naidoo and Jamison 2005). Naidoo, Shankar and Veer (2011) further examined how one tenet of market economics, that increasing consumer choice increases efficiency, may be flawed when applied to education. In order for consumers to be empowered they need to be able to make an informed choice

which companies are compelled to respond to (Cova and Dalli 2009; Naidoo, Shankar and Veer 2011). Essential to a functioning market is free public knowledge of the products so consumers can make these informed choices (Bartlett et al. 2002). Most nations have stringent requirements for education institutions to publicly provide a wide array of information about their courses, while using league table to demonstrate the relative qualities of institutions (Naidoo and Jamieson 2005). However, the commentaries suggest there are a number of reasons why informed choice is more difficult in educational markets. For example, McCulloch (2009) argues that while a wide array of information is available to students, some studies have demonstrated students lack the tools to retrieve and process pertinent information and make informed choices. This is made more difficult by the variety and complexity of products in the educational marketplace (Naidoo and Jamieson 2005).

While Naidoo, Shankar and Veer (2011) make this argument in a convincing fashion, their research is based on theoretical logic, rather than research data. Empirical research is difficult here as the efficiency of an education sector before market intervention is difficult to measure. However, other research from the field of consumer choice supports this claim as other academics have questioned the logic of consumer choice due to its implication that all individuals are equally informed, politically connected and capable of securing the best education for themselves. Empirical research in a number of studies (Hemsley-Brown 1999; Reay et al. 2001) has demonstrated that a range of factors such as class, gender and ethnicity can have statistically significant impacts on this complex decision making process, resulting in increased racial and social stratification amongst other negative political and social effects. This substantive

empirical evidence combined with corresponding analytical commentary provided by other academics provides a strong argument as to the dangers of consumerism within education. Whether TAFE teachers have noticed an increase in the consumerist attitude of students in an Australian VET setting has not currently been examined. As such, my research will hope to analyse if teachers do feel that students see their role differently to provide empirical evidence of possible effects of consumerism within the VET sector.

The commentaries also raises a number of practical problems with the increasingly consumerist attitudes in education. As students have been encouraged to see themselves as consumers within the education market, they are likely to view learning as a form of commercial transaction (Naidoo and Jamieson 2005). Since customers are generally external to an organisation, students who internalize this consumer identity place themselves outside the academic community. Students can then conceive themselves as passive receivers of educational capital which abdicates their own responsibility for learning (Naidoo, Shankar and Veer 2011). This has said to have bred a culture of educational entitlement amongst students who perceive educational success as a right that they have purchased (Sacks 1996). These instrumental attitudes towards education are demonstrated in the increasing demand for short pre-packaged courses with little interest in the course content (Shumar 1997). It is argued that this decreases educational quality as for effective learning to occur students need to engage in experimentation through various modes of active leaning while educators need to adjust their teaching to the needs of individual learners (Naidoo, Shankar and Veer 2011). Examining whether TAFE teachers have noticed this distortion of student-teacher relations due to increasing consumerism will form part of my research.

The increase of social control within the public sector is a frequently covered topic within educational policy literature. The rise of New Public Management in education has resulted in a substantial amount of analysis surrounding the effectiveness, applicability and potential dangers of NPM in education. Academic commentary claims this can negatively impact teachers' relationships with students and cause additional stress and insecurity for teachers. For example, Hoggett's (1996) academic commentary on NPM evaluates a number of techniques that make up these new modes of control within the public sector. He argues that operational decentralization, increased competition between public sector units and increased performance management and monitoring result in increased teacher insecurity, the loss of the' public service ethic' and forces a wedge between the consciousness and practice of workers in the public sector. Hoggett argues that many of these policies appear to be based on naturalistic assumptions about teachers' motivations and what should work within education rather than being constructed as evidenced-based policy.

Other commentaries question whether changes in policy are felt by teachers within the classroom, due to failures in policy implementation. For example, Andrews and Van de Walle (2012) highlight this problem by pointing out that within policy analysis whether a reform has been implemented 'on the ground' is rarely questioned. This is a problem for academic commentary as well as government policy evaluation, as government documents often use deeply non-scientific methods of analysis which are published as supposedly rigorous and systematic 'evaluations' (Pollit and Dan 2011). Pollit and Dan (2011) suggest that this contrast between government evaluation and academic commentary is a major feature of the literature surrounding education policy and makes

it difficult to discern accurate evaluations of policy design, implementation and impact. Based on this concern, the current research will provide evidence of these policies being implemented within TAFE and explore how teachers feel these policies effect their working environment.

Australian Vocational Education reform

The literature focusing around the Australian vocational education field specifically is more limited than the global literature. Due to its role as the traditional major provider of vocational training, TAFE has been the focus of the bulk of this research. Much research has concentrated on the perception of TAFE as a promoter of social justice in Australian education, its changing relationship with government and industry, and the overall qualifications framework of vocational education in Australia (Klatt and Polesel 2013; Wheelahan 2009; Wheelahan 2011; Wheelahan 2014b). Within this literature there is an absence of empirical studies which explore the 'everyday' life of TAFE teachers to gain an understanding of the effects of change (Martin 2012). Primarily this body of literature examines how neoliberal education reform has been adopted in Australia under its particularly means-tested variant of the welfare state despite the strong union movement (Roberston and Woock 1989). One of the primary messages to come out of the literature on the Australian vocational education sector is the rapid change the sector is undergoing (Wheelahan 2014a; Kaye 2009). It has been argued (Klatt and Polesel 2013) that this is in part due to the unique nature of Australian federalism which causes different states to implement a wide range of different policies.

The current study will focus on TAFE as an organisation due its unusual position in this rapidly changing field. The VET field as a whole is more vulnerable to policy change as it lacks many aspects which allow tertiary education to maintain its autonomy from the influence of other fields, such as traditional cultural capital and the connection with social elites (Wheelahan 2014a). As such, TAFE is more likely to experience educational policy changes originating from external pressure (Naidoo and Jamieson 2005; Bernstein 1996). Due to this vulnerability to be 'acted upon' by government and other powerful groups, educational policy changes are traditionally implemented in TAFE before being expanded to other sectors. This makes TAFE a useful organisation to study as it has experienced frequent changes due to it being used as a testing ground for educational policy. Therefore, teachers within TAFE occupy a good position to comment on the effects of frequent educational policy changes.

The literature addressing the traditional pedagogy of TAFE focuses on two major streams of adult educational theory which combine to form the dominant theoretical context of TAFE. These two key influences are Malcolm Knowles' (1990) concept of 'andragogy' and American pragmatism. Andragogy focuses on adults' ability to be goal-oriented, self-directed workers and has been implicitly institutionalized within TAFE through national frameworks and training packages (Knowles 1990). Andragogy outlines the differences between adult and child education and how these differences need to be respected in adult-learning processes. American pragmatism within education began with John Dewey and developed into two main streams of thought: experiential learning and symbolic interactionism. Experiential learning has been most closely associated with David Kolb and it defines learning as a mechanism by which

individuals structure reality in terms of an experiential process (Haycock 2009). Learning is viewed more as a process rather than in terms of outcomes, with the focus on individual's transformation of the ideas they receive (Finger and Asun 2001).Within the academic commentaries it is argued that these ideas inform the opinions and teaching styles of TAFE teachers, with some authors suggesting teachers structure their role through these frames of thought (Haycock 2009). Many of these ideas, such as learning as a process and learners having different qualities which necessitate different teaching styles, fundamentally clash with aspects of consumerist and market-based ideology promoted by neoliberal reforms. In terms of examining change in TAFE it is important to grasp the theoretical context as these values have been imprinted on the teachers and can help to explain teachers' dissatisfaction with contemporary reforms.

There is substantial academic commentary analysing the effects of marketization in the context of Australian vocational education. Wheelahan (2014a) and Kaye (2009) argue that increased cost-cutting, which is synonymous with a market-led environment, leads to a 'race to the bottom' as institutions ignore educational and social justice objectives in order to produce low-cost, low-involvement courses which are highly profitable. In the long-term this type of behaviour by unscrupulous providers harms the profitability of both public and private providers in Australia's education industry as when "dodgy cooking and hairdressing schools collapse, the reputation of respected VET and higher education providers also suffered" (Wheelahan 2014a). This can have internationally damaging consequences due the harm it can cause 'brand Australia' as an educational destination amongst overseas students (Wheelahan 2011). While these commentaries provide solid analysis of some of the dangers of marketization and how this process can

affect the vocational education field, they share the weakness of a lack of empirical data to determine if these problems are actually occurring within the system.

Summary on commentaries

The academic commentaries provide a useful overview of educational changes that are occurring in a variety of nations. They make connections between these changes and attempt to evaluate their effectiveness. This provides useful context for the changes that are currently taking place in TAFE. However, these commentaries tend to be undertheorized - many use theory as an overlay to relate specific educational changes to other different but similar changes rather than using it to examine the underlying effects to the educational sector. Additionally, the commentaries tend to not allow the views of those actually involved in teaching to be heard, which substantiates the claims made by teachers that those commenting on education are often at a distance from the actual education itself (Martin 2012). Teachers' viewpoints of changes add a unique perspective to the research as they act to implement the changes and see the effects of them.

Due to the frequent changes in education policy, much of the commentary surrounding vocational education reform in Australia appears to be focused on shaping the current debate rather than academically analysing it (eg. Kaye 2009; Wheelahan 2014b). This form of journalistic description is useful for raising issues for debate and generating interesting data about the current state of vocational education in Australia. However, it is less useful for examining the nature of changes in the education system. Description can make everything similar or everything different. To examine whether and what

kinds of change are taking place requires analysis of the organising principles underlying practices, to reveal similarity, difference and change beneath surface empirical features. Such analysis is largely absent from what I have termed 'academic commentaries' on TAFE. Moreover, they are also open to criticisms of cherry-picking data to suit their arguments. Commentaries are not based on the systematic collection and analysis of empirical data but rather bring in data, when it is used at all, to underpin arguments.

EMPIRICAL STUDIES

There has been a wide variety of empirical research centred on teachers' role in education. These studies have been prevalent since the first major wave of neoliberal education reforms in the 1980s which began to change the focus of the education, from the industry level down to in-classroom learning. However, there is a lack of exploration of how actors within education engage with and respond to reforms. There are two major types of empirical studies of education policy reform. The first comprise qualitative methods which have generally been preferred in the sociological community due to their ability to access in depth the thoughts, feelings and attitudes of teachers. Educators within a number of these studies comment that they appreciate unstructured interviews as it allows them to describe the complexity of the issues (eg. Kårhus 2012; O'Brien and Down 2002). The second compprises large-scale quantitative studies focusing on teacher attitudes, behaviours and values. These normally take the form of surveys, performance evaluations or employee-feedback forms. Generally this method of research has been used by in-government agencies as a tool for policy evaluation and policy development. As such, this section of the chapter will initially outline the

qualitative sociological works which have focused on teachers in times of reform, followed by examining the few quantitative sociological studies.

Much of the literature which has focused teachers' opinions on educational reforms has demonstrated that they are often unsatisfied with the changes (O'Brien and Down 2002; Smyth 1995). In order to gather teachers' perceptions on educational issues, qualitative research has been used to gain a deep insight into the problems affecting teachers (Dadds 1995; O'Brien and Down 2002; Smyth 1995). Teacher story research is a methodology for examining education which provides insight into the world of those actually engaged in educating replete with the language, values, prejudices and perceptions teachers have about their work (Goodson 1992). This method allows teachers to express opinions on educational policy while also providing a pathway via which they can contribute to policy decisions. This is important as traditionally consultation with teachers has been non-existent or tokenistic resulting in teachers feeling as they have been pushed to the margins when it comes to reforms (Smyth 1995: 194). This method has been regularly used in an Australian educational setting (Dadds 1995; Smyth 1995).

O'Brien and Down (2002) provide a good example of how to utilise this framework to examine education policy reform. This study began with initial exploratory research involving extensive participant observations, purposeful conversations and embedded interviews. The second phase of the study involved multiple, in-depth unstructured interviews with six experienced teachers. From these interviews a series of emergent themes or inventories of meaning were identified which were discussed in the paper.

This qualitative methodology allowed the interviewers to gain a deep understanding of the issues which were affecting teachers while also incorporating reciprocity in the research process as interviewees were able to guide the direction of the research. The study concluded that teachers were sceptical of a number of aspects of new managerialism as they perceived the changes as having hidden political agendas which were at odds with pedagogical values. Due to the top-down implementation, the changes were seen to lack pedagogical legitimacy which caused teachers to feel professionally threatened and lowered their morale. While the sample size was small and all from the same institution, some of the themes raised by the interviews could be triangulated with the results from other qualitative and quantitative studies in which similar issues were raised (eg. Andrews and Van de Walle 2012; Bartlett et al. 2002). This increases the ability of the results to be generalized. In particular the problems of top-down implementation and the clash between reforms and traditional educational values were common across educational literature. Teacher story research has been criticised for being insufficiently rigorous, its data collection small scale and its outcomes potentially biased (Tooley and Darby 1998).

Within this field a substantial amount of the literature is focused on describing the views and attitudes of teachers. Martin's (2012) study provides a good example of this type of literature as it utilises a larger sample size (n= 55) with less in-depth interviews in order to generate a wider conception of teachers' opinions. The larger sample size allowed Martin to conclude that there was no statistically significant difference in TAFE teachers' attitudes from colleges located in different geographical areas, between teachers working in different industry areas, or those using different teaching methods.

However, there was substantial variation in teacher perceptions based on years of experience. The current study will utilize Martin's (2012) conclusions, particularly whether length of experience impacts teachers' perspectives on reforms or professional identity.

The main conclusions of Martin's (2002) research focus on the insecurities and attitudes of teachers. The study highlights teachers' insecurities surrounding computer skills and the ability to teach non-industry-specific skills such as communication, critical thinking and problem solving (Martin 2012). They also expressed concerns that the cutting of public service budgets due to contemporary reforms had resulted in the quality of equipment used in TAFE becoming sub-standard as compared to that used in industry, which harmed the skills-development of TAFE students (Martin 2012). Additionally, teachers expressed dissatisfaction with managements' approaches to reforms and the lack of recognition for the work of teachers when reforms are planned and undertaken (Martin 2012).

The study concluded that policy implementation is difficult across TAFE due to teachers' unwillingness to implement reforms which they see as anti-educational. This process is facilitated by the relative autonomy of TAFE teachers' within the classroom (Martin 2012). However, there is little examination into how economically-focused reforms alter the professional identities of TAFE teachers and whether these reforms effect how they teach their course content. Martin's (2012) research demonstrates one of the major limitations of the field in that it lacks analysis of practices and beliefs in education in terms of their underlying, organising principles.

