Implementation of Project Based Learning in a Training Package Context

Julie Wright

School of Education
Design and Social Context Portfolio

October 2007

An exegesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
Certification

- Except where due acknowledgment has been made, this work is of the candidate alone.

- The work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award.

- The content of the exegesis is the result if work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program.

_________________________ date_________
# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ 2

GLOSSARY OF TERMS ........................................................................................................... 3

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 4

Chapter 2 CONTEXT .................................................................................................................. 10

2.1 Perspective - Global ........................................................................................................ 10
2.2 Perspective - National .................................................................................................... 12
2.3 Perspective - State ......................................................................................................... 15
2.4 Perspective – Institutional ............................................................................................. 16
2.5 Perspective - Personal .................................................................................................... 19

Chapter 3 A PROJECT BASED LEARNING MODEL IN THE TEXTILES, CLOTHING and FOOTWEAR TRAINING PACKAGE ........................................................ 21

3.1 Competency Based Training ........................................................................................ 21
3.2 Delivering The TCF Training Package in TAFE ....................................................... 23
3.2.1 Educational Theory ................................................................................................ 29
3.3 Innovation through Training Packages ........................................................................ 30
3.4 Program Structure through PBL ................................................................................ 32
3.5 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 36

Chapter 4 RESEARCH DESIGN ............................................................................................. 37

4.1 Theoretical Framework ................................................................................................ 37
4.2 Participatory Action Research Methodology ............................................................. 38
4.3 Reflective Practice ........................................................................................................ 41
4.4 Research Method .......................................................................................................... 42
4.5 Data ............................................................................................................................. 45
4.6 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 47

Chapter 5 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH DATA .................................................................. 48

5.1 Student Teacher Forum 2001 ..................................................................................... 48
5.2 Learner Surveys 2002 - 2004 .................................................................................... 50
5.3 Questionnaire 2003 .................................................................................................... 56
5.4 Student Experience Surveys 2002 and 2006 ............................................................ 57
5.5 Annual Program Reports 2002 and 2003 ................................................................. 59
5.6 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 60
Chapter 6 THEORISING PROJECT BASED LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Making PBL a legitimate choice in TAFE
6.1.1 The Theory/Practice Relationship
6.2 What about the learners?
6.2.1 Developing the Contingent Thinker in TAFE
6.3 Teaching Strategies in PBL
6.3.1 Teaching for Transfer
6.3.2 Experiential Teaching Practice
6.4 The Changing Role of the Teacher
6.4.1 Team Teaching
6.4.2 Correct Sequencing to Facilitate Employment
6.4.3 Mentoring
6.4.4 Where has the Curriculum gone?
6.5 Assessment
6.5.1 The purpose of assessment in Training Packages
6.5.2 The Assessment Process
6.5.3 Portfolio Assessment
6.5.4 Professional Judgment
6.6 Conclusion

Chapter 7 CONCLUSIONS and IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Significance of the Study
7.2 Findings and Conclusions
7.3 Unexpected Outcomes of the Research
7.4 Limitations
7.5 Recommendations and Implications
7.6 The Research Experience

APPENDICES

Appendix A Implementation of Strategic Review recommendations
Appendix B School of Fashion Group Forum
Appendix D Questionnaire 2003 Template and Responses
Appendix E Student Satisfaction Survey 2002
Appendix F Student Experience Survey 2006
Appendix G Annual Program Report 2002
Appendix H Annual Program Report 2003

References
Tables and Figures

Tables

Table 1: Number of learner sample groups ................................................................. 44

Figures

Figure 1 Boyer Scholarship of Teaching: ................................................................. 17
Figure 2 Unit of Competence TCF Training Package ................................................. 25
Figure 3 The Action Research Spiral ...................................................................... 43
Figure 4 Responses to Question 1 of Learner Survey 2002-2004 ............................ 51
Figure 5 2006 Student Satisfaction Survey ............................................................. 58
Figure 6 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey ............................................................. 58
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Ian Robertson, for his encouragement, support and wise counsel. His guidance has played an important part in bringing this project to completion.

Thanks also to the staff and students of the School of Fashion and Textiles, RMIT University for their participation in the research. The success of the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program owes much to their contribution.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank my first supervisor, Ern Reeders, who introduced me to the concept of practitioner research. It will continue to influence my professional practice into the future.

To my husband Vin, and children Brendan and Sean, I would like to reserve a special thank you. Their patience, encouragement and adaptability kept me going.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my mother who, personally and professionally, has always led by example.
Implementation of Project Based Learning

In a Training Package Context
ABSTRACT

Training Packages form the basis upon which practitioners in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector in Australia develop their pedagogical processes. As workplaces adapt their practices to compete globally, demand for skilled and knowledgeable workers places pressure on institutional training providers such as TAFE to develop training programs that support the acquisition of higher order thinking skills in graduates. Using a competence based framework as a backdrop, the research centres on the notion of the place of Project Based Learning in a Training Package context. The research proposes that learning through projects is an effective means of integrating Training Package outcomes with an instructional model that engages learners in independent, flexible and reflective learning.

The research was conducted retrospectively from a case study of an AQF Level 6 Textile, Clothing and Footwear Training Package Program at RMIT University TAFE. An Action Research approach underpins the investigation, resulting in the profiling of teaching, learning and assessment as areas in need of further examination. These defining themes are explored in the context of the Project Based Learning model developed at RMIT, with consideration given to the potential for broader application. The discussion concludes with a theoretical review of the new understandings of pedagogy.

The study aims to establish that a constructive alignment exists between the behaviourist approach of Training Packages and the more constructivist theories behind Project Based Learning; rendering it a suitable instructional model that meets the needs of 21st century learners.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTU</td>
<td>Australian Council of Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTA</td>
<td>Australian National Training Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQF</td>
<td>Australian Qualification Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQTF</td>
<td>Australian Quality Training Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAD/CAM</td>
<td>Computer Aided Design/Computer Aided Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBT</td>
<td>Competency Based Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEET</td>
<td>Department of Employment, Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIIRD</td>
<td>Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FELCS</td>
<td>Faculty of Education, Language and Community Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCT</td>
<td>Melbourne College of Textiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVAL</td>
<td>The Australian Centre for Organisational, Vocational and Adult Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTTE</td>
<td>Office of Training and Tertiary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR</td>
<td>Participatory Action Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBL</td>
<td>Project Based Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMIT</td>
<td>Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Training and Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCF</td>
<td>Textiles, Clothing and Footwear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The School of Fashion and Textiles is part of the Portfolio of Design and Social Context, situated on the Brunswick Campus of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT). RMIT is a dual-sector University offering Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET). Located within RMIT, the School of Fashion and Textiles is a major provider of vocational education and training for the Textile, Clothing and Footwear industry, both in Victoria and nationally. The Brunswick Campus offers vocational education in the workplace to trainees and apprentices in the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) industries and on campus, with a suite of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) training programs predominately at Certificate and Diploma level.

The School of Fashion and Textiles is comprised of three departments of specialisation: Fashion, Merchandising and Textile Design/Technology. As part of my role as a teacher in the Fashion Department, I was invited to develop and implement a new Advanced Diploma Program to complement the nested qualification structure of the existing Certificate and Diploma level programs. The new Program became known as the Advanced Diploma of TCF (Fashion).

Together with a colleague, I was presented with the challenge of designing and delivering the student learning experience for the Advanced Diploma of TCF (Fashion) Program and set about constructing a new understanding of teaching and learning that dovetailed with both RMIT University and industry training objectives. The Textile, Clothing and Footwear industry has undergone a period of rapid change in recent years (ANTA, 2000). Like many industries with a declining manufacturing base, TCF enterprises have moved aspects of their business offshore and developed new skill sets to equip them to operate in an open market. National Training Reform
aimed at identifying and developing new knowledge requirements has resulted in the release of a new framework for training in the form of a nationally accredited Textile, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) Training Package. The TCF Training Package, released in 2000, adopts an unashamedly ‘industry driven’ approach (ANTA, 2000) in setting out standards for workplace competence against which those in TCF workplaces and others wishing to enter the industry can be measured. The standards at which a person is deemed competent at Certificate, Diploma and Advanced Diploma level are described exponentially and referred to as Level four, five and six respectively. Level 6 competencies, those applicable to the Advanced Diploma Program, are higher order competencies; those skills that demand complex and analytical thought processes such as communication, negotiation and problem solving; many of which occur naturally within the workplace.

While it reflects workplace competence, the TCF Training Package is not a course of training (ANTA, 2000). Much of the responsibility for the provision of detailed curriculum and support materials falls to teachers and program developers to construct in response to rapidly changing training needs (Smith & Keating, 2003). A suitable curriculum model was needed for the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) as this was a program to be located in a TAFE environment, not the workplace. Staff in the RMIT Fashion Department had limited exposure to the use of projects as a learning model but emerging research indicated some success in using projects as a context for learners to acquire and develop higher order problem solving skills and knowledge (Henry, 1994). Known as Project Based Learning (PBL), this was the instructional approach chosen to deliver the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program.

The decision to subject the development and implementation of the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program to the scrutiny of a research study arose out of an opportunity to participate in an
innovative knowledge generating exercise introduced by the RMIT Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services (hereafter known as FELCS). The methodology that was proposed by FELCS was to carry out research through applying a model of inquiry to an issue, problem or change that was occurring in my workplace based on the notion that I could investigate and improve my own professional practice. As a result, a convergence is established between theory and practice; between the two components of project and research (FELCS, 2002). A clear distinction must be made here to clarify the scope of the project and also the research. Fundamental to my project was the intent to develop and implement a Training Package Program in an educational setting using Project Based Learning to enrich the experience of learners in such a way that they would be able to transfer their knowledge, skills and attributes into competence in the workplace. The research study, written reflectively, is situated within the Fashion Department of RMIT TAFE at the Brunswick Campus and is a record of the process conducted from the inception of the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program in 2001 through until 2004.

The research is designed around Participatory Action Research (PAR) which assumes that the focus of study is about change and improvement of one’s situation. As the name suggests, this methodology links action with research and together with its participatory, social nature, appeared to be the ideal vehicle through which the implementation process could be evaluated. One of the key characteristics of PAR is reflective practice that is built into a cycle of planned action where, in this instance, learners and teachers became co-participants in program development and improvement.

