

AVETRA Conference Abstract April 2016

TITLE: "Beyond art and pottery: community education providers' involvement in work-based learning and foundation skills"

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Abstract

Despite many years of involvement in accredited VET, community education providers are often considered as providers of art, craft and pottery classes. This research, commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, and managed by Community Colleges Australia, explores the extent to which community providers are delivering work-based learning and foundation skills.

The project involves a large-scale survey of community education providers followed by semi-structured interviews with a selection of providers.

The results show that community providers are very much involved in delivering a range of work-based learning programs, including traineeships, apprenticeships, mandatory work-based learning and programs designed for individual business clients. A significant number of community providers demonstrate entrepreneurial flair and daring by conducting a business specifically designed to provide work-based training opportunities such as a café, nursery or beauty salon. Challenges and obstacles for community providers delivering work-based learning are explored.

Perhaps less of a surprise is the finding that community providers are also very involved in delivering foundation skills. The research examines the range of conditions and practices used including: the qualifications of trainers, the characteristics of learners, the curriculum/training packages used, classroom and workplace practices, approaches to pedagogy and assessment and outcomes for students.

This research fills a gap in our understanding of the role of community education providers in supporting productivity and meeting the foundation skills needs of Australians.

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