An alternative approach to add empirical weight to research in education has been the use of policy document analysis as a tool in primary research. Smyth (1995) utilised this methodology when examining the changing context and self-value of teachers in Australia. Smyth examined ministerial papers, policy documents and institutional guidelines from different states to compare and contrast the changes within each. From this he reached conclusions about the general nature of trends within Australian education and provided a critical analysis of this re-structuring and the implications it may have for teachers' work. This is then compared to similar research conducted overseas. Smyth concludes that these neoliberal-inspired reforms have followed familiar patterns between countries and fundamentally damaged the relationship between teachers and students. Unlike other empirical research papers, a key strength of using policy document analysis is that it allows a standardized comparison of different educational settings, in spite of its lack of a theoretical framework. However, the lack of a theoretical framework makes it difficult to extrapolate and expand upon the findings of the study to garner further knowledge.

Kårhus (2012) and Bartlett et al. (2002) use primarily qualitative methods to examine policy documents and interview employees of different institutions within the same educational field. Through comparing the discourse and policy of different institutions, these papers support the popular theoretical notion that neoliberal education reforms affect different institutions to different extents (Bartlett et al. 2002; Naidoo 2004). In particular, they both concluded that marketization reforms disproportionately affect under-resourced institutions who serve low socio-economic background or disadvantaged groups. Kårhus (2012) uses Bernstein's (1996) concepts to examine how

structural and ideological changes within institutions recontextualise pedagogical discourse in local configurations. This change can be seen in the different language, themes and discourses used by teachers and managers. Kårhus's (2012) paper concludes that the focus on profitability and efficiency has created a system where other goals are considered secondary, and as such has legitimated disinterest in 'good teaching'. This can result in teachers who focus on providing high quality education feeling isolated from their place of work. The changes to curriculum content and officially endorsed pedagogy can result in teachers feeling uninspired and having little ownership over their work (Smyth 1995). Bartlett et al. (2002) extended this holistic approach by conducting additional interviews with elites from the local communities of the institutions in order to understand the specific political and economic context. This demonstrated that local communities substantially alter the policy implementation and educational discourses used by institutions.

Quantitative approaches

Quantitative approaches have also been used to examine teacher and public perception. Verhoeven et al. (2006) applied quantitative surveys to determine changing public perceptions towards teachers and educational institutions. The survey had a large sample size of almost 1000 respondents. A major strength of large scale quantitative surveys is the ability to accurately reflect the views of large populations in a statistically significant manner. The standardization of surveys allows easy comparisons of values and attitudes both over time and between groups. In this case, the survey suggested that communities' level of support for teachers had remained consistently high, which goes against the popular narrative (Skolverket 2003) and the general perceptions of teachers

shown other studies (Smyth 1995). They concluded that teachers feel their work is becoming increasingly deprofessionalized under neoliberalism as the execution of teaching is broken down into separate, measureable parts that de-skills the individual (Geisbers and Bergen 1990: Verhoeven et al. 2006). This process is enhanced by the more utilitarian, individualistic perspective advocated by neoliberal economics as, from this perspective, teachers are seen as outside of society's mainstream values due to the many intangible benefits of education (Verhoeven et al. 2006). Additionally, there is evidence that the public perception of teachers affects the performance of individual teachers and educational institutions as a whole (Thomas 2005). Whether these effects are similarly felt by teachers within VET, which has an educative climate more naturally focused on economic motives and job-related skills, is currently unexamined. Andrews and Van de Walle (2012) used a similarly large scale study of over 1000 respondents from the United Kingdom to examine public perception of government efficiency in the period after NPM reforms. They reported that the introduction of NPM strategies generally led to decreased citizen perceptions of efficiency, responsiveness, equity and effectiveness. This data on citizen perception can be combined with information of teacher perception to gain a more complete picture of whole communities' perspectives on changes.

Summary of empirical studies

The empirical studies into educational reforms raised important educational issues and provided insights into the breadth, depth and rapidity of educational reforms. Additionally, they provide opportunities for teachers to comment on policy changes. However, in terms of analysing these changes the value of these studies is limited. The

empirical studies are generally undertheorized and descriptive rather than examining the organizing principles underlying the practices and beliefs which are central to the vocational education field. It is only through examining these organizing principles that one can determine if substantial change has occurred in the field. To overcome this problem, this study will draw on Legitimation Code Theory to explore the organizing principles of the field (see Chapter 3). An additional issue is that most approaches to examining educational change were either context-dependant or freely floating, severing theory from data and practice which has resulted in studies struggling to inform or build on each other. The detailed, contextual description comes at the cost of thin explanation and knowledge that is segmentally locked in the specifics of their study

CONCLUSION

The literature examining teachers in times of reform covers a wide array of opinions and perspectives while using a number of different methodological tools. Both academic commentaries and empirical research offer good insights into the attitudes of teachers at both the micro and macro scale. However, for the purpose of this research both types of literature have limitations in that they are often undertheorized, overly descriptive and locked in specific cases. As such the current study will utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore teachers' attitudes and identity in times of reform. This data will then be analysed utilizing Maton's (2005) adaptation of Bourdieu's field theory framework, which will be outlines in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research process used by this study in order to gain a picture of teachers' perspectives of how reforms have changed the field of vocational education. The previous chapter outlined limitations in the literature examining teachers in times of reform, particularly, the underevidenced basis of commentaries, and a lack of theoretical frameworks for analysing data in empirical studies. This chapter outlines how the current research will both provide empirical evidence and enact a theoretical framework for analysing data. The central question of the research is: how have educational reforms impacted vocational education teachers in Australia? This can be broken down into two sub-questions:

- How do teachers view changes occurring in VET?

- How are these changes affecting the identities of teachers in the VET sector?

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first expounds upon the central research question and sets forth the object of study. The second presents the theoretical framework used to interpret and examine the object of study. The third describes the methodological approaches employed to gather data for the study while also outlining ethical considerations.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

As outlined in chapter 2, in order to effectively study teachers' perceptions of policy change a theoretical framework is needed that fulfils a number of criteria. Firstly, it needs to be able to be enacted in empirical research to provide substantive findings. Secondly, the framework needs to enable the study to go beyond surface level description of changes teachers perceive by examining the organising principles underlying practices in the field and whether these rubrics have been fundamentally changed. In order to achieve this, the current study will draw on concepts from Legitimation Code Theory (Maton 2014).

Legitimation Code Theory (henceforth LCT) developed from extending and integrating insights from the 'field theory' of Pierre Bourdieu and the 'codes theory' of Basil Bernstein to create a conceptual toolkit for researching and changing practice. Bourdieu's field theory proposes that society can be divided into multiple fields, for example the economic, religious or political fields (Azaola 2012). A field is a relatively autonomous network of relations that follow logics that are specific to that field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Agents within the field are structured hierarchically and compete with each other in order to dominate others and increase their influence on the field (Pryor 2005). Maton (2014) developed LCT from this concept to provide tools for analysing the organizing principles underlying practice and their effect on social fields.

LCT comprises a multi-dimensional conceptual toolkit, where each dimension offers concepts for examining different organising principles underlying practices, perceptions and beliefs of actors, as *legitimation codes*. The legitimation codes represent the 'rules of the game' (Bourdieu 1990) for a particular field. Within any context a specific code may dominate as the (unwritten) rules of the game, but not everyone within the field may recognize this, resulting in struggles over which codes is dominant. One can thus talk about a 'code clash' between the code characterising an actor's ways of thinking and being (or in Bourdieu's terms their 'habitus') and that defining achievement within a field (Lamont and Maton 2008). These competing measures of legitimacy may lead to difficulties for the individual as well as feelings of alienation (Chen et al. 2011).

As a conceptual framework LCT is proving useful to a range of studies looking at a variety of issues in education (e.g. Doherty 2008; Hood 2007). Additionally, use of it has spread to a wide variety of disciplines and areas within education such as science teaching (Georgiou et al. 2014), engineering (Wolff and Hoffman 2014) and journalism (Kilpert and Shay 2013). The framework has also been implemented using a quantitative approaches (Howard and Maton 2011), qualitative methods (Chen et al. 2011) and mixed methods (Howard 2012). This use across a variety of educational levels (primary, secondary and university) suggests exploring the VET sector is within its capabilities. LCT has been particularly productive in analysing fields undergoing periods of change and the perceptions and experiences of those involved in these changes (e.g. McNamara 2010, Stavrou 2009). As such, LCT appears well suited to the current study. As mixed methods have successfully utilised this framework in the past, the current research will utilise both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

There are currently five dimensions to LCT which can be used to analyse these organising principles, each centred on conceptualising a different form of code (Maton 2014). Specialisation and Semantics have been the most widely utilised in a range of studies (Hood 2010; Matruglio et al. 2013). However, Autonomy is now being enacted in ongoing studies of secondary schooling in Australia and professional education in South Africa (see www.legitimationcodetheory.com). The current study will utilise 'autonomy codes' due to its applicability to fields undergoing change from without that is said to be affecting its relations to external fields. This concept provides a useful perspective in examining the influences of other fields on the educational sector which provide the context for which the reforms within education are taking place. This is particularly useful in the VET sector as its Janus-faced nature of being oriented towards both educational and economic goals can be examined and interpreted (Maton 2014).

The Issue of Autonomy

The LCT notion of 'autonomy codes' extends concepts from Bourdieu's field theory (Maton 2005). Bourdieu, following Durkheim (2014) posited that society is structured into a number of relatively autonomous social fields of practice (such as the economic, educational, media etc.). . These fields are relatively autonomous from each other, in that they are not isolated from external principles but they are also not reducible to other fields (Bourdieu 1990). Building on this Bourdieu (1996) suggests that the 'rules of the game' of a specific field are influenced by both forces internal to the field ('autonomous principles') and by influences from outside of the field ('heteronomous principles'). As such, the tension between these two sets of principles acts to structure the field.

Bourdieu (1996) suggested that by looking at the relative influence of each of these types of principles one could determine the level of autonomy of a specific field.

Autonomy codes

LCT develops this notion by distinguishing two aspects to autonomy: *positional autonomy* and *relational autonomy*. These concepts each trace a continuum of strengths of autonomy from stronger (+) to weaker (−). *Positional autonomy* (PA) refers to where actors are located. Where actors originate from within the field, then positional autonomy is stronger (PA+); where actors are from other social fields of practice, then positional autonomy is weaker (PA−). *Relational autonomy* (RA) refers to where the 'rules of the game', logics or ways of working are located. Where actors draw on principles that are specific to the field in question, then relational autonomy is stronger (RA+); where actors draw on principles or practices from other fields, then relational autonomy is weaker (RA−). Varying the two components of autonomy independently generates four principal modalities or 'autonomy codes' (PA+/−, RA+/−) that can be represented as the Cartesian plane of Figure 1. This highlights that the organizing principles of a field (or context) may be shaped by different strengths of insulation with other fields in terms of who occupies positions and whose principles are used.

Figure 3.1: Modalities of autonomy
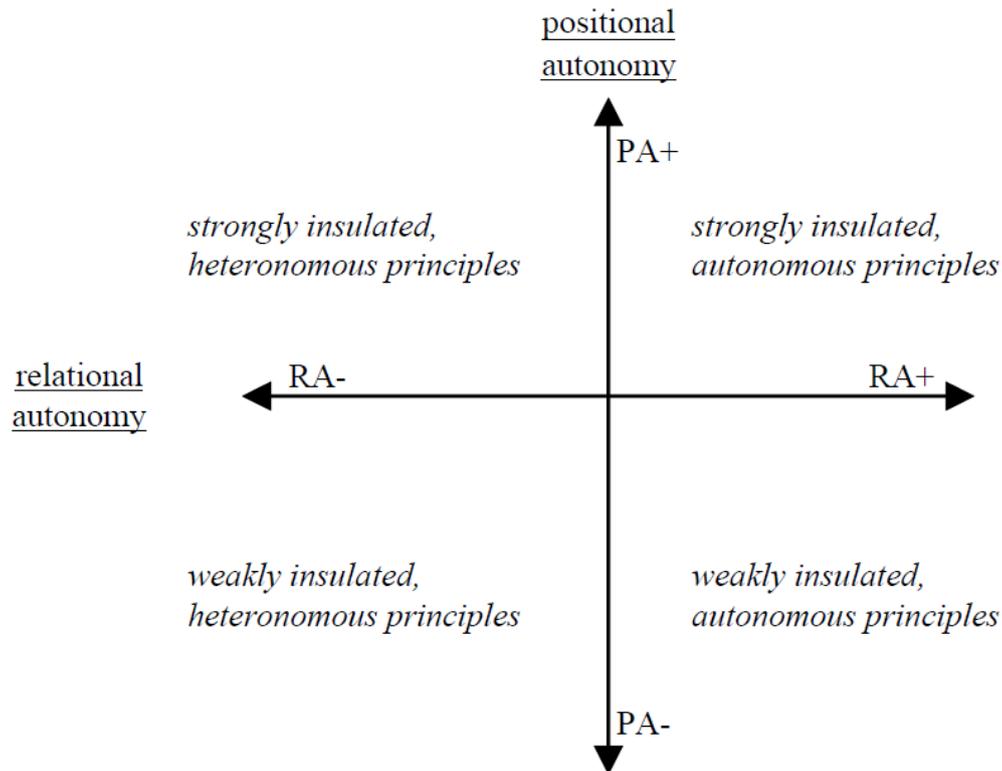
Bourdieu's original concepts offer two modalities of autonomy, which set out the
heteronomous and autonomous poles of the field. In the LCT development of his
concepts, the autonomous pole corresponds to the autonomy code PA+, RA+: situations
where actors from within the field are operating along lines specific to that field, and the
heteronomous pole corresponds to the autonomy code PA−, RA−, where actors from
beyond the field are drawing on principles from other fields.

These two autonomy codes traditionally characterized, for example, higher education:
elite universities were run by the professoriate according to liberal humanist ideas of
'knowledge for knowledge's sake' (PA+, RA+), while lower status colleges were
typically weakly insulated from external governance and oriented towards vocational

needs (PA−, RA−). In addition, the LCT development highlights two additional codes: where institutions governed by agents from industry or politics are run purely on academic lines (PA−, RA+); and institutions run by educators on economic and vocational principles (PA+, RA−). The first is perhaps unlikely or at best uncommon; the second, however, is highly relevant to this study (and to understanding recent developments in post-compulsory education more generally). Budgetary restrictions are encouraging institutions to become more economically focused while still administered by actors from within the field. The division of autonomy into two aspects is particularly useful for describing and examining educational changes and reforms as it allows the detection of shifts in the individual components of autonomy. In terms of the questions raised by the current research, this framework is useful as changes in either relational or positional autonomy can have different effects upon teachers and can help to explain changes in their identity.