The research has uncovered substantial literature of the use of PBL in Higher Education, particularly in the fields of engineering, nursing and mathematics, which is where it had its origins. However, I have encountered very few detailed studies of its application in a VET
context. I have located my research in a TAFE environment that uses the national competency structure in the hope that my research may assist TAFE teachers and others to implement this approach as an innovative way to interpret Training Packages.

Chapter Two sets out a contextual framework for understanding the national competency structure in a complex and rapidly changing vocational education environment. Using a global, national and local perspective, observations have been made about the nature of work and the connection between innovation, future prosperity and education. Some background is provided on the Australian experience of VET and major policy milestones at Federal and State level are identified. Competency Based Training (CBT) is introduced here and analysed through its relationship with teaching practice. Throughout the chapter, there is evidence of a recurring demand for vocational training to be flexible and responsive and this sets the scene for describing RMIT’s decision to undertake a review of its strategic direction. It is hoped that the reader can gain an understanding of the climate that prevailed at RMIT and an appreciation of the influences, both internal and external that surrounded this research study.

Chapter Three explores the implementation of PBL at RMIT and familiarises the reader with the local context in which the research was situated. The chapter looks at each of the four projects undertaken by learners in the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program and reflects upon how each of the projects speaks to different sectors of the fashion industry. After reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of CBT, various educational theories are discussed in light of their impact on VET pedagogical practice in the 21st century and the chapter concludes by noting that a constructivist approach, whereby learners build upon an existing knowledge base, appears to be conducive to productive learning.
Chapters Four and Five are concerned with the justification of PAR as a suitable research methodology. Critical to the chosen research method is the centrality of the researcher as a participant in the process of change. I have used this characteristic as a response to the highly contextual nature of the study undertaken as it has provided a framework around which I could evaluate the program in a meaningful way. Using a qualitative approach, data was drawn from field notes, questionnaires, surveys, journals and informal class discussions and then interpreted through the action research spirals of plan, act, observe, and reflect. The findings, reported in detail in Chapter Five, identify three emerging themes that underpinned the success of PBL in a TAFE context.

These three themes: teaching, learning and assessment form the basis of analysis of Chapter Six where the issue of transfer of learning is used as a thread of discussion. It emerges that PBL has characteristics favourable to the development of knowledge transfer enabling the learner to apply their skills and knowledge in different settings and situations. This is evidenced by supporting data in Chapter Five. Evaluation of PBL proceeds by acknowledging the reconceptualised role of the teacher and the effects of change to teaching practice and assessment. Other theoretical perspectives are discussed in light of the success or otherwise of local initiatives and the narrative concludes with comment on the notion of PBL as a compliant but creative approach to Training Package implementation.

Chapter Seven revisits the initial research topic of the evaluation of PBL in a Training Package context. Although discussion has been specifically related to its application in a TAFE learning environment, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that PBL, as an instructional approach, has
broader application in a competency based system. As a newer model of teaching and learning, its principles are consistent with the demand for more flexible and innovative approaches to VET practice that promote knowledge development within the context of the immediate environment and possibly beyond. The chapter concludes with recommendations and implications where it is hoped that the experiences gained and lessons learned through the project case study and articulated through the research will be open to further inquiry and application.
Chapter 2

CONTEXT

There are two interconnected issues that underpin this investigation and inform the research study. The first is the Training Package environment and the second is Project Based Learning. I wish to establish that there exists a tension between the two that makes the research meaningful and provides a platform for further inquiry. This chapter discusses the occupational environment from a global, national and institutional perspective and takes into account the social, political and policy reforms that have become a key part of the Vocational Education and Training (hereafter known as the VET) sector. The implication of adopting a training system that is standards based and uses CBT as a model of curriculum is discussed. The turbulent conditions that have shaped the development of the Australian Vocational Education and Training sector over the past 20 years act as a backdrop against which the implementation of the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program took place.

2.1 Perspective - Global

I will begin by reflecting upon the changes that have occurred in global educational and industrial policy. Skills profiles in the workplace have changed over the past ten years to reflect the acceleration of globalisation and technological change, resulting in the demand by employers for professional and para-professional personnel (Stanwick, 2003). Technological and economic growth, together with the concept of a global marketplace, is altering the way work is organised: enterprises compete for labour and skills, which in turn places pressure on the education system to deliver graduates who are capable of critical thought in an economy driven by innovation (DEET, 2006).
The most highly rewarding activity in an innovation economy is transforming ideas into new and better products and services and the most valuable commodity is the knowledge needed to do it (OTTE, 2002, p 2).

It appears that the delivery of training is being shaped by the notion that a skilled and flexible workforce is the key to economic development and education is pivotal to social change (Billett, McKavanagh, Beven, Angus, Seddon, Gough, Hayes, & Robertson, 1999).

These changes in the world of work include the need for skill development that is timely, occurs in the workplace where possible and assists organisations achieve a competitive advantage (Mitchell, 2006, p 12).

The International Commission on Education for the 21st Century (1996) report led by Jacques Delors, identified four ‘pillars’ of education for the future: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together (and with others), and learning to be. UNESCO and the OECD (1996) have identified lifelong learning as a key concept in educational policy, recognising that economic prosperity can be realised through providing people with opportunities to gain ongoing skills, knowledge and qualifications for use not only in employment but also for personal fulfilment. In Australia, major reforms of the VET sector have occurred over the past twenty years, influenced by a desire for change in workplace practices and the prospect of global competitiveness. Progressively reduced tariff protection has created even more localised change in the Textile Clothing and Footwear industry and put pressure on governments to respond.
2.2 Perspective - National

Australia’s awareness of the role that education plays in the development of a skilled workforce is evidenced as early as 1987 in Australia Reconstructed (ACTU, 1987), the document produced as an outcome of the ACTU’s mission to Western Europe. Delegates noted that generous investment in vocational education was regarded as necessary to ensure the long-term competitiveness of businesses, rather than a ‘knee jerk’ reaction to skill shortages. As Australia’s political, economic and social structure has changed through globalisation, technological change and an ageing workforce, successive governments have been concerned with achieving global competitiveness by having a well educated and innovative workforce. The Training Reform Agenda, a policy outcome of a bi-partisan think-tank led by the Hawke Labor Government, initiated a lengthy period of educational reform leading to the recognition that a nationally consistent system of training and qualifications was necessary. The Agenda proposed that reforms of the training system should be:

• 
  *industry led to meet the needs of industry*

• 
  *nationally accredited to industry competency standards*

• 
  *favourable to an open market system for the provision of educational and training services*

• 
  *designed to improve access and equity* (Misko, 1999, p 10).

The four criteria listed above placed industry needs as foremost in the reform process. Notably, the Agenda said very little about pedagogical practices and their significance in delivering effective training (Billett et al., 1999; Smith & Keating, 2003).

In other countries where competency-based systems exist, such as the United Kingdom and Germany, opinion is divided over the success or otherwise of this approach as a means of developing a skilled and knowledgeable workforce (Chappell, Gonczi & Hager 2000, in Smith,
2002). In order to fully understand why this may be the case, it is worthwhile exploring the circumstances surrounding the progressive introduction of Competency Based Training (CBT) as the training mechanism by which the national competency standards could be measured and assessed. From the late 1980s, Australia adopted Competency Based Training (CBT) based on the notion of national competency standards to develop adaptability and flexibility in the workforce (Billett et al., 1999). The take up of a competence based system in the Australian VET sector was directed at improving international competitiveness (Misko, 1999) through a nationally consistent model.

*Competency based training is gradually replacing traditional time-based training. The focus is moving from ‘inputs’ (providers and their needs) to ‘outputs’ or ‘outcomes’ (what the client is competent to do, at work, on completion of training). These outcomes are the skill needs of enterprises, defined by the industry or enterprise and expressed as competency standards. (ANTA, 1994, p 9)*

The importance of pedagogical practice as being significant for delivering effective training appeared to be overlooked at that time due to the reform policy being directed towards industry (Billett et al., 1999; Mulcahy & James, 1999) but twenty years later it is being acknowledged again. In 1994, the Australian Government released the Working Nation Report, securing its commitment towards improving Australia’s international competitiveness. This report outlined a policy devoted to the development of a national training system which was:

- flexible
- able to respond to the needs of industry
- competitive
- placed value on the outcomes of training
- provided opportunities for disadvantaged students (Keating, 1994).
With the states and territories still maintaining their own training systems, inconsistencies in curriculum and the determination of standards soon emerged, identifying CBT as problematic (Smith, 2002). The task of uniting eight separate systems into one national training system was prolonged and not without upheaval (Smith, 2002). In 1992, the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) was established resulting in a cooperative approach across all jurisdictions. One of the key initiatives of ANTA was the facilitation of new methods of packaging training to make it more amenable to learners in the workplace (Kemp, 1996), whilst preserving the model of CBT. ANTA presided over the development of the National Training Framework and two elements that emerged from it, namely the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) and Training Packages. The main emphasis of the AQTF is to register training organisations and put in place quality assurance procedures (Stanwick, 2003). Both the AQTF and Training Packages have been retained at the time of writing. Introduced in 1997, Training Packages are nationally endorsed competency standards grouped together to cover industry areas and represent a range of qualifications. Training Packages arrived on the scene as a remedy for the inconsistencies and confusion experienced by industry and training providers as noted by the Honorable Dr. Kemp, Minister for Schools and Vocational Education in his presentation to the 1996 Australian Council for Private Education and Training:

*Training packages will address the long standing criticism that elements of training, such as competency standards, curriculum and assessment arrangements are often developed independently of each other and fail to produce optimum quality training outcomes.*

Training Packages have since heralded an important shift in the way vocational education is delivered and as the training marketplace has opened up, private and public providers compete for training among businesses in an effort to service a diverse range of clients and training options (Kosky, 2002). Dr. Kemp’s optimism that Training Packages would attend to the
difficulties associated with delivering quality training outcomes has proven to be a little pre-emptive as debate continues to surround the issue. In the ensuing ten years, Training Package products and processes remain under constant review. A Training Package for the textile, clothing and footwear industry has been developed in consultation with industry bodies to accommodate the training needs of a myriad of clothing and related industries. The Textiles, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) Training Package was approved and endorsed in 2000 for introduction in 2001. This Training Package underpins the framework upon which the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program at RMIT is based and is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter Three.