The issues raised by autonomy codes were embedded in the data collection instruments and helped to guide the focus of the questions. Examining changes in the vocational education sector through the focus of autonomy codes sensitizes the research to the particular issues teachers face in relation to the internal and external factors that impact their teaching. Rather than simply examining the changes that had occurred in TAFE, this focused the questions on the balance between internal and external influence in the vocational education sector. This led to a number of questions from both the interviews and surveys drawing on positional autonomy as their guide (See appendix 1 and 2 for full question list), for example:

- Do most of the management within TAFE come from within the educational field?

- Have the motivations of TAFE management changed?

Additionally, a number of questions were developed to specifically examine relational autonomy, for example:

- Where do you think the reforms in TAFE originate from?
- When political policy-makers design reforms that effect TAFE, how do you feel they primarily view your role?

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This section outlines the methodologies adopted in the study. It outlines the benefits to the current research of using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies before demonstrating additional benefits of enacting both methods together.

The mixed methodology was chosen in order to fully explore teachers' opinions on reforms. Teachers were the focus of the research for a number of reasons. Firstly, teachers are substantially affected by reforms and offer interesting insights into reforms. This avenue of study has been explored within the vocational education sector by Chappell (1999; 2001) who examined the effect that policy changes can have on VET practitioners' sense of identity at work. TAFE teachers in particular are a profitable group to study due to the large impact policy changes have had on them; gradually shifting them from 'TAFE teachers' to 'VET practitioners' (Clayton, Fisher and Hughes 2005; Coffield 2008). Secondly, it is beneficial for teachers to participate in studies on reforms as it provides them with an outlet for them to voice their opinions and concerns about policy changes. As Shacklock (1995) outlines this form of research creates a space in the discourse where teachers' voices have legitimacy and can be heard in their

complexity. This is particularly important as teachers in Australia have suggested that they do not feel as if there is adequate communication with regard to reforms and that teachers' unwillingness to embrace changes is reflective of this lack of communication (O'Brien and Down 2002; Smyth 1995; Woods et al. 1997). Finally, teachers have interesting perspectives on reforms as they interact with both students and management. By being in communication with both the implementers of change and those the changes are targeted at they are given an insight into the goals of the changes and how well they are achieved in reality. Based on these reasons for studying teachers, qualitative methods proved useful for them to explain the complexity of the concerns, while quantitative methods allowed the views of a wide range of teachers to be heard.

Quantitative Methodologies

Quantitative methods have been used within sociology as they allow researchers to generate "hard, generalizable" (Siebler 1973) data which can be applied to larger populations. This has been particularly effective in determining the attitudes and opinions of population groups, which is frequently useful in the education sector (Romanowski et al. 2013). For the current study, quantitative methods can provide a wider perspective on the issues at hand than those provided by qualitative methods. The ease of administering large-scale surveys allowed a greater number of teachers to have their input on the results and thus contribute to educational discourse – which was one of the founding goals of the research. Another strength of quantitative methods is that the focus on standardized procedures means that the studies are highly repeatable which allows comparisons both between groups and over time. Traditional quantitative methods also have the benefit of strong political currency and perceived legitimacy

(Jayaratne and Stewart 1992: 100). This has meant that historically quantitative studies have been more effective in altering political opinions and have had larger policy implications (Jayaratne and Stewart 1992). For my research into TAFE, using quantitative methods increases its ability and likelihood to have practical applications due to this perceived legitimacy.

Qualitative Methodologies

Qualitative methodologies have become increasingly popular in educational studies in recent years (Haycock 2009; Martin 2012; O'Brien and Down 2002). The major strength of qualitative methodologies is their ability to provide depth to analysis. Rather than through statistical significance, qualitative data gains its influence from the persuasive power of real world narratives and events. The ability to gain a deeper understanding of issues is particularly useful in the current study for examining teachers' conceptions of their changing identity as well as exploring the intricacies of teacher's relationships to TAFE management, students and colleagues. This methodology has been popular in research focused around teachers as it provides insight into the world of those actually engaged in educating replete with the language, values, prejudices and perceptions teachers have about their work (Goodson 1992). Quantitative research can suffer from the restrictive nature of its questions limiting the potential discussion areas to those deemed important by the researcher (Sarantakos 2005). Comparatively, qualitative methods benefit from being less prescriptive than quantitative methodologies, which allows teachers to raise issues which are important to them throughout the research process.

Within the current study this methodology allows teachers to identify and address issues that concern them and thus allows unexpected themes to be discovered in the course of the research (Seale 2005). In particular, unstructured interviews form a flexible medium that allows interviewees to speak in their own voice, and is thus useful for exploring the voices and experiences of those who the researcher feels have been ignored (Seale 2005). This is a particularly useful tool when examining teachers as their ability to voice concerns about policies within the educational sphere is limited due to the potential occupational ramifications. The interviews were directed at obtaining data about teachers' demographics and experiences of reforms; as Sade-Beck (2004) suggests, this kind of subjective and individualistic data can often only be obtained by talking to those actively involved. This form of interpretive research provided insight into how teachers "make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam 1998: 6).

Mixed methodologies

While mixed methods approaches take a variety of forms (De Lisle 2011), they have increased in popularity in recent years. Mixed methods are useful when confronted by a complex and multiplex social phenomena that is not easily amenable to single frame probing, with the messiness of complexity demanding multiple investigative tools (Greene 2007). By using multiple, complementary and flexible methods this form of study can capture various perspectives resulting in a more holistic and accurate understanding of the phenomena under study (Ponterotto, Mathew and Raughly 2013). Due to being able to provide multiple, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives on an issue mixed methodologies have frequently been utilised in educational research

(Creswell and Garrett 2008). An additional benefit of mixed methods studies is their ability to utilise triangulation and convergence to increase the accuracy of findings. Triangulation generally refers to the use of mixed methods to collect some overlapping data (Patton 2002). When these different methods result in similar or converging conclusions greater confidence can be placed in the evaluation's overall findings (Yin 2013). As both the qualitative and quantiatitve aspects of the current study cover similar areas the triangulation of results can be used to increases confidence in the findings. This form of triangulation, as a form of "methodological polytheism" espoused by Bourdieu (1996), has been demonstrated as an effective research tool in a variety of studies (Pearce 2012). Finally, adding quantitative elements to a study can bolster the impact of small sample qualitative findings by documenting the 'representativeness' of oppressive conditions in larger representative samples thereby increasing the transferability and generalizability of the results (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2004; Ponterotto, Mathew and Raughly 2013).

METHODS

Within the current study two clear methods were enacted in this mixed methods approach.

1. Quantitative online surveys
2. Semi-structured participant interviews

Due to the time constraints of the project created by a protracted process of negotiating access to survey participants, both sets of data were collected concurrently and both phases of research were designed to reach complementary data.

Quantitative online surveys

The surveys were developed over time through consultation with LCT educational researchers (my supervisor, A/Professor Karl Maton and Dr Sarah Howard of the University of Wollongong) and former TAFE teachers known to me. A pilot study was undertaken to hone the questions to accurately target the study's areas of interest. A number of TAFE institutes were contacted with regard to being in the survey with three of these institutes agreeing to distribute surveys to their teachers. 'Institutes' within TAFE NSW are large groups of campuses spread over substantial geographical areas. As each institute runs a wide range of courses, teachers from a variety of faculties within TAFE completed the survey. Participants from both metropolitan and regional TAFE institutes took part in the research. The option to participate in the survey was distributed via email to teachers from three different institutes (Sydney, New England and Riverina). Upon receiving the email the participants self-selected to be part of the survey as participation was voluntary. This resulted in a total of 79 respondents with, 35 coming from metropolitan institutes and 44 from regional institutes. As the survey was distributed officially through TAFE I needed to ensure my questions were appropriate and acceptable for the TAFE institutes to distribute internally. This phase of the research posed a challenge. The considerable public debate stimulated by the forthcoming *Smart and Skilled* reforms has created a highly charged political atmosphere around TAFE, such that actors in positions of institutional governance may be more than usually wary of research into the experiences and beliefs of their teaching staff.

For TAFE to participate in distributing the survey to teachers I had to carefully negotiate any concerns raised by TAFE administrators. In particular, administrators expressed concerns that I might be comparing teacher attitudes between institutions, publishing data specific to faculties within TAFE or publishing politically sensitive data that the mainstream media might sensationalize. The survey questions, therefore, had to be sensitive to the current context, one in which TAFE is receiving significant negative media attention. As such, every attempt was made to ensure survey questions were not *explicitly* soliciting negative responses or mentioning any specific reforms while at the same time maintaining the integrity in relation to the research questions of the study.

Furthermore, there were additional practical issues to negotiate concerning the implementation of the survey itself. Using an online survey ([www.surveymonkey.com)](www.surveymonkey.com), made it easier to reach a larger number of teachers spread over a greater area than a paper version. However, such a format opened the possibility of the survey being confused with the kind of job-satisfaction surveys that have become increasingly popular in the public sector. This was discovered in the pilot study for this project as a participant suggested that the continuous use of Likert scales reminded him of job-satisfaction surveys. This was potentially problematic as if participants thought it was a job satisfaction surveys they may have been more politically sensitive in their answers. I thus minimized the use of Likert scales in the study due to their common usage in job satisfaction surveys.

There were two primary areas the surveys focused on: changes within TAFE experienced by the teachers and teachers conceptions of identity. As outlined above, the

autonomy codes of LCT were used as a lens for analysis when designing the questions by sensitizing the research to issues within the VET field. This resulted in the questions being increasingly focused on teachers identifying where they saw the changes originating from and whether the changes reflected the values in education changing (see Appendices 1 and 2 for full question list).

The survey was designed to elicit relatively straightforward answers, while the interviews aimed to gather more detailed responses. Teachers' perceptions of the major changes in TAFE provide an insight into the changing landscape of TAFE while also providing evidence of whether policy changes are actually having on-the-ground effects on teachers. The focus on teachers' conceptions of their own professional identity as well as their conception of how other groups perceive them will illustrate both how they view their position in the field of teaching as well as how other groups are impacting vocational education. This data will provide insight into teachers' attitudes towards reform and how they see these reforms changing their role as teachers.

Teachers were asked about a number of aspects of change within education, and whether they had felt the impact of those changes within TAFE as a whole and their teaching in particular. The questions focused around some of the key issues experienced in other educational areas in order to test whether they were present within TAFE. The issues which other research has raised that they were specifically asked about included marketization (e.g. Mok 2003; Lim and Tan 1999), increasing consumerism amongst students (e.g. Naidoo, Shanker and Veer 2011) and decreasing teacher autonomy (e.g. O'Brien and Down 2002). Alternatively the questions which focused around teachers'

conceptions of identity were aimed at revealing TAFE teachers beliefs about how they see themselves, and additionally how they perceive other groups see them. Other research has suggested that contemporary education reforms have altered society's perception of teachers and that teachers are distinctly aware of this shift in perspective (Verhoeven et al. 2006). A number of questions from the interviews and surveys specifically explored issues discussed in the literature (for a question list see Appendices 1 and 2), for example:

- Do you think you have more control over your teaching?
- Have the motivations or expectations of your students changed?
- Is there a tension between economic goals and educational goals in TAFE?

Semi-structured participant interviews

In total five semi-structured interviews were conducted with TAFE teachers from Sydney Institute. The teachers were recruited from five different faculties within TAFE, with one participant from each of visual merchandising, hospitality, allied health, nursing, and veterinary science participating. The teachers had been employed by TAFE for between 6 to 34 years. By coincidence, all the interviewees were female although this reflects the workforce in which females make up the majority of TAFE teachers (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012). Pseudonyms (Kate, Alice, Sophia, Rebecca and Susan) are used for interviewees to maintain anonymity while allowing quotes from interviews to be attributed to specific people. Recruitment for the interviews was initially planned via a survey (see above) what would include an option to volunteer. However, the length of TAFE's approval process meant it was necessary for the interviews and surveys to run concurrently. Accordingly, snowball sampling was used, beginning from contacts already known to the author.

The semi-structured interviews aimed at exploring the norms, values, discourse and ways of interacting that were distinct to vocational education in Australia. The interviews were focused on teachers' perspectives of reforms, both those in the past and those upcoming as part of the *Smart and Skilled* changes. In particular they examined who they perceived to be driving reforms and whether economic logics were becoming more persuasive in education. As such, the primary focus of the interviews was not to characterize the educational contexts of TAFE but rather to explore teachers' experiences of this context. Interview questions were open-ended and participants were encouraged to mention anything they found interesting or related (as suggested by Fontana and Frey 2005). This has the additional benefit of giving the subject greater control over the direction of their responses and enabling more space for new findings emerging from the data (Flick 2006). This was particularly significant for the current study: I have extensive second-hand knowledge of TAFE through my parents who worked as both Teachers and later managers within TAFE, which offers useful insights but is not identical with the primary experience of participants. An audio recording device was used to ensure that all useful information was collected and to allow subsequent analysis. The interviews were conducted in the offices of teachers on their TAFE campuses, to maximise their comfort during the interview and to make the atmosphere less formal than using interview rooms on the university campus. Additionally, other studies (Martin 2012) have suggested that length of tenure was the only demographic category that showed statistical correlation with attitudes towards teaching. Based on this there was no experience criteria for participation in the study in order to ensure that a wide variety of viewpoints are included in the results.

Furthermore, during the snowballing process of identifying candidates to interview a concerted effort was made to interview both novice and long-standing teachers.

DEVELOPING THE ANALYTICAL SCHEMA

The semi-structured interviews added nuance and depth to the research, while also providing an alternative mechanism for validating the findings of the survey. Qualitative data analysis was performed in a manner similar to that described by Bogdan and Biklen (2003: 115) in "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others". The responses were grouped according to each survey question. Responses to each open-ended question were examined in the context of the research questions and involved selecting, focusing and condensing data that best answered the questions. During this analysis data was grouped together in order to identify meaningful themes and patterns that added to our understanding of the initial research questions. Relevant quotes from the data were integrated into these various themes in order to support or refute previous findings. The language used by the teachers as well as the general themes that arose from the interviews were extracted from the context and interpreted for the presence of autonomy codes.

The data from the survey was analysed to generate descriptive statistics. It was then examined for trends in teacher perceptions and to create an image of teacher opinion on the issue. This information was then compared to the results generated from the

interviews in order to determine if the themes found during the interviews could be supported by the data provided by the surveys. When examining the data, teachers' opinions of changes in the field were considered in terms of autonomy codes. The language used by teachers in the study when describing themselves and other groups was analysed for potential code clashes. As such, the formulation of the questions as well as the analysis of the answers was structured in terms of changing positional and relational autonomy in the field.