2.3 Perspective - State

In the domain of state policy direction, it is the Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE) that regulates a range of education and training programs and services in Victoria. OTTE is located within the Victorian Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD) and administers public funding for TAFE institutes. Knowledge and Skills for the Innovation Economy 2002, a major policy statement released by The Honorable Lynne Kosky, MP on behalf of the Victorian Labor Government places the VET sector at the forefront of the vision of an innovative state, claiming that VET can assist in the creation of an economy that:

- Has an educated and highly skilled workforce
- Is a leader in knowledge creation and innovation
- Is integrated and networked locally
- Has high levels of enterprise formation and business growth
- Is internationally integrated and
• Has a business environment and infrastructure base that facilitates business success (Kosky, 2002).

In order to create the infrastructure to facilitate the necessary changes, the policy statement identified a need to invigorate TAFE Institutes. To be successful in the future, TAFE’s need to locate and empower their most effective innovators and communicators, set up centres of excellence and adopt a more flexible approach to staff management and delivery models. Two years before the State Government released its policy, RMIT as a dual-sector university with a substantial TAFE presence had already begun a parallel move towards educational reform by way of program renewal.

2.4 Perspective – Institutional

RMIT University’s 2000-2002 Academic Strategy drew heavily upon the work of Ernest Boyer, whose book *Scholarship Reconsidered* argues the need for colleges and universities to undertake ‘new forms of scholarship’ that link teaching with research into ‘real-world’ problems (RMIT, 2000). Boyer proposed that universities traditionally separated the activities of teaching and research, often affording greater status to the role of research at the expense of student learning. He argued that there were four distinct but interconnected forms of scholarship: discovery, application, integration and teaching that made up university activity. ‘Program Renewal’, an educational design process authored by RMIT, became the facilitative mechanism to establish these scholarly linkages. This research study was made possible through Program Renewal, which highlighted the need for teachers to put their own teaching into a scholarly context and make it the subject of reflection and research.
‘RMIT has adopted a different approach. Using the Boyer classification of scholarship, staff involved in teaching and research are engaged in the different aspects of scholarship shown in Figure 1. Program Renewal provides a means for reflecting on these links and for integrating research and teaching within the experiences of both staff and students’ (RMIT, 2000, p 17).

The School of Fashion and Textiles responded swiftly to the University’s Teaching and Learning Strategy 2000–2002 by engaging an external company, Pivotal Consulting, to undertake a strategic review on its behalf, to provide recommendations on the School’s future direction. The Strategic Review Executive Summary identified a range of factors it deemed critical to success:

- Integrating resources and facilities across Higher Education (HE) and TAFE and the implementation of an efficient streamlined educational model
- A structure that can evolve from apprenticeships to post-graduate with flexible exit and entry points
- The need to be sensitive to the differences as much as the similarities between programs, TAFE/HE and workplace training
- Developing articulated pathways – multiple entry and exit points.
• A student-centred approach to program structure, content and delivery

• The school maintains on-going dialogue with industry ensuring that it continues to be a world leader in tertiary education

• Promote collaborative projects and industry partnerships.

(Artifact from own notes. No further source obtainable).

Central to the review team’s findings was the movement towards creativity and innovation of educational opportunities, reflective of the larger RMIT vision. The review had as one of its key objectives the need to develop new programs that built upon the activities specific to Training Packages as well as advancing the reshaping of the School’s academic architecture (RMIT, 2001a). See APPENDIX A. Included in the School’s response to the Strategic Review was the notion to develop, in the Fashion Program, a higher level TAFE Program than was currently being offered.

Early in 2000, Program Managers in the Fashion Department were considering the viability of expanding the suite of programs to include The Advanced Diploma of TCF (Fashion). With the introduction of the TCF Training Package imminent, the Fashion Department resolved to introduce a third tier to their set of nested programs, the Certificate 4 and Diploma. This would allow an individual the option to complete the requirements for the Diploma only, or proceed to the Advanced Diploma qualification. The correct positioning and content of the Advanced Diploma within this framework was significant in its attempt to fulfil the University objectives of respecting the differences and unique qualities of TAFE and HE programs (RMIT, 2001b). See APPENDIX B. One of the significant drivers of change during that period was the urgency for RMIT to be seen as operating on the leading edge of education: to offer something that its TAFE competitor institutions could not.
The school needs to be perceived as being at the forefront of the industry and education sectors in the areas of fashion and textiles. It is vital that we establish a reputation in the area of research (Internal Memo, May 8, 2000).

Local competitor institutions are:

- Box Hill Institute.
- Gordon Institute of TAFE.
- Kangan Batman TAFE.
- Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE.

During the period prior to the commencement of Training Packages, none of the above institutes, including RMIT, offered an Advanced Diploma of Clothing Production (Fashion) qualification.

2.5 Perspective - Personal

The Fashion Department has not always been part of RMIT and is a recent tenant on the Brunswick Campus. Previously known as the Melbourne College of Textiles, many observers regarded the Pascoe Vale-based college as the pre-eminent institution for supplying and delivering high-quality trade-based education to the clothing industry. RMIT negotiated a merger with Melbourne College of Textiles (MCT) during the latter part of the 1990’s that involved relocating to the recently constructed Brunswick Campus. Staff, students and resources arrived in 2000 to a new purpose-built complex housing design and patternmaking studios, CAD/CAM facilities and a fully equipped clothing factory. It was into this complicated environment, which by default became part of RMIT that I arrived in 1999 as a sessional teacher,. I vividly recall the upheaval and uncertainty felt amongst long-standing staff members of MCT for whom the takeover brought even more intense feelings of insecurity already fuelled by the myriad of external changes taking place. MCT had been delivering Clothing Production Programs using
Competency Based Training long before the implementation of Training Packages. Pre-purchased national training ‘modules’ that used Learning Outcomes served as the method of delivering accredited qualifications. There was a sense of mistrust amongst some long standing staff about the new Training Packages and a weariness towards having to ‘teach the same thing but in a different way’ (pers. com). Research indicates that the staff’s reaction was not uncommon following a decade of reform resulting in a general feeling of displacement (Cornford, 1999; Mulcahy & James, 1999). In contrast, other commentators believe that unlike previous delivery models, designing learning tasks and activities from the ground up for Training Package Programs can provide a unique opportunity to adopt a creative approach to interpretation and implementation (Cornford, 2000).

Waterson (in Smith & Keating, 2003, p 171) describes teachers developing their own curriculum from Training Packages as an opportunity...creating space for innovative educators to explore and colonise.

The TCF local manufacturing industry, around which so much of the Fashion Department Programs were designed, was in decline raising quiet speculation amongst staff as to whether their skills would match the new format. The TCF Training Package is oriented towards the workplace with standards of performance reflecting ‘on the job’ requirements. With the merger between Melbourne College of Textiles and RMIT, administrators were keen to address the issue of articulation, particularly since RMIT City Campus also provides a three-year undergraduate program. The inclusion of an Advanced Diploma Training Package Program at TAFE was favourably received and motivated by an interest in creating articulation pathways between Fashion TAFE and Higher Education (RMIT, 2001b). However this plan was never realised as the Higher Education arm of the School of Fashion and Textiles eventually moved across to a different portfolio.
Chapter 3

A PROJECT BASED LEARNING MODEL IN THE TEXTILES, CLOTHING and FOOTWEAR TRAINING PACKAGE

This chapter examines the methodology of Project Based Learning (PBL) and discusses its application as an instructional approach in Fashion TAFE at RMIT. PBL and CBT may appear to some to be unlikely bedfellows when their relationship is discussed in terms of educational worth. This is because critics have labelled CBT as ‘behaviourist’ in nature due to its reliance on performance as a measure of competence (Gonczi, 1992), whereas PBL asserts itself as ‘constructivist’, meaning that learning is a process of building or constructing knowledge. PBL is an approach more widely used in Higher Education, which is where it had its beginnings but I have sought to evaluate its effectiveness in a TAFE environment. The AQF Levels 5 and 6 of the Clothing Production Training Package contain performance criteria that require high levels of abstract thought, for example, behaviour that is not easily observable and measurable, suggesting that a behaviourist approach is not ideal. Thus, research suggest that constructivism is considered more responsive to contemporary social and cultural demands and is emerging as a framework that connects theory with practice (Gonczi, 2001).

3.1 Competency Based Training

Competency Based Training at RMIT TAFE is a fundamental aspect of this research project. It requires an understanding of the national training model and its relationship with suitable pedagogical practices to satisfy the needs of all stakeholders. In this context, stakeholders are identified as learners, teachers, RMIT and employers.
CBT has been at the foundation of curriculum design and assessment in VET for over a decade even before the introduction of Training Packages where it has been retained as a vehicle through which performance outcomes can be made explicit. Competence itself is a difficult concept. Concerns surrounding its definition, its development and most importantly its assessment, have generated much discussion as to what it means to be ‘competent’ (Chappell, Gonczi & Hager in Foley, 2000).

The National Training Board, the body accountable for policy and regulation originally stated that competence is characterised by four component skills:

1. The requirement to perform individual tasks (task skills)
2. The requirement to manage a number of different tasks within the job (task management skills)
3. The requirement to respond to irregularities and breakdowns in routine (contingency management skills)
4. The requirement to deal with the responsibilities and expectations of the work environment (job/role environment skills), including working with others; and to transfer the skills to new tasks and situations (NTB, 1992, p 29).

It is the fourth characteristic (job/role environment skills) that has recently come into focus in calls for a wider definition of competence. Current research, based on OVAL (The Australian Centre for Organisational, Vocational and Adult Learning), University of Technology, Sydney 2004 Research Working Papers 03-12 and 03-14, (Walsh, 2004), highlights a demand for employees to possess attributes enabling them to function interactivelly, consistent with the trend towards short-term employment and changing work practices. This is indicative of growing awareness that workers need to be more than just technically skilled (Walsh, 2004). In fact, it is the elusiveness of a definitive description of competence that prompts the following:
A person’s competence is something that lies behind what he or she can actually do. We cannot observe his or her ‘competence’ (Smith & Keating, 2003, p 135).