ETHICAL CONCERNS

There were minimal ethical issues encountered in either the surveys or the interviews. Survey and interview participants' were provided with an information sheet prior to the beginning of the survey which detailed the process they were consenting to and how the research would be used and only upon agreeing to this did the surveys and interviews commence. The demographic data provided by individual teachers for the survey is not specific enough to allow identification and as such the survey participants remain anonymous. The names and job titles of those who participated in interviews will not be disclosed in the presentation of the research, and all participants were informed of this. Pseudonyms have been used throughout the research.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the overall design of the present research. It has outlined the initial guiding questions and explained why these questions are important for understanding and characterizing the contemporary educational context. The chapter then identified the central conceptual framework of LCT, which is utilized to orient the research towards the object of study.

The chapter then justified the two-pronged mixed methodology utilised to gather data and how the strengths and weaknesses of these types complement each other to provide a coherent research framework. Following this, the chapter outlined the process involved in the creation and enactment of the interviews and surveys, as well as the techniques used to analyse the collected data. Finally, the chapter highlighted the ethical concerns considered during the research.

The findings of the research which were gathered using the methodologies outlined in the current chapter are presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4 – HOW TEACHERS VIEW CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses responses from the survey and semi-structured interviews in order to explore teachers' perceptions and beliefs about changes within TAFE. Chapter 2 highlighted a distinct lack of empirical research into the actual opinions, thoughts and feelings of those who implement educational policy: teachers. This chapter examines data collected in surveys and semi-structured interviews to establish how TAFE teachers' view and construct changes within the VET field as a whole. Data and quotes are used to explore themes running through the shared opinions of the participating teachers, although differences of viewpoint will be identified. This chapter is divided into three sections: (1) determining whether there have been changes in TAFE; (2) nature and origin of any changes; and (3) teachers' perceptions of the effects of changes.

HAS TAFE CHANGED?

Existing accounts suggest that TAFE has been undergoing substantial change in recent years. The upcoming *Smart and Skilled* reforms (which involve the opening up the education market within the VET sector) are but the most recent of a number of changes ostensibly aimed at making TAFE more cost-efficient and competitive. The current study examined this claim that significant changes have happened within TAFE. The survey results supported this portrayal: As shown in Figure 4.1, 93% of teachers either

agreed or strongly agreed that 'There had been substantial changes in TAFE during the time they had been working there'. Furthermore, contrary to some other aspects of the literature which suggest that changes within TAFE often lack impact due to teacher incredulity and thus lacking implementation (e.g. Martin 2012), Table 4.1 suggests that 87.5% of teachers felt these changes had impacted their teaching.

Figure 4.1: Likert scale quantifying change in TAFE during employment term
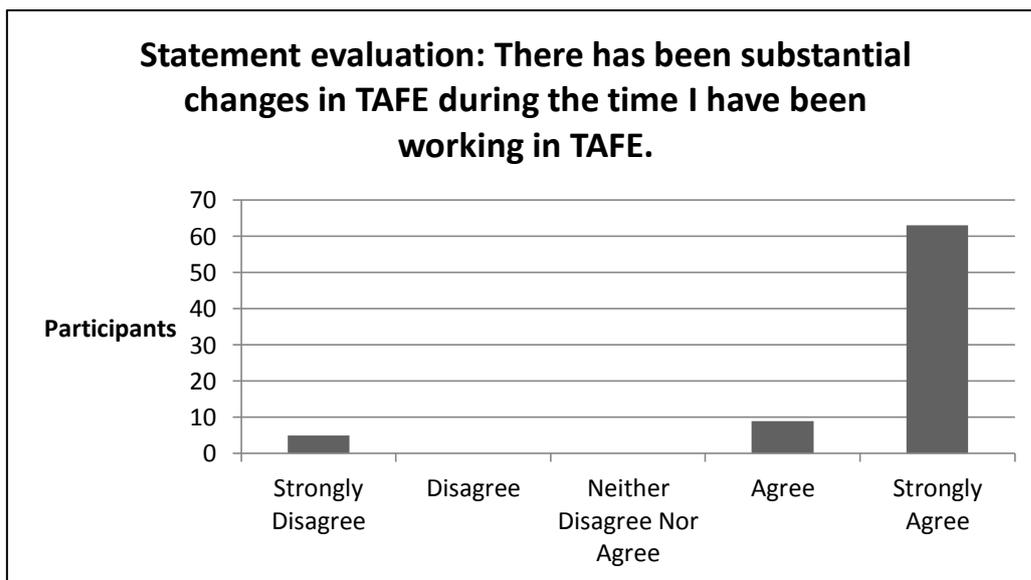
Table 4.1: Job impact of VET changes

Have reforms in the VET system changed the way you do your job?	
Answer Options	**Response Percent**
Yes	87.5%
No	12.5%

While the survey data (see Figure 4.1 and Table 4.1) does suggest that the majority of teachers believe that changes within TAFE have had a substantial impact, semi-structured interviews suggested that policy changes having actual effects may be a recent phenomenon. As one participant argued:

In the past various changes that we went through really didn't have much of an impact at the coalface with the teachers, I think there was quite a lot of rhetoric around, probably two reforms ago, "TAFE is now working on a business model and blah, blah, blah", but this is really right down to the line.

(Rebecca)

This quote suggests that while TAFE has been attempting to become more business oriented for a substantial period, it is only recently that these changes have substantially affected teachers. The above data suggests that changes have happened in TAFE, that these changes have been substantial and that the biggest of these changes have happened quite recently. This leads to the questions of what the changes involve and where the changes are coming from, which will be examined in the next section.

NATURE OF CHANGE

Who is initiating changes?

The semi-structured interviews allowed teachers to clearly express their views in regards to the complex origins of change within vocational education. When talking about specific policies and their implementation teachers generally attributed changes to senior management. In particular, senior management at a faculty level was suggested to set the 'mood' or direction of the department with their encouragement of particular aspects of education. A good example of this was provided by one participant who outlines that her faculty are:

Really innovative in the way we think, we've been given freedom to think outside the square of just doing classroom delivery. If it wasn't for their support

it couldn't have happened. I don't think without the changes being made to

TAFE I don't think the people would've started to think that way.

(Kate)

She goes on to suggest that while teachers in her faculty 'have been forced' to try more innovative styles of teaching such as developing online resources, she believes that teachers bought into and embraced these changes. This demonstrates that these changes are being implemented in a top-down approach rather than as a result of innovative ideas from teachers or from student suggestions.

A crucial theme of the interviews was that the teachers all adopted a nuanced, big-picture perspective when asked about the origin of broad policy changes in TAFE. Rather than attributing these changes to TAFE itself, or to TAFE senior management, teachers are cognisant that the changes are being implemented in the whole sector of vocational education rather than TAFE itself. As such, teachers tended to attribute these changes to influences external from education, generally from the political and economic spheres. As one participant stated 'It's not TAFE managers deciding for changes, it's coming from the state government, and it's for their political ideology' (Susan). The teachers in general understood that TAFE senior managers were merely reacting to change forced upon the sector and thought that many of senior managers' responses to these changes were sensible.

Teachers felt that one of the reasons TAFE was struggling to implement changes was due to the nature of senior management within TAFE. There was a conception that senior management were primarily people from within TAFE, who similarly to the

teachers themselves, lacked the business experience to transform TAFE into a successful commercial entity. As one participant stated:

> I think that the people who got higher in rank through TAFE have all come from a teaching background, so how can you run businesses and financial planning if you haven't really had that background?
>
> (Alice)

This comment suggests that the bulk of managers within TAFE come from an educational background, primarily from within TAFE, which means they have a good understanding of the issues and values of TAFE as an educational institution. (I shall return to 'code' these responses, further below).

Where do the ideas originate?

Teachers felt changes had occurred in a number of areas of TAFE. While the context of the upcoming *Smart and Skilled* reforms may have influenced changes that teachers were particularly sensitive to, Table 4.2 displays that teachers suggested that the three biggest areas of change were 'management restructuring' (28.8%), 'changing administrative duties' (35.6%) and 'course structure changes' (23.3%). Many teachers additionally responded that substantial changes had occurred in all three areas. The overall tone of changes was described by one survey respondent as reflecting change from an 'educational focus to business focus'. Teachers gave a number of specific examples of these changes which included less delivery hours per course, more administrative duties for teachers, more teacher time spent on business development and compliance, with less spent on actual teaching-related duties. These changes were geared towards making TAFE more competitive, efficient and cutting down on costs.

Table 4.2: Types of changes that most effected teachers' work

What types of changes within TAFE have had the largest impact on your job?	
Answer Options	**Response Percent**
Other (please specify)	37.00%
Changing administrative duties	35.60%
Management restructuring	28.80%
Course structure changes	23.30%
Increasing use of technology	9.60%
Increasing performance management	2.70%

Note: respondents were able to select more than one option for this question; as such each percentage reflects the percentage to total respondents who selected that option as an answer.

While the surveys established that teachers feel as if substantial changes have happened in TAFE and that these changes have occurred in a range of areas, the interviews provided depth and complexity to the teachers' concerns. The major theme of the interviews was a perception that TAFE was increasingly focusing on economic goals, often at the cost of educational quality. Teachers placed their traditional ideas of what the goals of TAFE should be in contrast to the conceptions of TAFE in the recent reforms. One respondent in the survey encapsulated this tension:

> We are a public education provider, our ethos should be about providing a fair and equitable education to all members of society. Rather we are turning into a business focused on the bottom dollar rather than the social good of education.

Existing research from the field suggests that discomfort between the educational and business priorities in public educational institutions due to the clash between the values of public education and those of business is common amongst teachers (Luk-Fong and Brennan 2010; Romanowski et al. 2013). Throughout the interviews teachers described the stress and dissatisfaction caused by this issue as they "seek to maximise the

attainment of mutually incompatible values" (Rosenbloom 1983: 219); for example: 'I'm worried that we aren't giving them [students] what they need' (Rebecca). Teachers additionally suggested that the focus on preparing to compete in the vocational education market has resulted in the reduction of course hours, which led to concerns of the quality of education provided: '(teachers) feel that their ability to deliver proper training or education is being eroded by the drop in face to face teaching hours' (Susan). Furthermore, they suggested that there has been increasing encouragement to teach the exact competencies and skills outlined in training packages with no expansion to related areas: 'we have to stick to the training package and we can't go away from it' (Alice). This does not sit easily with some teachers who value educative aspects of TAFE as opposed to purely skills- training components, as stated by one interviewee 'the courses we are delivering here are not just about training packages and the skills, it's actually education which encompasses a much broader view of learning… I feel as if that is being subverted' (Susan).

Furthermore, teachers suggested that TAFEs increased business focus was effecting what is valued within TAFE as an organisation. One participant addresses this in her statement: 'I feel as if the teaching part, which is the main part – doesn't matter, like it's not important. But the paperwork, having the right logo and all the right instructions that's really important [said in a sarcastic tone]' (Susan). Teachers expressed that this valuing of business acumen and administrative role made them feel undermined, as their teaching skill, which they see as the central role of their job, are becoming undervalued. One participant expressed this as 'people feel that the teaching part is undervalued – in a really big way. They don't feel that they have the respect that they used to have, as a

teacher' (Susan). These quotes suggest that the overall nature of changes within TAFE have altered the organisation's focus to now be oriented towards primarily economic goals.

Autonomy codes

As has been described above, teachers within TAFE are within the field of education, even if they have past vocational experience in their field. Similarly, teachers suggested that TAFE management is primarily made up of former teachers who had risen through the ranks of TAFE and thus have substantial experience in, and ties to, the educational field. This suggests that the field as a whole still has relatively strong positional autonomy (PA+) as those implementing policy changes can be described as originating from and being primarily located within the field of education. In contrast, teachers characterized recent changes in TAFE as being based on economic rather than educational principles. The quotes used above illustrate TAFE's shift towards becoming more business-oriented. This was also reflected in the language used in the interviews as teachers talked about increasing notions of 'accountability', 'commercial viability', 'increased competitiveness' and 'efficiency' in describing the way TAFE is now currently being run. Furthermore, this was not just an additional focus within TAFE, as teachers outlined how this shift in ideology was coming at the cost of less focus on educational quality and the educational values that had traditionally underpinned TAFE. Thus, the data from the study was reflective of ways of working and markers of achievement within TAFE being increasingly drawn from other fields, in this case primarily the economic field. This suggests that within TAFE the relational autonomy is

becoming increasingly weak (RA−) as its guiding principles, or 'rules of the game' becoming increasingly economically oriented.

In bringing together these notions, people who are primarily from inside TAFE and the educational field (PA+) are the agents carrying ideas from outside the field and applying them to TAFE (RA−). This reflects what Maton (2005) calls a 'fractured autonomy' within TAFE due to the contrast between stronger positional autonomy and weaker relational autonomy (PA+/RA−). Historically, within education as a field the strengths of positional autonomy and relational autonomy have typically been aligned (Maton 2005). During the era of the 'social compact' in tertiary education elite universities were strongly insulated from external involvement and valorised liberal humanist ideals (PA+, RA+), while lower status institutions were weakly insulated from external governance and more openly oriented to fulfilling economic needs (PA−, RA−). This fractured autonomy places TAFE in an interesting position within education, and helps to explain the teachers' feelings of isolation and the sense that 'this is no longer for the likes of me'. Furthermore, this fractured autonomy (PA+/RA−) may have substantial effects on teachers' sense of identity which will be further explored in chapter 5.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTS OF CHANGES

Teachers in both surveys and interviews provided their perspective on the effects that changes have had on TAFE. These effects can be divided into two clear types: those of TAFE becoming increasingly outward-focused towards new economic goals and shifts in more traditionally academic activities prompted by the changes. After outlining

teachers' perceptions of both these types of change, this section will examine teachers' evaluations of the changes.

Being more outward focused

A major theme to arise from both the surveys and the interviews was an increased orientation towards TAFE being a competitive business. One participant reflected the general concerns about change found in the survey by suggesting that TAFE was becoming increasingly oriented towards business and that these new business responsibilities were limiting her ability to perform her educational role:

> The educational focus is getting smaller and smaller. I mean, that's why we're here, that's our core business: students. And I always love being in the classroom, I loved that interaction with students but I just feel I'm not giving them as much as I should. And across the board I think people feel that way too. (Susan)

The above statement reflects the tension between TAFEs new business focus and teachers' traditional conceptions of teaching. Additionally, there was a common trend of participants suggesting that effort put into dual objectives of business success and educational success was a zero sum game, in that increased effort put into marketing, administering and commercialising courses was coming out of time spent planning lessons, facilitating student enquiries and teaching. This was reflected in a comment made by one participant: 'I'm spending more time on that [business oriented reforms] and less time on lesson preparation and following up on student's concerns' (Rebecca).