Of the many stakeholders who are directly exposed to the VET system, it is the education and training providers who develop appropriate pedagogical practices to fit within the framework that underpins competency standards. Literature within the vocational education community asserts that the original CBT model, with its emphasis on the measurement of outcomes against specific standards, gave scant regard to the development of cognitive and problem-solving abilities of learners. Training Packages are reviewed every three years and awareness of this concern has led to the introduction a number of initiatives such as Training Package Support Materials, ‘Reframing the Future’, and the embedding of employability skills.

3.2 Delivering The TCF Training Package in TAFE

Every Training Package consists of endorsed and non endorsed components. The endorsed components, those that cannot be changed in any way, are:

- Competency Standards
- Assessment Guidelines
- Use of the Australian Quality Framework Levels of Qualification

The unendorsed components allow for customisation to meet specific training requirements and include:

- Learning Strategies
- Assessment Materials
- Professional Development Materials
- Training Resources
Figure 2 illustrates a unit of competence drawn from the TCF Training Package. Each unit has Elements, Performance Criteria, a Range of Variables and an Evidence Guide. These constitute the endorsed components of the unit and ensure that the competencies are embedded in the material delivered. Accompanying each unit is a list of Key Competencies. These are generic skills that include communication, teamwork, problem solving and use of technology, the skills needed for economic success in the global marketplace (Ballenden, 2001 in Stanwick, 2003).

Whilst there are certain elements of the Training Package that are not negotiable, there is scope for the training package developer to customise and contextualise the content and method of delivery. For example, units of competence can be clustered together to form the ‘learning units’ required for the qualification, around which holistic learning experiences can be developed (Down & Stewart, 2001).
Figure 2 Unit of Competence TCF Training Package

LMTPDCL-99A: AGREE DESIGN BRIEF

Field: Product Development

This unit covers the skills and knowledge required to negotiate and confirm a proposal for garment design and production and to establish the budget for the design brief within a clothing enterprise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE CRITERIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Client requirements | a. Basis are discussed and interpreted to develop a perception of what is required  
   b. Understanding of the planned design is explored and defined with client through sketches, samples, and discussions  
   c. Consultation occurs with relevant personnel to ascertain feasibility of proposed ideas |
| 2. Prepare proposal | a. Information required for the proposal is confirmed through consultation with the client and/or other relevant personnel  
   b. Proposal is prepared to accurately reflect the design ideas and requirements |
| 3. Establish time-frames and budgets | a. Cost/price points are determined and confirmed  
   b. Time-frames are negotiated and agreed  
   c. Budget is established and monitoring strategies are identified  
   d. Outstanding issues related to costs, design and time-frames are negotiated and resolved with client and relevant personnel in accordance with workplace procedures |
| 4. Complete documentation | a. Agreement on design brief is confirmed with client in accordance with workplace requirements  
   b. All relevant paperwork and documentation is prepared in accordance with enterprise procedures |
## Range of Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>SCOPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1. General context** | a. Work involves the negotiation and confirmation of a proposal for garment design and production and the establishment of the budget and proposed time-line for the design brief within a clothing enterprise  
b. Significant judgement is required in planning, design, technical or supervisory activities related to products or processes  
c. Work is assessed in accordance with statutory requirements, organisation insurance requirements, OH&S legislation, manual handling procedures and relevant health regulations |
| **2. Worksite environment may include** | a. Work may be conducted in a large scale production or small business situation  
b. The competencies apply to workplace activities associated with negotiating, confirming and agreeing the design brief  
c. The competencies can refer to enterprise and client initiated ideas or requests  
d. The competencies may involve applications associated with:
  d.1. Original creation  
d.2. Adaption of designs or interpretation of sketches within contexts related to:  
d.2.1. Single or multiple production styles and ranges  
d.2.2. Made-to-measure  
d.2.3. Theatre costume  
e. Activities may relate to all the criteria normally required to finalise details associated with proposal preparation and agreement of design requirements  
f. The competencies are applied under limited guidance in line with a broad plan, budget or strategy  
g. Knowledge and skills are applied as part of the major functional area and/or in highly specialised situations requiring a range of skills  
h. The competencies are used independently within substantially non-routine situations |
| **3. Sources of information/documents may include** | a. Customer’s requirements  
b. Work specifications  
c. Design sketches and drawings  
d. Summaries of costs of materials and processes  
e. Organisation work procedures  
f. Organisational or external personnel  
g. Quality and Australian standards and procedures |
| **4. Workplace context may include** | a. Work organisation procedures and practices relating to the negotiation and confirmation of a proposal for garment design and production and the establishment of the budget and proposed time-line for a design brief within a clothing enterprise  
b. Conditions of service, legislation and industrial agreements including:  
b.1. Workplace agreements and awards  
b.2. Federal or State/Territory legislation  
c. Standard work practices  
d. Reporting actions include verbal and written communication in accordance with organisational policies and procedures  
e. Communication may be oral, written or visual and can include simple data  
f. Being responsible for the maintenance of own work quality and being required to contribute to the quality improvement of team or section output, where necessary  
g. Safety, environmental, housekeeping and quality are as specified by machines/equipment manufacturers, regulatory authorities and the enterprise |
| **5. Applicable regulations and legislation may include** | a. Occupational health and safety legislation relevant to workplace activities  
b. Workers’ compensation legislation |
Evidence Guide

1. Critical aspects of evidence to be considered
   a. Assessment must confirm appropriate knowledge and skills to:
      a1. clarify design requirements
      a2. identify and confirm garment costs, time-lines, etc.
      a3. establish or interpret procedures
      a4. determine report requirements and present information in appropriate formats
      a5. assemble information related to proposal
      a6. prepare proposals
      a7. communicate effectively with design team, production departments, customers, etc.
      a8. apply workplace health and safety policies in work operations
      a9. maintain accurate records

2. Interdependent assessment of units
   a. This unit does not need to be assessed in conjunction with other units

3. Required knowledge and skills
   a. Underpinning knowledge of:
      a1. the elements and principles of design and how they can be used to create good design in the clothing industry
      a2. the industry, global and local trends in fashion and garment design
      a3. garment construction techniques and processes
      a4. detailed knowledge of a range of fabrics, including weight and other characteristics, together with an understanding of marker making and cutting
      a5. research sources
      a6. colour/colour mix and interpretation
      a7. fabrics, fibres, trim, accessories and their properties and characteristics
      a8. proposals, the detail required and issues associated with terms and conditions
      a9. safety and environmental aspects of relevant enterprise activities
      a10. workplace procedures and reporting processes
      a11. relevant OH&S legislation, regulatory requirements and copyright obligations and codes of practice
   b. Underpinning skills to:
      b1. clarify requirements
      b2. negotiate and confirm proposals
      b3. establish and confirm terms and conditions
      b4. communicate effectively with clients, individuals, design personnel and supervisors
      b5. establish or interpret procedures
      b6. determine report requirements and present information in appropriate formats

4. Resource implications
   a. Access to real or appropriately simulated situations involving the negotiation and confirmation of a proposal for garment design and production and the establishment of the budget and proposed time-line for a design brief within a clothing enterprise
   b. This includes real or simulated work areas, materials, equipment, and information on work specifications, relevant safety procedures and regulations, quality standards, organisation procedures and customer requirements

5. Consistency in performance
   a. Applies underpinning knowledge and skills when:
      a1. planning and organising work
      a2. negotiating and confirming design proposals
      a3. completing tasks
      a4. applying safety precautions relevant to the task
   b. Shows evidence of application of relevant workplace procedures including:
      b1. hazard policies and procedures including codes of practice
      b2. job procedures and work instructions
      b3. quality procedures (where existing)
      b4. waste, pollution and recycling management processes
   c. Action taken promptly, accidents and incidents reported in accordance with statutory requirements and enterprise procedures
   d. Recognises and adapts appropriately to cultural differences in the workplace, including modes of behaviour and interactions among staff and others
   e. Work completed systematically with attention to detail without damage to goods, equipment or personnel

6. Context for assessment
   a. Assessment may occur on the job or in an appropriately simulated environment

### Key Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collect, Analyse &amp; Organise Information</th>
<th>Communicate Ideas &amp; Information</th>
<th>Plan &amp; Organise Activities</th>
<th>Work with Others &amp; in Teams</th>
<th>Use Mathematical Ideas &amp; Techniques</th>
<th>Solve Problems</th>
<th>Use Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© Australian National Training Authority, 2000

LMT00

"Review date: 31 January 2003"
The goal of the course team of the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program was to create a learning curriculum that was based on appropriate pedagogical strategies, was compliant with the Training Packages rules and implementation guidelines, and aligned with the institutional objectives as outlined in Chapter Two.

Projects Director (Educational Development) Cathy Down indicated that RMIT places:

… equal value on both the learning journey of the students and their vocational outcomes. It recognises that whilst Training Packages specify the outcomes to be achieved and the rules for awarding national qualifications, it is at the RTO level that the learning curriculum must be developed (Down & Stewart, 2001).

Similarly, The School of Fashion and Textiles indicated that any new programs brought on line through Training Packages should include characteristics favourable to learning such as:

- a student-centred approach to program structure, content and delivery
- multiple entry and exit points
- collaborative industry partner projects

Integrating workplace learning into a TAFE context suggests an understanding of how students learn most effectively in their surroundings. The consistent theme of integration of theory and practice as evidenced by RMIT’s adoption of the Boyer model of scholarship where teaching is integrated with research and speaks to the early work of the progressive educational theorists such as Dewey and Kolb who each in their own way identified the value of personal learning in both education as well as the business environment. Kolb, the most recent of the two theorists, described his experiential learning model as ‘an integrated function of the total organism – thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving (Kolb, 1984, p 31). Likewise, Project Based Learning is thought to provide a holistic approach to learning and assessment in an institutional environment, and together with Kolb’s experiential learning model, provides a framework and, as
such, a link between education, work and personal development, which is a good starting point in the discussion of effective vocational education.

3.2.1 Educational Theory
As a learning theory, behaviourism has been closely aligned with Competency Based Training with its reliance on observable changes of behaviour (Beckett, 2004; Misko, 1999 and Smith, Lowrie, Hill, Bush & Lobegeier, 1997 in Smith, 2002). This is noticeable in the units of competence and elements contained in the Training Packages that guide the teacher’s preparation of curriculum and learning resources. Using a behaviourist orientation, the learner’s role is passive. The teacher’s role becomes one of knowledge enabler with assessment being the indicator of knowledge uptake. The ‘checklist approach’ that underpins some assessment practices at RMIT Fashion TAFE reinforces the fact that behaviourism is still used. Blunden (1997), cautions teachers against basing teaching practice on purely behavioural outcomes as it does not take into consideration the unobservable elements of learning, such as thinking, problem solving and reasoning, but acknowledges that there are some instances where the achievement of safe work practices requires a behaviourist approach. Clothing Production teachers have found the behaviourist approach of instruction, demonstration and repetition most effective in their teaching practice when teaching foundational technical skills on industrial sewing machines and electric cutting equipment.

Cognitivism and objectivism, advances of the behaviourist notion, introduced the concept that mental processes contribute to learning. Gagne’s contribution to the literature on objectivism (elements of behaviourism and cognitivism) is still influential in vocational education through his proposition that learning programs should be sequenced according to complexity to enhance transfer of learning (Blunden, 1997). By contrast, Chappell (2003a) notes that both these
theoretical positions reinforce the role of the teacher/trainer in determining the strategies that will permit transmission, rather than transfer of knowledge.

More recently, educational theorists have forecast and evaluated the changing needs of workers and their workplaces resulting in newer understandings of pedagogy based upon constructivist principles. Constructivism proposes that students learn by building upon their own existing knowledge rather than receiving knowledge from others (Henry, 1994). Knowledge of and in workplace practice is paramount in the sphere of vocational education. Piaget, together with Dewey and Kolb, has developed the notion that intelligence is shaped by experience (Kolb, 1984).

*It will be increasingly important that educators and trainers prepare people to deal with new work situations and change. They need to be able to manage change both individually and collaboratively as part of a wider workplace community* (Rumsey, 1999, p 1).

### 3.3 Innovation through Training Packages

Research indicates that changing work practices are having an influence on teaching and learning in VET. A growing body of literature exists within the VET system that is devoted to explaining how TAFE could become more flexible and relevant in its approach to Training Package implementation in order to contribute to the emerging knowledge economy (Boud & Hawke, 2003; Callan, 2004; Kosky, 2002; Mitchell, 2003; OTTE, 2002; Simons, Meyers, Harris, & Blom, 2003). What emerges from this discourse is a dialogue that challenges educational providers to search for new ways to meet the needs of their customers in a competitive arena at a local and organisational level. Mitchell (2003) suggests that practitioners can adopt innovative practices to promote a learning centred agenda and lifelong learning, and defines innovation as
the implementation of, amongst other things, a new idea, method or process. A study by Simons et al (2003) examines innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment whilst Callan (2004) explores the concept more extensively and expresses innovation more in terms of organisation and enterprise, rather than individual teachers interpreting Training Package Programs in an innovative way. The development and implementation of the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program demonstrates consistencies with the concepts of innovation outlined by Mitchell (2003), Simons et al (2003) and Callan (2004) and has enjoyed the support and endorsement of the RMIT Fashion Department to date. Of particular interest are the recommendations made by Mitchell (2003, p 103), that indicate conditions for better support and sustainability of an innovative project:

- innovation can be significantly enhanced by a deep knowledge of learners, learning styles, teaching strategies and learning sites and contexts
- innovation can be significantly enhanced by a deep understanding of assessment
- innovation can only be transferred when a range of factors are in place (meaning that some innovative ideas are context sensitive).

Putting suitable pedagogical practices that are learner centred, work centred and attribute focused in place in an educational environment presents a challenge to the teaching practitioner who is coming to terms with a reconceptualised VET environment as being less about developing skill and more about developing people (Chappell, 2003a).

In spite of being devoid of curriculum or syllabus content, some commentators are of the opinion that Training Packages allow teachers the scope to develop innovative teaching strategies that encourage learners to develop their own personal constructs (Hawke & Cornford, 1998; Waterhouse, 2000). The proposition that high-quality training can emerge from Training Packages is advanced by Lewis (2000) and Scollay (2000), who similarly agree that successful
implementation of Training Packages rests with the professional pedagogical knowledge that a committed teacher possesses. However, this view is not uncontested. Smith (2002) presents a view that Training Packages are disadvantageous for learners not exposed to a work environment as demonstration of competence often requires exposure to and knowledge of the workplace. Smith’s suggestion challenges the authenticity of delivering Training Packages to TAFE students, who make up 85% of accredited VET training, and highlights the difficulties experienced by training providers as they endeavour to construct appropriate learning activities for a student cohort largely comprised of learners who have no access to a workplace (Smith, 2002).

Whilst PBL offers a simulated learning experience, some industry experts have mixed views regarding the authenticity of using simulations to assess competence, particularly in the higher AQF levels, citing that competence can only be acquired and assessed on the job (Boorman, 2001). Meeting this challenge with Diploma and Advanced Diploma level qualifications is particularly contentious in a TAFE setting with learners studying management-related competencies without access to a workplace environment.

### 3.4 Program Structure through PBL

A major assessment requirement of the AQF Level 6 qualification is the demonstration of the ability to solve complex problems. Project Based Learning (PBL) the instructional model that organises learning around projects (Thomas, 2000) has been favoured as the method of delivery for the Advanced Diploma Program due to the value of its learning strategies to teaching practice. PBL is grounded in a constructivist, learner-centred approach and the active participation from students is critical to its success. As an instructional approach, PBL has garnered particular attention in the fields of cognitive science and engineering that has much to do with its association with constructivist learning practices and the development of higher-order cognitive
skills. Constructivists place the learner at the centre of their own knowledge building giving rise to a ‘general agreement’ that learning is ‘context dependent, socially mediated and situated in the ‘real-world- of the learner’(Chappell, 2003b, p 3).

Commentators have encountered difficulties in locating a universally accepted model of Project Based Learning (PBL), resulting in a variety of practices being utilised. Thomas (2000, p 4) has identified five defining features that a project must have in order to be considered an instance of PBL:

- Project-based learning projects are central, not peripheral to the curriculum
- project-based learning projects are focused on questions or problems that ‘drive’ students to encounter the central concepts and principles of a discipline
- projects involve students in a constructive investigation
- projects are student-driven to some significant degree and
- projects are realistic, not school-like.

Project-based learning shares many characteristics with problem-based learning. Both approaches are student centred, collaborative and use authentic ‘real world’ issues to enhance learning. However, in Project-based learning it is the project that is the end product (Uden & Beaumont, 2006) rather than finding a solution to a problem. The models of PBL introduced at RMIT take into account the policy frameworks and practical considerations available at the time of implementation.

The Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program is a full-time course of study undertaken over four terms of one academic year. Eight hundred student contact hours are allocated, averaged over two to three days per week. Four separate Term Projects are offered, each project is comprised of a cluster of four to five competencies that are grouped together to form discrete units of assessment. Each project addresses a different sector of the fashion industry, and in so doing
gives an overview of career options. Each project is of ten weeks duration and is structured in such a way that valuable skills, knowledge and attributes are developed. The projects are evaluated on subject matter to ensure the scope of work is within the learner’s capability and every project is reflective of different disciplines in the fashion industry. Three of the projects are undertaken individually and the fourth is a group submission.

PBL is not a dominant feature of the lower level programs within the Fashion Department where a tradition of face-to-face teaching is used to embed technical skills such as use of industrial sewing machines and garment patternmaking. In the lower levels, learning is fragmented because of practical constraints such as timetabling and teacher availability, although efforts are being made during planning to develop a more cohesive approach. The highly practical nature of the Certificate 4 and Diploma Fashion Programs and the need to consolidate technical skills acts as a practical and pedagogical disincentive to exposing learners too early to project work. Henry (1994) notes that a systematic introduction to PBL beginning with a ‘structured’ format in the lower years and thereafter increasing the difficulty and scope of the projects is beneficial in allowing students to prepare and develop the various skills involved.

The four projects can be summarized as follows:

**Project 1 – ‘Small Business’**

Students are required to develop a viable fashion ‘small business’ concept that can withstand scrutiny by financial stakeholders such as banks, business partners, franchisers. External relationships are developed with existing business enterprises, suppliers and potential customers. The outcome of the project is a collection of ‘artefacts’ that include design/development concepts, a small collection of sample garments and supporting documentation in the form of a Small Business Financial Report. These artefacts are presented by the learners, in an open exhibition, to a panel of teacher/assessors who act as prospective buyers/financiers.
**Project 2 – ‘Elective” Students own choice – Exploratory Design’**

Students select their own topic to explore using local or international design competition briefs as a basis for their learning. Choices are often made using considerations such as the allure of competition prize money, as enticement, and the degree of personal challenge involved. This project appeals to the creativity of learners and produces mostly avant-garde ‘fashion as art’ pieces. Internal assessment is conducted as for Project 1. Students also undergo a form of public external assessment from competition judges who are usually renowned within the industry. Winning Fashion Design Competitions has proven to be useful to past RMIT students by way of exposure and job prospects.

**Project 3 – Industry Partner Project**

The engagement of a suitable industry partner enhances the learning activities provided in this project. As well as setting one brief for all students to investigate, the industry partner involved supplies resources and access to their workplace. Groups of 3 to 4 students form ‘companies’. They engage in collaborative practices, competing against each other to deliver and present a garment range that best meets the industry partner’s set brief. The industry partner contributes valuable feedback through full participation in the assessment process.

**Project 4 – Manufacture and Quality Assurance**

In spite of its name, there is no requirement in this project to produce garments on campus. Instead, students are encouraged to arrange their own field study placement with a company that develops fashion product either on or offshore. The duration of study placement relies on the capacity and location of the enterprise to accommodate students. This can range from three days to full-time on-going employment. Such a disparity has been found to cause inconsistencies in the depth and range of information sourced. Therefore, students with minimal placement time are encouraged to seek another company with which they can make comparisons. Students not directly involved in field study placement remain on campus attending tutorials concerning
various contemporary manufacturing models. Assessment can be conducted in the workplace for students who have secured full-time employment as a result of the project.