Furthermore, the increased regulatory duties imposed on teachers by training packages mean that teachers have similar feelings towards the increase of administration and compliance requirements, as stated by one participant:

> In the last 5, maybe 8 years slowly things began to escalate and we were expected to do more and more and more… especially a lot of paperwork, evidence and compliance issues… I feel that we are not teaching any more, we are actually ticking the boxes, and we are actually providing all kinds of evidence and the teaching has suffered as a consequence.
>
> (Alice)

The majority of teachers felt that the focus on administrative duties was undervaluing their skills as a teacher, and most were very unwilling to compromise standards of teaching for these increased business and administrative burdens.

A good example of the changes making TAFE increasingly commercially oriented was the increase in flexible and alternative models of course delivery aimed at providing options to consumers. Alternative modes of delivery, which generally refer to online courses or off-site training, have become increasingly prevalent in TAFE according to all five interview participants. In regards to in-industry training teachers were largely positive as it allowed students to gain experience of industry beyond the actual competencies of performing the work. One participant exemplified this when discussing one of her assessments which had students working with local shopfronts in the Redfern area in that her courses were 'Not just delivering now in classrooms, now delivering our units of competency in industry… assessing their skills in industry' (Kate). However, the teachers were generally not convinced of the educational benefits of many of these

flexible learning practices, suggesting that, while these changes were making TAFE more appealing to the consumer, it was diminishing the quality of education provided. In particular, teachers were sceptical of benefits of increased online learning. One participant suggested that online learning was being increasingly forced upon students in an effort to minimize contact hours and that based upon her observation 'some students had serious difficulty motivating themselves to work online' (Susan). The same participant did suggest online learning could be a positive aspect of TAFE courses but increasingly TAFE was pursuing 'the pushing of things to an online environment when people are not actively choosing to do it online' (Susan).

Effects on inward-focused activities

While reforms within TAFE have changed many aspects of teachers' 'day to day' teaching, the study provided mixed results as to whether the content of teachers' lessons had changed. A popular narrative in literature on the marketization of education (Kwong 2010) is that teachers are encouraged to be more innovative in their classroom delivery in order to compete in the education market. As displayed by Table 4.3, participants in general did not think this was the case with 94% of them thinking that the new changes have not given them more control over their teaching. A number of comments by survey respondents suggested they now actually have less control over classroom content due to increasing compliance testing, as stated by one respondent 'There is no longer time to "educate" and deal with broader issues. The focus can only be to cover the minimum requirements'. Other respondents suggested that this lack of control over their curriculum and teaching indicated that management and policy makers did not respect teachers' capabilities, as one respondent stated 'there seems to be

a lot less trust in teachers' willingness and ability to do their job well and

professionally'.

Table 4.3: Increase in teacher autonomy

As a result of these changes, Do you think you have more control over your teaching?	
Answer Options	Response Percent
No	94.2%
Yes	5.8%

The semi-structured interviews differed on this issue, with most teachers suggesting that

there had not been substantial changes in teachers' course delivery. One participant

expressed this sentiment: 'we've got to cover the competencies of the units, but how we

deliver that is entirely up to us' (Kate). The teachers felt the Australian Skills Quality

Authority (ASQA – the national regulator of the VET sector) policy of having minimum

competencies for each course, which could be delivered in a manner decided upon by

the teacher, to be reasonable.

Administration of classes has traditionally been one of TAFE teachers' duties, however

teachers suggested recent changes have greatly increased the administrative component

of their role. One of the biggest concerns amongst teachers was a perceived increase in

their administrative burden. As one participant states:

Even as a teacher you work longer hours now, it spills over into your weekend.

We've got a lot more paperwork to do that we didn't have before. From a

teacher's point of view, nowadays, they feel the paperwork has become the most important thing.

(Susan)

Teachers suggested that this increase was based on changes to compliance policies with evidence having to be provided that the training package requirements of the ASQA had been fulfilled. Teachers were generally frustrated by this additional time spent on administrative tasks and felt these tasks were actively deteriorating the quality of education they were providing, as demonstrated by one survey respondent who commented: 'I spend more of my time devoted to business development and compliance and less time in actual teaching related activities.'

Teachers additionally suggested that there were a number of effects that were not related to educational reforms that had increased their weekly workload. Primary amongst these was students changing expectations of teachers in the digital age. As one participant commented, this change was 'making the job a lot harder… I have no time off, 52 weeks a year I'm supposed to respond to students' emails and phone calls' (Susan). This heightened demand on teachers time has caused increased job-related stress and anxiety amongst teachers which is demonstrated by one survey respondent's explanation that increased student expectations 'creates constant stress which impacts on me and I'm sure, saps some of my energy which would normally be channelled into my lessons'. When the increased workload due to student contact expectations is compounded by the increased administrative and business duties of TAFE reforms, teachers feel TAFE's demands on them have increased drastically in recent years without an equivalent pay increase. One survey respondent outlines the negative

consequences the cumulative effect of these changes can have, commenting that 'We are on call at lot more and have a lot less job security. Also some teachers are fighting change so hard they are refusing to work and this damages student outcomes'. This provides evidence of the extreme actions of some teachers in opposing changes; however the teachers interviewed were simply putting additional hours into teaching each week in order to fulfil their administrative duties.

TEACHERS' EVALUATION OF REFORMS

As outlined above, the majority of teachers feel as if current changes to TAFE are diminishing the quality of education provided to students. They feel as if the changes making TAFE more business focused are at the cost of educational quality. Teachers focused on how the increased regulatory duties and expectation to generate business reduced the time they spent on teaching-related activities. Additionally, they suggested that increased use of flexible learning options and decreased control over teacher content resulted in lower-quality education being provided by TAFE. Notably, when participants evaluated policy effectiveness they repeatedly used the yardstick of educational quality as a primary indicator. In terms of autonomy codes this is clearly demonstrative of a group with relatively high relational autonomy (RA+); they explicitly valorise *educational* quality as the key marker of achievement within the field. Furthermore, these teachers solely occupy positions *within* the field of education, suggesting that as a group they also exhibit relatively strong positional autonomy (PA+, RA+). In contrast, the majority of reforms implemented in TAFE borrow strongly from the economic field. The reforms clearly aimed at achieving goals such as commercial

success, profitability and increased efficiency, which are alien to the traditional conceptions of educational achievement. Based on this, these reforms are altering the field of vocational education to be increasingly oriented towards the economic goals, and thus the relational autonomy of the field is weakened (RA−). Based on this there is a code clash between the values of teachers (RA+) and the values increasingly being adopted by recent reforms (RA−). This may help to explain much of the dissatisfaction of teachers with the new reforms as well as their discomfort in implementing them.

While the majority of participants in semi-structured interviews viewed the changes in a negative light, one interviewee proposed some benefits. She described how her sector of TAFE, visual merchandising, had undergone a shift in making courses more oriented towards current practices in the industry, and thus more relevant:

> When I first started here I found that what was being taught here had no relation to what was being done in industry at all… the change has been all about making sure what we deliver in that training package has immediate reference to what's being done in store… we need to be training our students so that they can walk straight into jobs.
>
> (Kate)

While it is somewhat difficult to delineate between reforms that make TAFE courses more profitable in preparation for the marketization of VET and those that simply orient courses to be more reflective of current industry practice, the same participant did state the 'greater policy shift [of adopting business-practices] made it easier to be more industry-oriented'.

However, this staff member did suggest that this may be specific to her area:

> For us it's not that hard to address as retailers are really commercial and visual merchandise is really commercial area of work anyway, it's not like we're in the trade areas, so the mindset of anyone working in visual merchandise is all about the commercial side of things… so that's our mindset anyway, so relating that to education, it's not that dissimilar.
>
> (Kate)

This suggests that the trade and educational backgrounds of particular areas effect how easy changes will be to implement. The industry area that this participant worked in was more commercially oriented, and as such had relatively weaker relational autonomy (RA−), such that she was more easily able to accept and embrace recent changes (RA−) due to the code match between them. Alternatively, interviews with other teachers from more traditional 'educative' areas (with stronger relational autonomy, RA+), reflect this as 'commercialising' education appeared to be harder to comprehend and accept for these groups due to this code clash. This suggests that the ease of implementation of reforms in education is dependent upon the alignment of autonomy codes of the reforms with the codes of the individuals being affected, particularly teachers. This may help to explain teachers' reluctance to implement reforms and their generally negative perspective of the reforms themselves.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined teachers understanding and opinion of recent reforms in TAFE. Data from both the survey and semi-structured interviews revealed that teachers feel as if substantial changes have recently occurred in TAFE. They suggested that while the implementers of change, TAFE management, were in general actors from within the field (PA+), the principles embodied by the changes were strongly influenced business and commercial goals (RA−). This 'fractured autonomy' has created tensions and conflicts for teachers that result in them being, in general, very sceptical of recent reforms within vocational education. In examining teachers' evaluations of the effects of the policy changes it became clear that there was a significant code clash between views of teachers and the goals of reforms. This raises the question of whether these reforms, and the code clash they entail, have shaped how the role and identities of teachers have changed. This issue is addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5 – TAFE TEACHERS' CHANGING IDENTITY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines data from the survey and semi-structured interviews to examine how recent and ongoing changes within TAFE may be affecting teachers' sense of identity. Chapter 4 outlined teachers' perceptions of changes within TAFE, particularly in regards to the origins of changes and their opinions on changes. This leads to question of whether these changes have altered TAFE teachers' sense of identity. The current chapter aims to answer this question by examining how teachers conceive of their own professional identity and how they view how others construct their identity. The chapter is divided into two sections based on themes emergent from the data: first, the complex nature of TAFE teachers constructed professional identity; and, second, the perceptions of other groups within TAFE of teachers and the effects these perceptions may have on their professional identity.

TEACHERS' SELF-PERCEPTION

Substantial change

TAFE teachers are in an unusual position within education due to the complex nature of their sense of professional identity. Research has suggested that due to the encouragement within the sector for teachers to maintain their industry ties, many teachers are in a position where they identify both as part of their industry and as a

teacher (Chappell 1999). This is certainly reflected in the current study: as Table 5.1

shows, only 64% of participants primarily identified as 'teachers'. While participants

identified as a variety of labels, teachers frequently commented that their close

connection with their vocational field crosscut their identity as a teacher. A good

example of this was seen in the interviews where one participant stated, 'When people

ask me what I do, I say I'm a nurse…my job is a teacher, but I look at myself as a

nurse' (Sophia). This reflects the interesting position of vocational education as a

particularly 'Janus faced' field in that it orients itself externally towards the

occupational needs of industry and internally to the educational needs of students. The

nature of the field thus complicates TAFE teachers' identity, resulting in them not

simply identifying as just a 'teacher'. Turning to autonomy codes, the teachers

conceived of themselves as occupying positions within education (stronger PA+) and

valued educational achievements (Stronger RA+). While they may not be as strongly

PA+ or RA+ as for example university professors due to the vocational orientation of

their work, their traditional conception of themselves can be displayed heuristically in

Figure 5.1.

Table 5.1: Participants' view of their role within TAFE.

How do you primarily view your role within TAFE?	
Answer Options	**Response Percent**
Teacher	64.0%
Trainer and assessor	16.0%
Vocational education practitioner	12.0%
Service deliverer	4.0%
A builder of economic and social capital for the NSW government	4.0%
None of the above	0.0%

Figure 5.1: Heuristic depiction of relative autonomy of TAFE teachers represented by the circle.
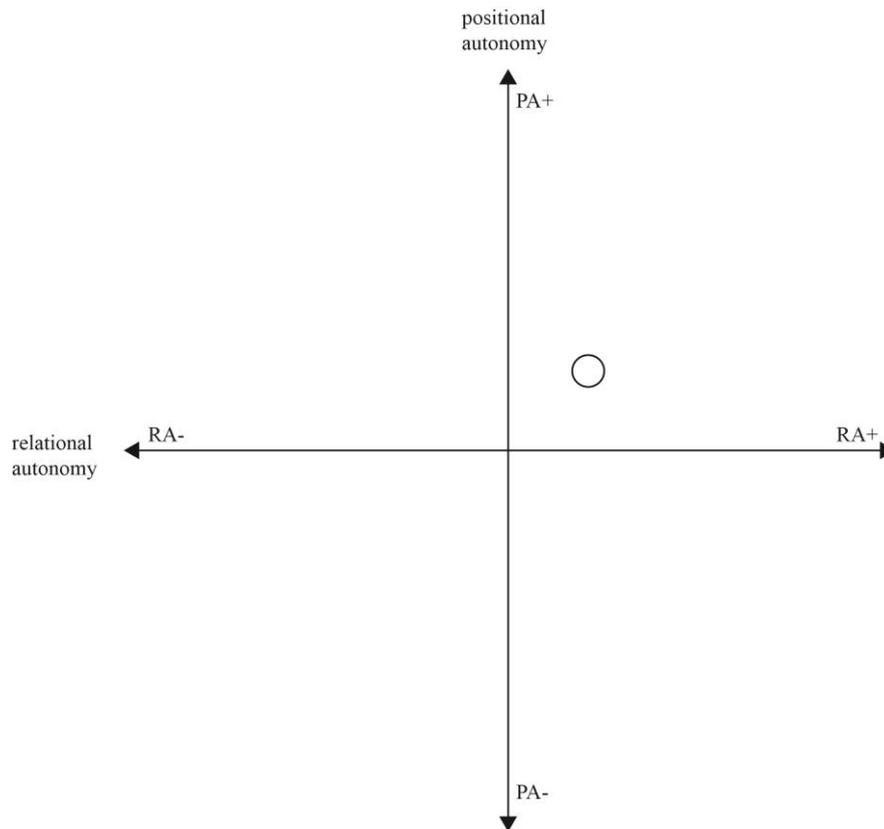
However, as Table 5.2 displays, 60.3% of the participants felt that their identity has been changing over the last five years. The comments of survey participants indicated that some felt their identity shifting from a teacher to either a 'trainer and assessor', 'vocational education practitioner' or a 'service deliverer'. As Table 5.1 displays, 32% of respondents identified as one of these categories. Teachers described that they felt a number of changes have acted to alter their identity as a teacher; for example one survey respondent commented, 'I used to see myself as a teacher but that role has been eroded significantly'. This data indicates that there has been a recent shift in TAFE of teachers feeling as if their identity as a teacher is being altered due to changes in their role.

Table 5.2: Have teachers sense of identity changed over the last five years.