The outcome of each project is a ‘product’ and students are assessed on the artefact together with all the development work that was completed during the process. This portfolio of evidence forms the basis of assessment. Assessment criteria are informed by competency standards drawn from the TCF Training Package.

### 3.5 Conclusion

It has been worthwhile to understand how different educational theories have informed VET pedagogical practice leading to a recognition and improvement of training models in the continually evolving VET sector. After a brief introduction to PBL, much of this chapter has been devoted to familiarising the reader with contextual details about the projects undertaken by learners in the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program. The following chapter introduces the reader to participatory action research as the methodology used to evaluate the effectiveness of applying PBL in a TAFE context. Details are provided regarding the methods used to gather information and data collection.
Chapter 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this study was to apply teaching and learning research to an issue, problem or change that was occurring in my workplace. As a practitioner/researcher, I sought a line of inquiry that explicitly linked learning with research and was introduced to Participatory Action Research (PAR) as part of the project induction. I quickly noted its suitability to the particular issue I sought to change. A characteristic of PAR is its spirals of plan, act, observe and reflect (Fig. 3) that allows the practitioner researcher to analyse a new initiative to find out what works, what doesn’t and act accordingly. The Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program was a pilot program already being delivered to clients. PAR provided a framework around which I could become a participant in a process of change that was highly contextual and one through which I believed that the effectiveness of the program could be evaluated in a meaningful way. This chapter defends Participatory Action Research as the research design, discusses how the research was conducted and makes comment about ethical issues arising from my position as both teacher and researcher.

4.1 Theoretical Framework

Jarvis (1996, p 45) describes the inclination to revert to habit as the development of a guiding personal theory which is profoundly influenced by the life history and biography of the practitioner. Practitioner-based action research offers an opportunity to challenge old habits cultivated through lived experience with a process of inquiry. When a practitioner encounters an unexpected problem or experience foreign to her personal theory, a ‘disjuncture’ (Jarvis, 1996) or ‘critical incident’ (McTaggart, 1991) occurs. As she attempts to make sense of the situation
through reflexive, critical analysis, deeper understanding emerges when the ‘critical incident’ is incorporated with personal theory. As a teacher, I am constantly analysing my own practice, usually using a range of informal strategies to identify what worked and what didn’t. As a result, I rarely teach the same lesson twice in exactly the same way, preferring to draw upon the reactions and feedback from learners and members of the teaching cohort as a guide. This same approach is reflected in participative, action – oriented, ‘practice research’ (Wadsworth, 1998) which, due to its practical and social nature, became the vehicle through which the curriculum content and structure for the RMIT Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program was evaluated.

4.2 Participatory Action Research Methodology

Participatory Action Research is a form of ‘collective, self-reflective inquiry’ (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, p 5) that features the researcher as a participant in an investigation to examine, change and improve practice. It is this active role of the researcher that differentiates action research from other conventional research approaches (Corey in McTaggart, 1991). Action Research has at its core the dual aims of action and research; ‘action’ to bring about change in community, organisation or program and ‘research’ to increase understanding on the part of the researcher, the client, or both (Dick, 1999). It is the experimental and social nature of this method of research that defines it as a way of trying out ideas in practice that lead to improvement and new knowledge.

The ‘evolving methodology’ (Jennings & Graham, 1996 in James & Mulcahy, 2000) of PAR as a method of social research was pioneered in the early work of Kurt Lewin in the 1940’s who explored the link between theory and practice (Lewin, 1951). After falling from favour during the 1950’s, as research method it experienced a resurgence in the 1960’s, advanced by Paolo Freire and his examination of the emancipatory power of reflection in education (Freire, 1972). The use
of action research as a methodology in an educational context can be traced to the United
Kingdom in the 1970’s where it was applied as a means of investigating curriculum
improvements. More recently, its adoption in Australia has attracted proponents such as Stephen
Kemmis and Robin McTaggart who have been internationally influential in ‘articulating the
theory and practice of action research’ (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

Wadsworth (1998) describes PAR as

… research which involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current
action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change and improve it.

( http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/p-ywadsworth98.html) accessed May 24,
2007.

The notion of the researcher participating in the problematising of issues and challenges is at
odds with other conventional methods of social research in that action, rather than hypothesis,
drives the research forward (Corey in McTaggart, 1991). This reconceptualisation of the role of
the researcher is further explained by Habermas, in McTaggart (1991), who refers to three
defensible forms of science: the empirical, the hermeneutic (or interpretive) and the critical. Used
in more conventional, and possibly linear, professional research, a hypothesis grounded in
empirical (quantitative) data is tested and conclusions drawn. This orthodox form of research is
sometimes undertaken ‘for its own sake’ (Wadsworth, 1998, p 1) and the researcher is not central
to the process. By contrast, action research aligns itself within an interpretive and critical
theoretical perspective which means that an effort is made to understand and improve existing
practices thereby placing the researcher at the centre of the inquiry. Research begins by
acknowledging that a problem exists even though the problem may not be clearly articulated.

Wadsworth (1998) describes emergent problems as ‘hunches’ that are progressively unpacked,
evaluated and acted upon. It is the ability to critically assess and reflect on one’s interpretation of
events that changes the role of the researcher from ‘disinterested objective observer’ (McTaggart,
to co-participant. Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Grundy (cited in McTaggart, 1991) have carried through the assertion that critically informed practice (or praxis) is necessary for action research to be validly linked to an epistemological theory. Using the three conceptualisations of action research: Technical, Practical, and Critical, commentators including Grundy (cited in McTaggart, 1991), Carr & Kemmis (1986), and Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) have helped me to understand how, as I have moved through these three phases, I have developed ‘actionable knowledge’ that seeks to change and improve learners’ experiences: an ongoing aim of this action research study. Crawford (1995, p 239) describes actionable knowledge as that which can ‘change professional practice or social institutions through the active and transformative participation of those working within a particular setting’.

The ‘Technical’ form of knowledge making aims to increase or decrease the incidence of particular outcomes. At the commencement of the project I relied upon my ‘personal construct theory’ of teaching experience to experiment with different teaching strategies mainly using trial and error to see what worked best. As the project continued the teaching cohort collectively but tentatively developed new practices although these were still situated within what we perceived to be the interpretation of Training Packages. This progression, known as the ‘Practical’ form, aims to improve and inform the practical decision making of practitioners.

The most transformative mode of knowledge making is the ‘Critical’ (or emancipatory) form of action research which positions the practitioner/researcher as an agent of change who uses authentic understanding to enact transformative practices. In this respect, the appropriateness of the action is highly contextual prompting Schön (1987) to argue that practitioner knowledge, based on performativity, exhibits sufficient rigour and relevance to satisfy the notion of relationship between the high ground of theoretical, or propositional knowledge and the lowly swamp of practice (Schon, 1987 cited in Chambers, 1997, p 190).
4.3 Reflective Practice

The process of critically examining one’s theoretical perspective is what Schön describes as reflective practice and constitutes a necessary part of action research, although McMahon (1999, in James & Mulcahy, 2000) makes a distinction between the two. McMahon suggests that...

...reflective practice can be used to identify problems, action research can seek to provide solutions’ (James & Mulcahy, 2000, p 168).

It can be argued that to merely understand and act upon the solutions that emerge through the project, renders one guilty of what Argyris and Schön (1978) describe as single-loop learning, a situation where we don’t learn from our or other’s mistakes, thus resulting in failure to achieve desired results. By engaging in double loop learning, we look beyond the surface nature of our problem or situation and engage in critical reflection. This kind of inquiry enables the practitioner to become contextually sensitive to why things are done in a certain way and to probe for assumptions, values, and beliefs that lay beneath people’s actions (Marsick, 1988). The exegesis undertaken as a component of this research study could be considered to be ‘double-loop learning’. This is evidenced by examination and critical analysis of the political and social context in which the project is located. By engaging in such intense scrutiny of normal workplace procedures, I was unwittingly becoming more retrospective, or as Steier (1991, p 2 in Redmond, 2004) notes: ‘reflexive’, meaning ‘a turning back of one’s experience upon oneself’. Similar to other commentators, I have at times felt like Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz, travelling along a road of twists and turns, with the dilemmas and uncertainties of a practitioner research project. I was led down blind alleys, wasted time following intriguingly deceptive ‘hunches’ that never materialised, stared down incarnations of a wicked witch in the form of institutional conflict and my own self-doubt. All the while, I was accompanied by trusty co-participants and colleagues whose practical wisdom, values and belief in the integrity of this form of research gave me the
courage and heart not just to continue, but to complete. Hodgkinson, (in McTaggart, 1991, p 14) could have easily discarded my efforts and interest in ‘scholarly research’ as ‘amateurish’ and a ‘weak version of what professional researchers were doing’, however, from my perspective, the documented link between action research and curriculum as a field of inquiry (Kemmis & Stake, 1988; McTaggart, 1991; Usher, Bryant, & Johnston, 1997) left me in no doubt that I was guided towards the ‘only legitimate option for educational researchers’ (McTaggart, 1991) and seemed to be an entirely appropriate approach for my particular situation.

4.4 Research Method

Action research is distinguished by its spiral of four steps: plan, act, observe and reflect (Figure 3). The cyclical nature of action research means that the evaluative process can commence at any stage, but usually begins as a plan of action for improvement or change. Four long Action Research Cycles were trialled and evaluated over the period of this research. Newcomers to action research are cautioned against undertaking such long loop cycles as difficulties maintaining commitment and a lack of observable progress can be disheartening (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). I approached the task this way because the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program extended over a full year. Four independent projects existed within the year long Program, and although they had procedural similarities, the focus of each was different. In order to capture and act upon issues in context as they emerged, the Program was allowed to progress through the full-year cycle.
The inclusion of participants as part of the research process highlights the social nature of this type of approach, whereby the active involvement of others through shared knowledge can contribute to the identification and resolution of problems.

Wadsworth (1998) describes those who are researched upon as the critical reference group, meaning those for whom the problem or issue is about. In this instance, the students were central to the project’s focus which was the implementation of PBL in a Training Package environment. Their opinions, thoughts and feelings contributed significantly to the eventual outcomes of this highly situated research. For this reason, I have identified them as the critical reference group.
Table 1 lists the number of students enrolled in the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program over the duration of the research study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of enrolment</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Number of learner sample groups*

Researching on/with my students called into question my role as both practitioner and researcher. The intimate, daily contact and familiarity between teacher and student had the potential to raise ethical concerns due to the inequality and constraints of the teacher/student relationship so that the project was categorised by the ethics committee as Risk Level 2.