Has this changed in the last five years?	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Yes	60.3%
No	39.7%

A common theme in survey comments and semi-structured interviews was the idea of their core identity being a teacher, but with new identities being added on due to changes placing additional responsibilities upon them. The increase in non-teaching work is demonstrated in Table 4.2 where 35.6% of respondents thought increased administrative duties were the major change occurring in TAFE. This additional work has affected teachers' sense of identity; for example 'While I still regard myself as primarily a teacher, my non-educational responsibilities have grown enormously' (one survey respondent). The range of tasks teachers now perform as part of their role is substantial, as evidenced by another survey response: 'we do so much more than just teach: admin, compliance, student support, paper pusher, industry consulter'. This is indicative of the increased scope of teachers' roles and how teachers feel there is less focus to their identity due to the range of tasks they have to complete. Alternatively, one interviewee explained that due to the increase in non-teaching activities she has accepted that her role has changed, and that she is no longer primarily a teacher, as Alice states, 'I see my role as more administrative rather than educational… it's more business oriented'. This acceptance of change in identity was a point of difference to the other teachers who were passionate about the core of their identity being 'teacher' or 'educator', even with increasing non-teaching responsibilities.

Apart from the increased non-teaching aspects of the role, one interviewee suggested that due to the nature of the changes within TAFE, teachers would need to undergo a 'psychological shift' (Susan) in order to work within the new educational framework. In her example, she had to inform students that the course that they were currently doing which cost $700 this year would cost them $5800 next year. She suggested that in having to justify these changes to students she needed to undergo a shift in culture and identity as these changes fundamentally clashed with her notions of education providing a second chance for all, as well as an opportunity for people to benefit themselves. She further proposed that under the new TAFE model of competition in vocational education and increased course costs, teachers are working for an organisation with fundamentally different goals to the one they joined, and thus teachers need to alter their sense of identity to reflect the organisation's values.

From 'teacher' to 'trainer'

In the surveys and interviews teachers commented that they increasingly saw their role shifting from teacher to trainer and assessor. As seen in table 5.1, 'trainer and assessor' was the second most frequently selected category when teachers were asked about their identity with 16% of respondents selecting it. This shift was also seen in the survey comments as one respondent stated about changes to their identity: 'From teacher to trainer with major limitations to decision making and use of common sense relating to the human factor'. The crucial difference teachers identified was the increased emphasis on the skills they transferred to students rather than on the holistic education they provided. This is demonstrated in one participant's comment that 'The push is to be a trainer & assessor, but being a vocational educator is much more'. Teachers described

that they were unwilling to embrace this identity as a 'trainer and assessor' as they feel it diminishes and undervalues the scope of their role as a teacher. For example, one survey respondent stated 'we are supposed to be "selling a product", but have resisted this construct of our role'. This construction of teachers as trainers who bring business to TAFE stands in stark contrast to the way teachers traditionally view themselves, as demonstrated by one participant who stated:

> I would rather describe myself as an educator because training I think is too narrow… I don't think I just go in and train people and then walk out. It's more looking at people holistically. Looking at what motivates them, helping them, assisting them with problems.
>
> (Rebecca)

Teachers feel the new corporate conception of teaching as 'training and assessing' alienates teachers from a number of aspects they see as crucial to their jobs. A number of interview participants suggested that it devalues a range of the extra-curricular responsibilities that make up a teachers role including 'mentoring', 'guiding' and even 'parenting' their students. While the bulk of teachers still primarily identified as 'teachers', a substantial portion felt pulls on their identity away from this traditional 'teacher' identity.

Autonomy codes

TAFE teachers have always had a complex identity due to the nature of vocational education trying to serve the needs of industry as well as fulfilling educational responsibilities. The current study demonstrates that recent changes within education have increased the complexity of how teachers see their role due to increased non-

teaching responsibilities. In general, teachers still primarily saw themselves as educators and were actively frustrated by new job responsibilities that took time away from teaching-related activities. In terms of autonomy codes the teachers as a group originate from within the field of education (PA+) and hold educational values as their central purpose (RA+). This group clearly expressed that they wanted to see themselves as teachers (PA+) and perform this role of educating (RA+). However, they expressed their frustration that this increasingly wasn't the case as their non-teaching activities expanded (RA-) and they increasingly have to focus on economic aspects of training and assessing. This code clash explains teachers' unwillingness to view themselves under this new conception of teacher identity as a 'trainer and assessor'. This leads to the question of whether this code clash is reflected in others' perceptions of teachers which will be explored in the following section. This pull on their values is demonstrated heuristically in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2: Heuristic depiction of pull of reforms on teachers.
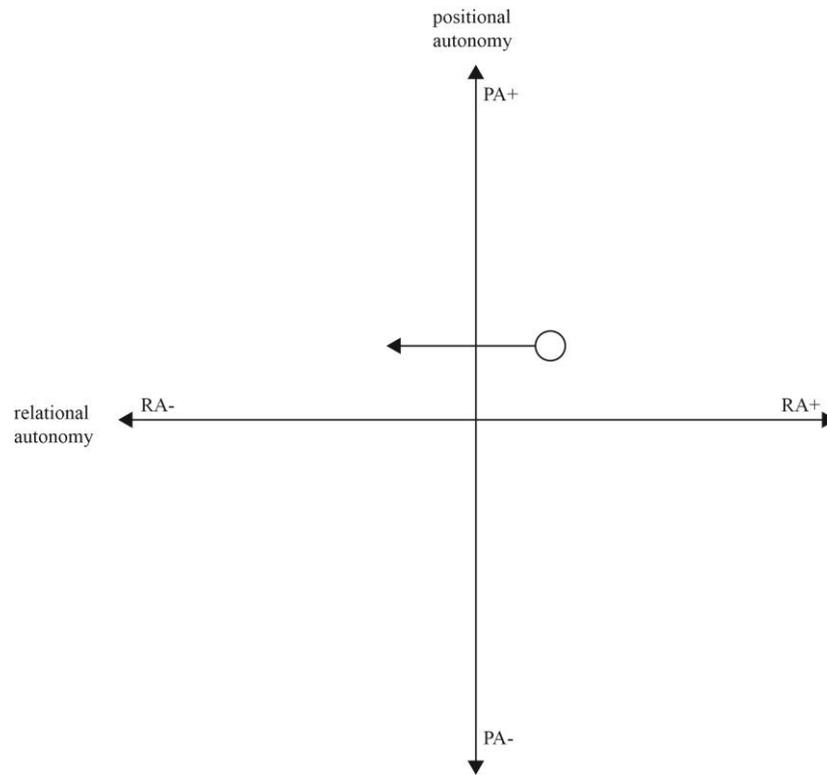
Managements' Perception

Substantial change

Throughout the interviews and survey teachers suggested TAFE management's conception of their role as teachers had changed and this was affecting their professional identity. The majority of respondents felt that both senior managers and education policy-makers within TAFE primarily view them as categories other than 'teacher'. In particular, as seen in Figure 5.3, 44.6% of respondents felt that policy-makers viewed them as 'service deliverers or as builders of social capital for the NSW government as opposed to only 14.9% of respondents who felt they were primarily viewed as teachers. Similarly, Figure 5.4 shows that 65.3% of respondents felt that

TAFE senior management viewed them as either 'trainers and assessors' or 'service deliverers', as compared to the 15.3% who felt that they were viewed as 'teachers'. When compared to the results of teachers' conception of their own identity, where 64% of respondents self-identified as teachers (see Table 5.1), these results demonstrate that teachers felt other groups perceived them in a very different way to how they perceived themselves. Furthermore, Table 5.3 demonstrates that teachers felt that TAFE management's views have shifted relatively recently: 66.2% of respondents suggested there had been a change in how TAFE management saw them in the last five years. Many teachers commented that changes that have occurred within TAFE and the way these changes have been implemented, has revealed these two groups changing conception of teachers. This is reflected in Susan's statement when discussing reforms in TAFE that 'I don't think the teachers have changed themselves, I think they feel that management is trying to force them into thinking that they are delivering products'. This conception of teachers 'delivering products' fits into the consumerist perspective of education that teachers suggest management is increasingly adopted.

Table 5.3: Has the way TAFE management sees teachers changed in the last five years.

Has this changed in the last five years?	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Yes	66.2%
No	33.8%

Figure 5.3: How teachers feel they are viewed by policymakers.

When political policy-makers design reforms for TAFE, how do you feel they primarily view your role?
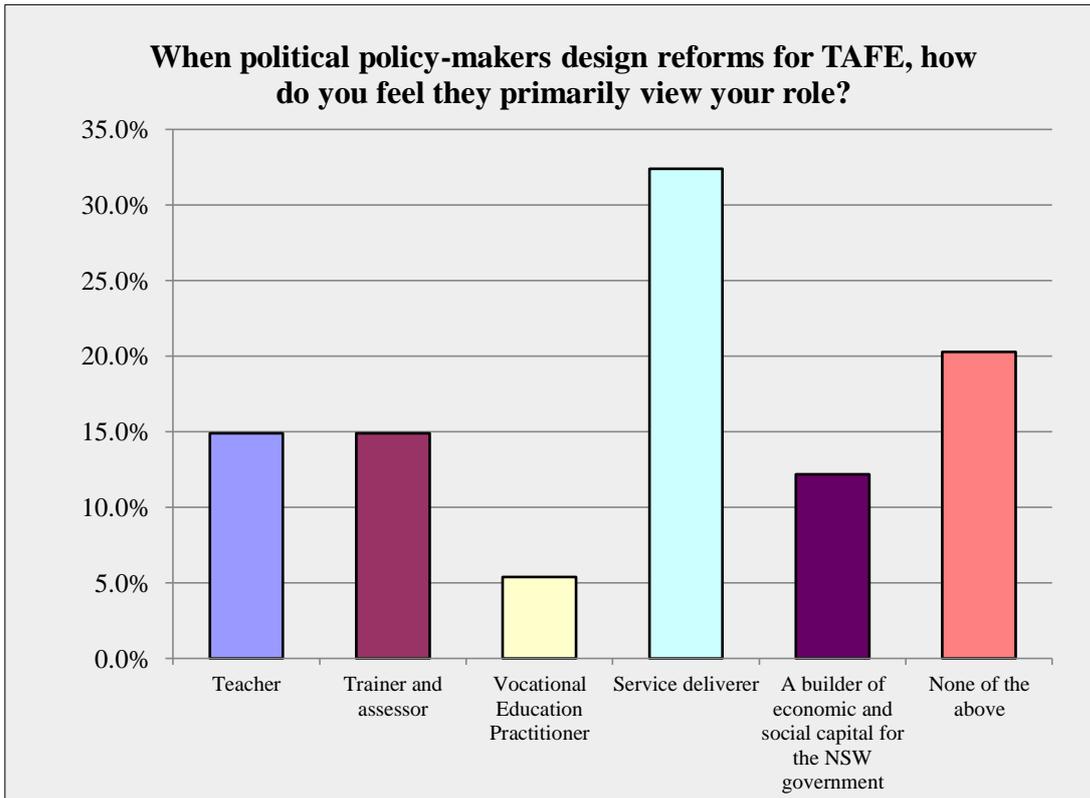
Figure 5.4: How teachers feel they are viewed by senior managers.

How do you feel TAFE senior management primarily view your role as an employee?
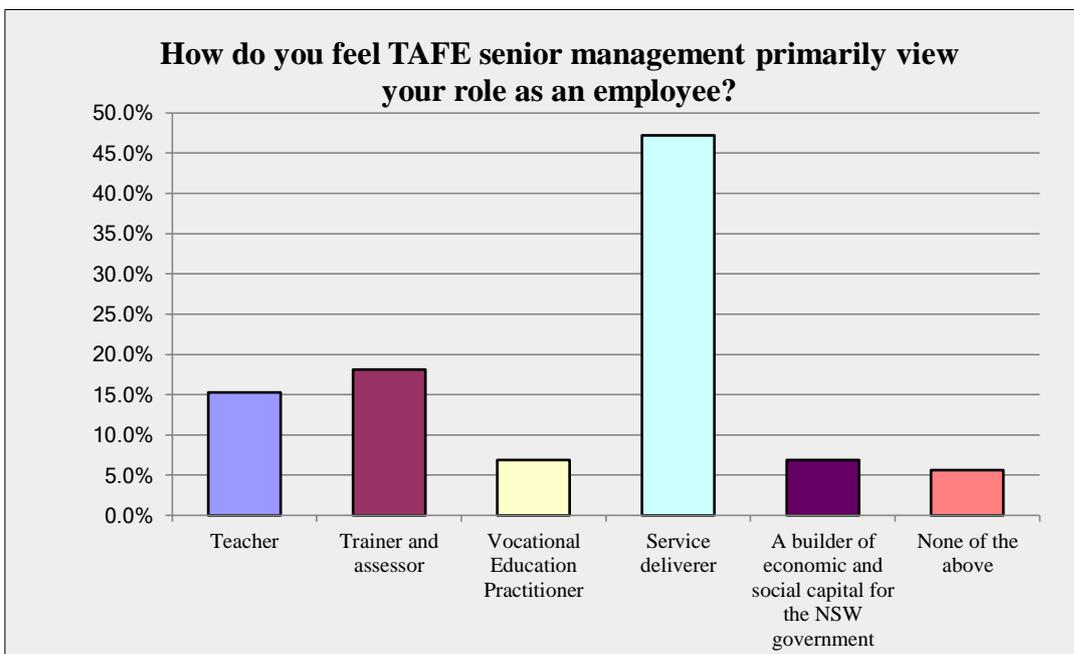
From 'teacher' to' trainer' and 'businessperson'

Teachers suggested there have been two primary changes in the way they were viewed by management. Firstly, that in trying to prepare for the marketization of VET, TAFE senior management is increasingly viewing teachers as trainers and assessors rather than educators. For example, as one survey respondent stated 'I believe that the role of a teacher in TAFE is viewed less as a teacher but more as a facilitator of learning and being able to assess a student in order to receive the desired qualification'. This conception of teaching appears to minimize many of the holistic aspects of educating that teachers' value as part of their role. When teachers were asked for evidence that management's view of them had changed, they responded that the most obvious way this was demonstrated was in the changed language used by managers when describing teachers' role. One participant provided a good example of this:

> teachers are no longer "teachers" they are "trainers" or "assessors", we are no longer "teaching" we are" training", our students are not "students" they're "learners", our courses are not "courses" they're "products" and it's all commercial.
>
> (Susan)

This change in language reflects the changed perspective of policy makers who craft this official language and managers who utilise it.