Carr and Kemmis (in McTaggart, 1991, p 45) advise that

*…when status and power differentials exist among participants, these must be suspended to allow collective work to begin, but combated in the course of that work.*

In order to minimise the perceived risk of vulnerability to this group, participants were issued a plain language statement with consent form and advised of the nature of the investigation. A teaching colleague, not associated with the project, was recruited to act in a supervisory role to distribute and collect general surveys and questionnaires. Subjects were informed of the voluntary nature of their participation and reassured that their responses would be anonymous. Student subjects were assured that participation was truly voluntary and their refusal to participate would have no bearing on their academic assessment.

In order to evaluate the Advanced Diploma Program in a true and fair manner, I had to acknowledge that my own performance could be scrutinised by learners and peers alike.
This was dealt with by supplying non-threatening conditions for learners to speak and write freely. Participation in any written questionnaires concerning the project was optional and anonymity guaranteed. Questionnaires generated through the project were left for collection in a designated area and Student Satisfaction Surveys generated by RMIT were distributed and collected by a neutral third party. Students were reassured that their input was a valuable contribution towards enhancing the quality of student learning and program improvement.

Learners valued being part of a wider community or continuum of learning through the tentative nurturing of an ‘alumni’ group. This initiative brought into focus a sense of empowerment and authority for learners to speak out confidently on issues of concern, as much for their own resolution, as for those following them into the Advanced Diploma Program.

4.5 Data

Data sources captured in the self-reflective spirals of this research project and analysed in the following chapter, relate directly to the learning experiences of student participants of the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program. The raw data were gathered using a variety of formal and informal means. The following data are listed chronologically for interpretation in Chapter Five.

A 2001 Student Teacher Forum comprised 11 students and 3 teachers and was conducted at the completion of the first ten weeks of the inaugural Program. Information was drawn from students and teachers alike, brainstorming their opinions of ‘what worked’ and ‘what didn’t’. Written responses were elicited from seven students and these responses, together with my own field notes provide the basis for analysis. In 2002, the course team generated a learner survey that was distributed to a cohort of 18 students. It consisted of open ended questions regarding the students’ perception of their own learning experience. During the same year, official RMIT statistics in the
form of Student Experience Surveys were used as data and are presented for here for analysis. The RMIT Student Experience Survey measures the student experience in relation to good teaching, generic skills, appropriate assessment, the learning experience and overall satisfaction. In 2003, a questionnaire initiated by the course team and completed by 9 student participants contained open ended questions designed to extract information about an issue of concern which had emerged. The following year, a learner survey originally distributed in 2002 was reissued in 2004 and completed by 14 students. The RMIT Student Experience Survey results from 2006 were also referenced to provide comparisons with those from 2002.

A research study such as this, which relies upon qualitative evaluation, is less structured and draws data from a range of sources including conversations, observations, journals and informal class discussions. These data sources have proven to be the most difficult to record and present for analysis. Boucher (2001 in FELCS, 2002) describes this process as immersing oneself in the data and looking for confirmation or contradiction of identifying themes. Other less formal sources of data, specifically the students’ completed project portfolios, were also accessed to gain valuable information about teaching praxis and the students’ learning experience but are not presented explicitly for analysis in the following chapter. Instead, the knowledge that these intangible data sources imparted is embedded throughout Chapter 6 as part of the theorisation of PBL.

The participation of the teaching team of the Advanced Diploma Program was also handled in a more subtle manner, characterised by an emphasis on context, process and change. In the complex and often confusing situations that emerged, their contribution is more recognisable in the technical and dialogical aspects of the project ‘made through deploying intuitive knowledge acquired through experience, as well as strategic knowledge gained through conscious reflection’ (James, 1999 in James & Mulcahy, 2000, p 518).
4.6 Conclusion

I have chosen to locate my research in the critical/emancipatory perspective of Participatory Action Research. In so doing, my aim has been to develop new teaching and learning practices that resolve the tension between the behaviourist nature of Training Packages and the desired learning approach of PBL. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of this application the next chapter is devoted to analysis of the data. Data were collected from a variety of sources to establish a basis upon which to compare later findings. After analysing the original data, I was able to form generalisations which could be verified with data from other sources. This technique of triangulation via multiple sources allowed me to compare primary and secondary research evidence in order to judge whether improvements were happening so that when subsequent data were reviewed it was possible to see if changes had taken place as a result of my actions (McNiff, 2002). The next chapter is concerned with extracting meaning from the data and identifying three main themes that inform the research from hereon. The effectiveness of the use of PBL as an instructional approach in a TAFE Training Package Program is evaluated from the perspectives of the themes of Learning, Teaching and Assessment.
Chapter 5

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH DATA

Using the critical theorist approach that is PAR, this chapter seeks to test the relationship between thought and action (Greenwood & Levin, 1998). I have observed and elicited numerous responses from participants that fulfil the social and interpretive nature of an action research approach and now proceed onto the evaluation process. This chapter builds on discussion from the preceding chapter to illustrate how the gathered data were interpreted. Examples are given and linked directly to the emergent themes of Teaching and Learning and Assessment.

5.1 Student Teacher Forum 2001

The purpose of the Student Teacher Forum 2001 was for teachers of the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program to engage in open and forthright dialogue with their students to determine satisfaction levels regarding the new Program and its mode of learning (PBL). It was the intention of the teaching staff, and me as practitioner/researcher to use the data from the forum to plan further improvements. The Forum was conducted in the Council Room of RMIT Brunswick Campus after the completion of the first project – Small Business. Three staff members responsible for delivering the Advanced Diploma Program were present. After experiencing ten weeks of the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program, each of the 11 students enrolled in the initial program were invited to comment on

- what worked for them
- what didn’t work for them.

During the discussion, verbal and written feedback was gathered. Reflecting upon the robust discussion that ensued, I was alerted to the sensitivities and power imbalance that is part of the
teacher/student/researcher relationship. This did not deter students in the pilot program from being openly critical of the new mode of learning (PBL) and the perceived lack of teacher support. Students were invited to vocalise as well as commit their thoughts to paper. These notations, together with feedback elicited from the teaching team, formed a basis for appraisal. Comments such as:

...I found I was working on my own for most of the work

...I like having a lot of time out of school hours

...the days we had off were great

...more encouragement to use the outside work time and not to leave things until next class.

Further evaluation revealed one particular issue of concern. Learners were struggling to understand the unstructured nature of PBL after having become accustomed to a more behavioristic teaching style over previous years. Similarly, the teaching team had to acknowledge that PBL was also a new experience for them that had a high degree of uncertainty. This misunderstanding was manifesting itself in several ways: learners were unable to adequately time manage their projects as all that ‘free time’ had them rushing to meet the required deadlines. Teachers had formed preconceived notions that the learners’ research skills and learning independence were more advanced than they actually were. Underpinning these new understandings was a gradual awareness of the importance of generic, employability skills in an AQF Level 6 Training Package Program and a realisation that although Project Based Learning appeared to prepare learners for future employment there were certain elements in course design, Training Package compliance and assessment that were misaligned. The misalignment refers to the predominance of outcomes requiring direct evidence of performable technical skills being written into the original course outline and assessment criteria. This resulted in a narrow interpretation of the Training Package that overlooked the explicit or implicit inclusion of the
Key Competencies in either learning tasks or assessment. This discovery served to narrow and define a hypothesis that would shape the direction of my research; that producing a well-rounded, competent, employable TAFE student could be achieved through a mixture of innovative course design, educational theory and an integrative assessment method.

In the following section, the data is analysed in chronological order. This approach is loosely reflective of the action research cycles that took place and attempts to show the many ways in which information was accessed.

5.2 Learner Surveys 2002 - 2004

In 2002, eighteen students were enrolled in the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program. Each student was invited to participate in a survey (APPENDIX C) designed to gauge whether they had perceived a change in the way that they approached learning in a PBL environment. The survey was distributed six months after commencement of the Program and seven respondents returned the survey.

In 2004, the same survey was distributed to a different cohort of fourteen students enrolled in the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program. Nine students returned the survey. Figure 4 compares the responses from the two groups.
Question 1: What has been your personal aim in participating in the Advanced Diploma Program? Respondents could select more than one answer.

Over the two year period between 2002 and 2004, learner participants appeared to have reprioritised their purpose for undertaking the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program from one of personal skill enhancement to an acknowledgement that the Program was going to assist them to be (a) ‘work ready’. It could be concluded that the Program’s strong emphasis on graduate employment and industry partnerships had some influence on the 2004 learners’ decision to select that particular program. Interestingly, the responses to (c) to be an independent learner and (d) to be self responsible were perceived to be more highly relevant to learners undertaking the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program 2002 than in 2004. The intervening years have seen a considerable uptake in the readiness of teachers in the lower AQF levels of Certificate 4 and Diploma in Clothing Production to embrace learner centred pedagogical practices similar to those
modelled in the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program. It is possible that learners in the 2004 cohort had already been exposed to these practices in their first or second year.

**Question 2: How have you gone about achieving your personal goals?**

Responses amongst the 2002 learners indicated an emerging awareness of personal learning, of knowing how to learn and build knowledge. These learners appeared to be using constructivist principles to make sense and meaning out of their lived experience, by using strategies such as:

- tuning into the teachers' advice and knowledge
- talking to people in the industry
- learning and listening to every bit of knowledge and taking on board where my faults are and improving these areas
- knowing my personal skills more better (sic). Knowing what to do and how to achieve them; being more independent learner by looking up books for my information
- not to rely on my teachers for assistance and try to do it myself
- become more self-reliable, using my own initiative, become more aware of what my skills are and trying to improve them.

In what could be called a significant shift, the responses provided by the 2004 cohort exhibited a more mature, outward-looking and deeper approach to learning. They showed evidence of being able to apply knowledge in different contexts. Their responses once again elicited an explicit vocational link:

- taking numerous and various types of work experience
- forcing myself to try different things
- meet people and know about them and their stories: how they achieved their goals
- listen to every aspect of the course that I can apply in the workplace
- improve my knowledge in the trade
• my goal was to complete the year and have a full time job by the end
• work towards the future and my business

One respondent moved beyond an individual focus by demonstrating accountability for others
• taking responsibility for a group.