A number of teachers emphasised that even in the face of this changing perspective of their role, they still see education as their primary purpose and are passionate about maintaining the high quality of education that they provide. For example, one

participant stated: 'TAFE has tried to change the way we think, but we don't, we see ourselves as teachers and we actually hate the idea of seeing ourselves as trainers, we're actually educators' (Susan). Teachers felt this conception undervalued their educative abilities and made their role seem menial, as one survey respondent stated: 'I feel we are undergoing a de-skilling of our profession'. Some teachers were even more vehement on this issue as they viewed policy makers and senior managers as having no respect for the capacity and needs of teachers, as stated by one participant:

> I think currently we are seen pretty much as the lap dogs – there is things that just have to be done and we're the ones who have to do it and we will do it…. I don't know if we're looked at as professional people…I felt more valued in the past.
>
> (Rebecca)

This perspective demonstrates that these changes can cause increased friction and instability between the different levels of TAFE as an organisation.

In addition to being seen more as trainers and assessors, teachers feel management views them in an increasingly entrepreneurial and business-like way, with increased expectations of marketing and generating business for TAFE. As one participant stated 'it has changed. They not only see us as deliverers of training, but they expect us to be businesspeople as well, and it has been hard but we are all learning' (Alice). This reflects teachers struggles to resolve the way their identity is perceived, particularly when it contrasts to how they view themselves, as stated by the same respondent 'I'm not trained to be a financial guru, I'm not a business person, and yet we were forced to look at our budgets and make financial decisions' (Alice). This comment reveals

insecurities which were common amongst interviewees, that they were seen as business people by management and that they were not confident in fulfilling this new identity by making business decisions. Teachers also commented that TAFE management are increasingly rewarding teachers who generate business and demonstrate financial decision-making skills. As one participant stated:

> Well the teachers who do the business and are out there and have a high profile, they are the ones who get the most rewards in terms of recognition, whereas those who are more… educationally focused don't get as much kudos.
>
> (Rebecca)

This reflects the changing values of TAFE management due to the recent changes within TAFE.

Autonomy codes

The teachers' perception of TAFE management and policy makers increasingly viewing them as 'trainers and assessors' or 'business people' can be examined through weakening positional autonomy. Managers and policymakers are increasingly viewing teachers' identity in terms of their economic value to TAFE, rather than educational value. Based on this management is constructing teachers' identity as a more non-educational role due to the increased focus on business and management skills. This conception of teachers as business and administrative agents places their identity outside the field of education which is reflective of a viewpoint of weakening positional autonomy (PA−). Management's new perspective on teachers, which values their non-educational activities highly, places pressure on teachers to strive for and identify with activities that are not traditionally educational. Combined with reforms creating an

environment in which economic achievement is more highly valued (stronger RA−), this results in teachers being increasingly pulled towards a position of weakened positional and relational autonomy (PA−, RA−). This is represented heuristically in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5: Heuristic depiction of managements' pull on teacher identity.
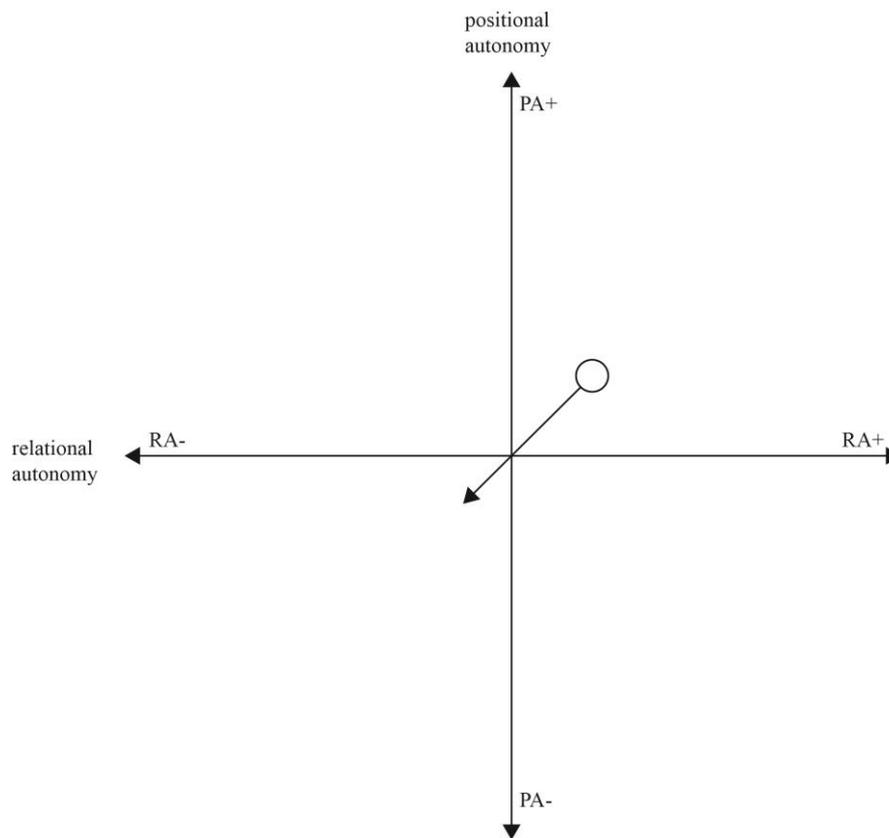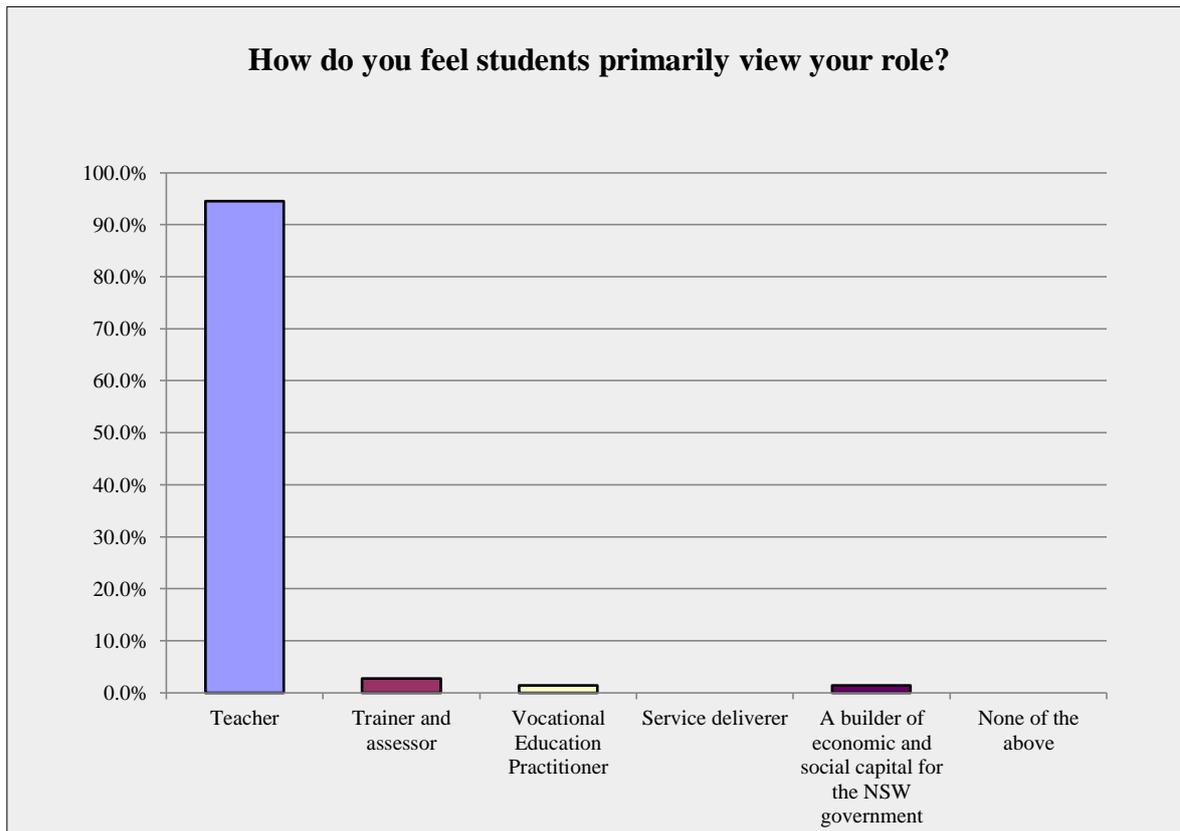

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION

Teachers in the survey and semi-structured interviews identified one constant in how they construct their identity which is the unchanging relationship between teachers and students. As Figure 5.6 displays, 94.5% of respondents felt that students still viewed

them primarily as 'teachers'. Furthermore as Table 5.4 demonstrates, 95.8% felt that students' perspective has not changed in the last five years. The semi-structured interviews also found that the relationship between teachers and students had remained constant, which strengthens the reliability of this finding. A statement by one interviewee reflected the opinions of the teachers: 'Students still see us as traditional teachers similar to those in school… they don't see us as trainers, don't see us as providers of services at all' (Susan). Comments from the survey respondents further supported that student-teacher relationships remained unchanged: 'This is the one constant for me, when I walk into the workshop I know exactly what we have to achieve as do the students'. This unchanging conception of teachers suggests changes within the vocational education system did not result from 'pressures from below' or the dissatisfaction of students with the current system.

Table 5.4: Change in students' perceptions of teachers in the last five years.

Has this changed in the last five years?	
Answer Options	**Response Percent**
Yes	4.2%
No	95.8%

Figure 5.6: How teachers feel students perceive their role.


How do you feel students primarily view your role?

Autonomy codes

Based on participant teachers' perceptions, students still view education in a traditional

fashion. Many participants referred to students still seeing them as 'traditional teachers'

with similar expectations to their secondary school teachers (PA+). There was also

frequent suggestions that students have not yet felt the effects of the upcoming reforms

while being relatively unaffected by past reforms. This helps to explain their traditional

understandings of education. Based upon this understanding of students' conception of

teachers, it suggests that students view education from a perspective of stronger

relational autonomy (RA+) where they value the provision of high quality education.

This is supported by one participant's observation that students had complained to her

about some of the new business-oriented changes particularly the 'cutting of course hours and the move to online learning' (Susan). This acts to reflect student's distinctly traditional educational values. Based on the teachers observations, students view teachers as 'educators' and value high quality education, indicative of relatively strong relational and positional autonomy (PA+, RA+). Teachers felt responsible to students to continue to provide high quality education in the face of recent reforms. This pressure placed on teachers by students' educational expectations is depicted heuristically in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7: Heuristic depiction of students' pull on teacher identity.
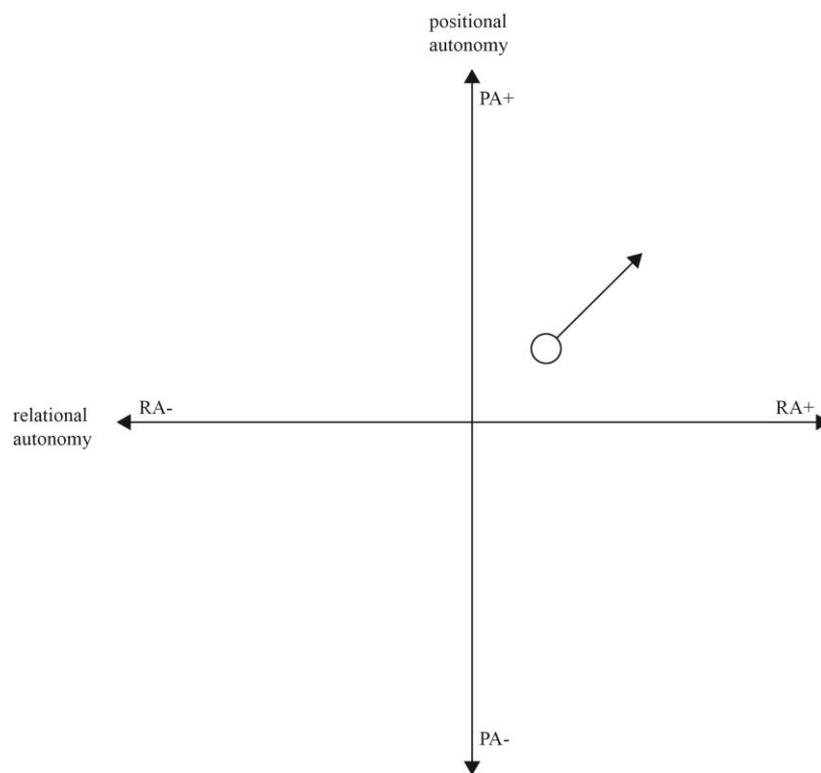
TENSIONS IN TEACHERS' IDENTITIES

VET teachers' identities have always been complex due to the dual focus of the sector on both educational and vocational goals. However, recent changes within TAFE have complicated teachers' positions as they increasingly feel pulls in multiple directions by different groups who conceive of their identities differently. Teachers themselves feel pulled by reforms which are altering TAFE to become more economically focused (reflective of weakened relational autonomy, RA−). Additionally, they see management and policy makers as constructing teachers' identities to be less educationally focused and more connected to the fields of business and industry, which pressures teachers to identify as outside the educational field (PA−, RA−). However, the participant teachers still felt students saw them in a traditional, educational manner, with associated pressures of maintaining the high quality of education provided to students (PA+, RA+). Teachers felt students and managers conceptions of teachers' identity occupied either end of a spectrum; Figure 5.4 reflects that only 15.3% of teachers felt that management primarily viewed them as 'teachers', while Figure 5.6 displays that 95.4% of teachers felt that the students still primarily view them as 'teachers'. These contradictory pulls on teachers' identity can help to explain the conflicted opinions of teachers in regards to their professional identity. This tension is heuristically represented in terms of autonomy codes in Figure 5.8. Throughout the interviews it was clear that teachers were struggling to negotiate and manage this tension, which was causing additional stress for the teachers and led to them feeling less able to do their jobs due to the competing expectations of each identity.

Figure 5.8: Heuristic depiction of the tension of teachers' identity in TAFE.
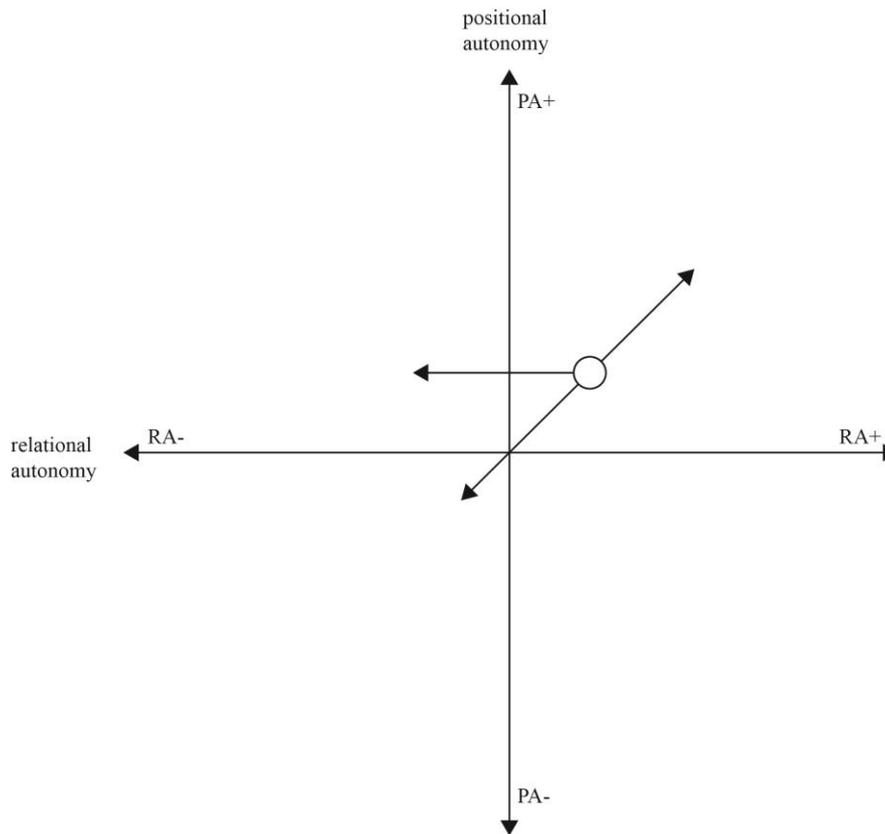
CONCLUSION

This chapter examined results of both the survey and semi-structured interviews in terms of how the changes within TAFE have affected teachers' identity. Teachers demonstrated that they have a complex self-identity, as while they primarily identified as 'teachers' a substantial minority identified other categories. Teachers felt that managers' conceptions of them had changed substantially, with less focus on them being teachers and a greater emphasis on being 'trainers and assessors' and 'business people'. In contrast the teachers felt that students' conceptions of them remained unchanged, with the vast majority still feeling as if the student-teacher relationship had

remained constant. Based upon this research teachers appear to be feel multiple pulls on

their role, based on different groups conception of the place of 'teachers' in vocational

education. Teachers attempted to negotiate this tension between these distinct ways of

looking at education that reflect different sets of autonomy codes (PA+, RA+ and PA−,

RA−). This leads to the question of what these findings relating to teachers' sense of

identity tell us about the original research questions and the value of this approach,

which will be examined in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the findings of the research and considers their implications

for the central research questions of how TAFE teachers feel about reforms to education

and whether these changes affect their identity. It compares the results of this study to

the wider literature while outlining how the current study contributes to closing the gap

in educational reform literature regarding teachers' perspectives on changes. Finally, the

limitations of this study are discussed, before suggesting avenues for future research

that could build on the contribution of this thesis.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study is situated within a background of substantial educational reform since the

1980s which can be classified as of a similar, 'neoliberal' type. These reforms, in

various guises, have been implemented internationally and their costs and benefits

extensively discussed in educational literature (e.g. Kwong 2010; Natale and Doran

2011; Naidoo, Shankar and Veer 2011). However, teachers' conceptions of the changes,

and what the changes mean for teachers' identities, are comparatively unexamined areas

for research. Analysing teachers' perspectives on reform is crucial as teachers are the

primary implementers of reforms which, in turn, can have substantial effects upon

teachers. Based upon this, the current study aimed at examining TAFE teachers'

conceptions of reforms and whether these reforms had resulted in a shifting identity for teachers.

A second motivation is that existing educational research either lacks theoretical frameworks for analysing data in empirical studies or serves as commentary on reforms which are often underevidenced. The current study utilised Legitimation Code Theory in order to connect the data gathered with a theory to explain change within the field. This allowed the research to examine the organizing principles underlying the practices of education to gain a clearer picture of the extent of change within the field.

A mixed methodology was applied in the study in order to examine teachers' perspectives of changes. This methodology provided a large sample to gather a wide variety of teachers' concerns, while also incorporating semi-structured interviews which allowed teachers to provide their detailed perspectives on ongoing reforms. The findings of the study were separated based upon the two research questions, with Chapter 4 examining teachers' perceptions of changes, while Chapter 5 explores whether these changes altered teachers' sense of identity.

Chapter 4 focused on the teachers' perspectives and evaluations of the ongoing changes in TAFE. Teachers suggested that recent changes in TAFE were substantial and had impacted a wide variety of aspects of teaching. This initial finding is interesting as other work in the field had suggested that actual effects of reforms within VET were often minimal due to teachers reluctance to implement them (Martin 2012). A key theme raised by teachers was that changes were diminishing their ability to provide high

quality education to students. This was mostly due to the changes enforcing more of a business-oriented approach while not valuing the time teachers spent in the process of providing holistic learning. Teachers suggested that the increased value placed on business acumen and administration made them feel undermined due to their teaching skills, which they see as central to their role, being undervalued. This theme of feeling as if their skills were being undervalued has been explored throughout literature on marketization within education. Geisbers and Bergen (1990) outline how teachers are deprofessionalized under neoliberal reforms through the execution of teaching being broken down into separate deliverable parts which acts to deskill the individual. In addition to this, the majority of the teachers feared that business was overtaking education as the focus of TAFE which they felt did not reflect the public education ethos. This resulted in the teachers generally being opposed to the reforms and uncomfortable in implementing them. This reflected other research in the field which also demonstrated teachers discomfort in implementing reforms which they see as reflecting the values of business, rather than the values of education (Kenway, Bigum and Fitzclarence 1993; Martin 2012; Natale and Doran 2001; O'Brien and Down 2002).

In terms of the conceptual framework teachers' dissatisfaction with ongoing educational reforms, stemmed from a code clash between the teachers valuing inward-focused educational achievement while identifying as educators (reflective of an PA+, RA+ code) while the reforms utilised measures from the business world to define achievement and perceived of teachers in terms of their economic production (reflective of a PA−, RA− code). This code clash helps to explain teachers' dissatisfaction with

reforms and their unease in implementing them. Additionally, this notion is further supported by teachers within the study who held the minority view that these changes could benefit TAFE. These teachers generally worked in areas of TAFE that were more commercially-oriented, such as visual merchandising, and due to this they were more willing to embrace commercially-oriented reforms due to the code match between the reforms and their values.

Teachers still maintained that the managers who were implementing these changes were primarily from an educational background, generally ex-TAFE teachers. Connecting this to teachers' conceptions of the reforms, indicates that people who are primarily from inside TAFE and the educational field (PA+) are the agents carrying ideas from outside the field and applying them to TAFE (RA−). This reflects a fractured autonomy within TAFE due to the contrast between strong positional autonomy and weak relational autonomy (PA+, RA−). Historically, within education these autonomy codes tended to be in sync with one another (Maton 2005). This fractured autonomy places TAFE in an unusual position within education, and helps to explain the teachers' feelings of alienation towards reforms.

Chapter 5 explored how teachers view themselves, as well as how they perceive how other groups within education view them. Teachers described how they felt as if their identity was becoming increasingly complex due to the pressure to see themselves as more of a 'trainer and assessor' rather than a 'teacher'. The bulk of teachers were passionate about the holistic aspects of education which they felt were being undermined by this 'trainer and assessor' identity. However, this push away from a

purely educational identity was clearly felt as a substantial amount of respondents identified with categories other than teacher. Teacher's clearly felt that management's perspective of their role had shifted in recent years with more focus being placed on their identity as a 'trainer and assessor' and 'business person' than in the past. Teachers also felt education policymakers held similar views as managers in regards to teachers. In terms of autonomy, these groups appeared to value teachers in terms of the economic benefits they could provide to TAFE and pressured teachers to see themselves in increasingly economic terms. This viewpoint is reflective of weaker positional and relational autonomy (PA−, RA−). Alternatively, teachers felt one of the few aspects of TAFE that remained unchanged was student-teacher relationships. Teachers almost universally felt students still viewed them as 'teachers', and valued them for their educative abilities and the holistic guidance they provided. This demonstrates that students still view teachers as educators and judge in terms of their ability to educate, which is reflective of a viewpoint of stronger positional and relational autonomy (PA+, RA+). Teachers distinctly felt tension on their identities between these two groups, as they struggled to meet managers' business expectations while having difficulty justifying educational changes to students. Their attempts to manage and negotiate this tension between the different codes of the different groups were reflected in teachers' complex and varied conceptions of their own identity.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The research conducted in this thesis is subject to certain limitations that provide avenues for future research into the effect of reform upon teachers. Firstly, the research was exploratory in nature and therefore the study provides interesting insights into teachers' perspectives rather than definitive findings. The results of this study provide a valuable starting point for future, larger-scale research projects. Additionally, the external validity of the study is limited as even though the survey had 79 respondents, making statistically significant generalizations based on the results of the study is difficult. The fact that results from the survey were convergent with those from the semi-structured interviews does increase the generalizability of the findings due to this triangulation. However, a quantitative survey sampling a larger group of TAFE teachers could provide more definitive results in regard to their opinions of reforms.

The study did not differentiate teachers based upon teaching experience. The data within the study, as well as other research within the literature (Marin 2012), suggested that the length of time worked for TAFE impacted teachers' perceptions of change. Future studies could focus on teachers of different experience levels and compare them with the results of the current study in order to test this hypothesis.

Finally, due to similar reforms currently being implemented in tertiary education, a similar research project could be undertaken in that sector and the results compared to

the current study in order to explore whether TAFE teachers' experiences of reforms are reflective of educators across educational fields.

FINAL REMARKS

The current study aimed to explore teachers' perspectives on reforms and allow the teachers to voice their concerns about the ongoing changes in TAFE policy. In doing so, the study reveals a number of tensions between the values of teachers and those of other groups within vocational education. In attempting to portray an image of teachers' perspectives on reforms, the study also reveals further insight into one of the key difficulties of teachers' current position within education, hinted at in educational literature but not systematically theorised: that teachers are caught between different autonomy codes, different measures of achievement and status that give rise to different, if not competing conceptions as to their role. As teachers attempt to negotiate this tension it has become clear that not only is TAFE a Janus-faced sector, but teachers are feeling under pressure to become increasingly Janus-faced themselves.

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APPENDIX A – SURVEY

Note: The survey was completed online using the site surveymonkey.com, with the survey accessed at the domain: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/D585LB5

Due to screenshots of all the survey questions being prohibitively long, this is a mocked up copy of the survey.

Comment boxes had no character limit.

Demographics:

- How long have you been working in TAFE?
  - Options: 1-2, 3-5, 6-9. 10-15, 16-20, 20+
- What is your highest educational qualification?
  - Options: High school certificate, Certificate III-IV, Diploma/ Advanced Diploma, Bachelors degree, Masters degree, PhD
- Do you work in a metropolitan or regional TAFE?
  - Options: Metropolitan, Regional
- What field within TAFE do you work in?
  - Options: Business and Finance; Child studies, health and community services; Engineering, Building and Construction, electrotechnology, automotive and maritime; Events, tourism and hospitality; Languages, communication and foundation education; Hair and beauty, fitness and sport; Horticulture, floristry, environment and sustainability; information technology, media and entertainment, design
- Do you have a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (or equivalent)?
  - Options: Yes, No
- Have you ever worked for a private RTO (Registered Training Organisation?
  - Options: Yes, No
- If so, how long ago?
  - Options: 1-2, 3-5, 6-9, 10-15, 16-20, 20+

These questions are about Changes in TAFE:

- Evaluate the following statement: There have been substantial changes in TAFE during the time I have been working here.
  - Options: Likert scale

In the last five years or since you started:

- Have reforms to the VET system changed the way you do your job?
  - Options: Yes, No

      o   if Yes, Please elaborate your answer below:

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- Have the motivations of your students changed?
  - Options: Yes, No
  - If Yes, please elaborate your answer below:

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- Have the motivations of TAFE management changed?
  - Options: Yes, No
  - If Yes, please elaborate your answer below:

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- Do you think you have more control over your teaching?
  - Options: Yes, No
  - If Yes, please elaborate your answer below:

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These questions are about how you view you role within TAFE:

- How do you primarily view your role within TAFE?
  - Options: Teacher, Trainer and assessor, Vocational education practitioner, Service deliverer, A builder of social and economic capital for the NSW government, None of the above
- Has this changed in the last 5 years?
  - Options: Yes, No
  - If Yes, please elaborate your answer below:

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- When political policy-makers design reforms that effect TAFE, how do you feel they primarily view your role?

- o Options: Teacher, Trainer and assessor, Vocational education practitioner, Service deliverer, A builder of social and economic capital for the NSW government, None of the above
- o Please elaborate your answer below:

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- How do you feel TAFE senior management primarily views your role as an employee?
  - o Options: Teacher, Trainer and assessor, Vocational education practitioner, Service deliverer, none of the above, A builder of social and economic capital for the NSW government, Option other than those above
- Has this changed in the last five years?
  - o Options: Yes, No
  - o If Yes, please elaborate your answer below:

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- How do you feel your students view your role?
  - o Options: Teacher, Trainer and assessor, Vocational education practitioner, Service deliverer, A builder of social and economic capital for the NSW government, None of the above, Option other than those above
- Has this changed in the last five years?
  - o Options: Yes, No
  - o If Yes, please elaborate your answer below:

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Any further comments on the above questions:

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APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW GUIDE

Demographics:

- What area within TAFE do you work in?
- How long have you been working in TAFE
- What is your highest educational qualification?
- Do you have a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment?
- Have you ever worked for a private RTO (Registered Training Organisation)?

These questions are about Changes in TAFE:

- Have there have been substantial changes in TAFE during the time I have been working here?
- What direction do you think TAFE is heading in?
- Where do you think the reforms in TAFE originate from?
- What do you think managers think of the reforms?
- Do most of the management come from within or external to TAFE?
- Have reforms to the VET system changed the way you do your job?
- Have the motivations or expectations of your students changed?
- Do you think you have more control over your teaching?
- Is there more encouragement to be innovative as a teacher?
- Is there a tension between economic goals and educational goals in TAFE?
- How much time do you spending doing non-teaching activities compared to the past?

These questions are about how you view you role within TAFE:

- How do you primarily view your role within TAFE?
    - Has this changed in the last 5 years?
- When political policy-makers design reforms that effect TAFE, how do you feel they primarily view your role?
    - Please explain your answer
- How do you feel TAFE senior management primarily views your role as an employee?
    - Has this perception changed in the last five years?
- How do you feel your students view your role?
    - Has this perception changed in the last five years?

Any further comments on the above questions.