**Question 3: What else do I need to make this happen?**

The purpose of this question was to establish where gaps lay in terms of teacher or learner support. The 2002 respondent replies were either pragmatic:
• I need to get a full-time job

Or indications of a lack of teacher support and motivation:
• give me more encouragement in my patternmaking skills and give me a push when I get stuck
• I need more self encouragement and to believe that I can achieve anything
• more encouragement to take up every opportunity given.

By contrast, 50% of the learners in 2004 cited obtaining employment as the only thing preventing them from achieving their personal goals:
• I would like to be made to go and find work experience from the start of the year
• I think I just need experience in a working environment
• a job
• I need to begin applying for jobs in the industry and continue networking to broaden my contacts.

Lack of self confidence was considered a blocker by 30% of the 2004 learners and a further 20% suggested that personal organisation, particularly time management, was letting them down.

I noted that the 2004 statements appeared not to implicate teachers as much as those in 2002 and seemed to be more self-reflective and accountable: characteristics of independent learning.
Question 4: What has changed about your approach to this kind of work during the course of the year?

Though not made explicit, the kind of work referred to was Project Based Learning. The question was seeking to ascertain to what extent learners were aware that they had control over their own learning. Responses amongst the 2002 learners were wide ranging but underpinned by a deeper understanding about the industry into which they hoped to enter:

- I have changed my mind about what area I would like to work in
- my attitude to the industry and how it really is – being realistic about it
- I have learnt that a fantastic patternmaker was not born overnight; it’s a learnt trade.

Others cited their changed approach to deadline setting and working within realistic periods.

One particular student wrote candidly about when ‘the penny dropped’ for her:

...when I first started this course, I felt like I was wasting my time; then as the year progressed, I realised that the subjects were set out to get us ready for working in the industry and using our own initiative.

This response captures the essence of PBL as a means by which learners can discover and uncover the bigger picture.

The 2004 cohort also submitted a broad range of responses that suggested they were taking their learning more seriously than in previous years as preparation for the workforce. This is congruent with previous responses from this group. For some, it appeared that they had gained a deeper understanding of the supply chain and could recognise patterns and sequences throughout the projects. Generally, answers were more detailed than those received by respondents in 2002.
Question 5: Do you think you have become a more independent learner?

This question invited participants to give examples of how they had become more resourceful. The outcomes of Project work featured prominently in all responses. Those in both groups of 2002 and 2004 found liberation in forward planning and described their commitment to time management as important in achieving goals. Project work gave the learners the opportunity to ‘put everything together’:

...working with a gantt chart helped me with more independent learner because last year we were given a lot of dates, but no guideline on what to do and how many weeks. ...Also last year we were given a lot of subjects to do, and had to put everything together, but this year we had to do all of these ourselves, but it gave me more independent on my learning than last year

...I think that any other year I would have freaked out, but I was surprised as to how methodical and independently I went about it

...because if I need to know something it is up to me to seek out the answer. The information was not explained to me step by step; I had to find it and work it out.

Overall Summary of 2002-2004 Survey results

Feedback from all survey participants was generally positive and provided evidence of change and personal growth between 2002 and 2004. Responses indicated a clear link between learning and the workplace, particularly with the 2004 group. Learners’ burgeoning self reliance and sense of work readiness was evidenced in both groups and noticeably the 2004 group, who were able to clearly articulate ways in which they had taken charge of their own learning. It was noted that the 2004 group was more familiar with reflective writing since its gradual introduction into the Program post 2002.
5.3 Questionnaire 2003

The Questionnaire 2003 (APPENDIX D) distributed to the class of 2003 on April 4 was scheduled at the completion of the first Project – Small Business. The questions were designed to unearth hidden assumptions about the way students perceived their own learning and timed to capitalise on the reflective phase after project completion. A major contributor to learners’ self awareness is thought to be reflective processes that bring into consciousness the gap between what we say and what we do, such as between thought and action (Friedman & Rothman in Sankaran, Dick, Passfield, & Swepson, 2001). Sometimes known as action learning, this approach encourages:

...the capacity to ask fresh questions in conditions of ignorance, risk, and confusion, when nobody knows what to do next. (Revans, 1983, in Sankaran, Dick, Passfield, & Swepson, 2001, p 49).

In 2003 the questionnaire was distributed to the full student cohort of 16 learners and completed by nine participants. The raw data that were collected addressed concerns previously identified in the overall data gathering efforts of 2002. Using data from a variety of sources that included the Learner Survey 2002, journals, observations and informal teacher discussions, tentative links began to emerge between learners’ perception of success and self responsibility, prompting further investigation. The 2003 questionnaire was distributed to learner participants after a nine-week period of exposure to the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program and participants were invited to make judgments about their own performance within the PBL framework.

Consideration was also given to the point at which learners made a change or improvement to their situation.

Responses to questions one and two suggested a generalised assumption that learners defined and measured personal success according to their ability to complete projects in a timely manner and
to their own standard of satisfaction. When asked to comment on what they perceived to be the blockers of task completion (question three), responses highlighted two areas: a lack of communication with teachers and procrastination. Questions four, five and six sought to establish whether learners recognised the qualities thought to be useful in becoming employable. These three questions yielded a variety of responses indicating that each learner was making connections between her employability and acceptance of responsibility for self and team. Question seven was included to canvas learner opinion about how teachers could be more effective. Once again, opinions were diverse and some valuable suggestions emerged. A majority of respondents indicated a need for assistance with practical skill development whilst others requested help with interview skills and resumes.

In summary, feedback from the 2003 questionnaire validated an earlier hunch arising out of the 2002 Student Survey that some learners were recognising that securing employment was reliant upon more than just technical competence alone. For the teaching team, it highlighted a need to formalise the acquisition of employability skills resulting in a gradual shift towards explicit assessment of the same.

5.4 Student Experience Surveys 2002 and 2006

Since 1999, RMIT University has collected data pertaining to the student experience. Copies of the 2002 and 2006 Student Satisfaction Surveys became available for analysis and appear as APPENDIX E and APPENDIX F. The data has been summarised and presented as Figure 5 and Figure 6. The 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey was completed by thirteen respondents and in 2006 by twelve respondents. Overall satisfaction levels had risen 31% in the four year period to deliver a 100% approval rating.
Notably, 67% of the 2002 student respondents and 75% of the 2006 cohort considered assessment to be clear, consistent and appropriate to the program. Whilst these percentages could still be
considered very positive, there was no doubt that assessment was consistently the least favourable aspect of the overall student experience.

5.5 Annual Program Reports 2002 and 2003

As part of RMIT’s annual Program Quality Assurance processes, Program Leaders report on their programs in relation to implementation, design and currency of each program. Annual Program Reports 2002 (APPENDIX G) and 2003 (APPENDIX H) respond to data provided in the Student Satisfaction Surveys. These Annual Program Reports attempt to identify concerns and make recommendations for planned action over the next twelve months. In this instance, both reports presented an opportunity to check and establish validity about some evaluations we had been making concerning student learning. By triangulating the data that was sourced through learner journals and our own informal Learner Survey 2002 (see 5.3) we were able to verify that learning through projects was delivering measurable benefits to teachers, students and prospective employers. This conclusion was supported by evidence in Section 3 of the Annual Program Report Overview that states:

Key Issues emerging from the current performance of the program.

The demand for our programs remains high. Informal feedback from graduates working within the clothing industries indicates and strengthens our belief that the programs we deliver are both current and relevant. Continual industry enquiries seeking graduates for employment reinforces these beliefs (p 2)

and earmarked as a priority for action.

Continue to develop strong industry links to:

Assist in course relevant industry projects.

Offer work placement opportunities
5.6 Conclusion

The data analysed in this chapter has illuminated some interesting findings, most notably the students’ growing self reliance and sense of work readiness. The outcomes of PBL framed many responses with participants beginning to understand that project work required them to become more resourceful and independent learners. The overall quality of written responses improved from 2001 to 2004 since the practice of reflective journal writing was introduced in 2002. This finding suggests that students were becoming more skilled in expressing themselves and appears to correspond with their more mature, outward looking and deeper approach to learning.

Data from the earlier years also revealed some perceived shortcomings in the level of teacher support and motivation and highlighted the fact that teaching in a PBL environment required some adjustment and greater understanding of the needs of learners. As the learners themselves achieved greater independence in their learning they became more and more satisfied with the performance of their teachers. The next chapter considers the strategies developed by the teaching team to achieve this outcome.

With the data continuing to focus on achievements in personal learning and workplace readiness, it became apparent that there was a misalignment between what the students were learning and the criteria upon which they were being assessed. The assessment checklist in use was only recording the students’ performable technical skills with no reference to their capability to problem solve and think reflectively. RMIT Student Satisfaction Surveys 2002 and 2006 confirmed that students were less satisfied with the appropriateness and consistency of assessment practices than other features of their learning experience and although improvements
were made over the research period, it continued to be a challenging and complex situation. Chapter Six offers a theoretical perspective that attempts to make connections between these issues of concern and the appropriateness of a PBL framework.
Chapter 6
THEORISING PROJECT BASED LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION

“Curriculum defines what counts as valid knowledge, pedagogy defines what counts as valid transmission of knowledge and evaluation defines what counts as valid realisation of the knowledge on the part of the taught” (Bernstein, 1973, p 85).

As previous chapters have argued, changes in workplace organisation have demanded a new approach in the VET sector. My recent experience as a TAFE teacher researcher has heightened my awareness of the need to question whether the contemporary strategy of Project Based Learning (PBL) is a sustainable approach through which Training Package competencies can be developed, processed and evaluated. PBL in a VET context challenges the assumption that VET is still not sufficiently responsive to the demands of globalization, technology and work (Chappell, 2003a). The chapter builds upon the work of Bernstein (1973), linking the ideas and findings from Chapter five with other current discussion and draws upon some newer theorisations regarding the integration of theory and practice. Bernstein (1973) describes three message systems that support the establishment and maintenance of pedagogic discourse as curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation. I have selected these themes as a continued framework for discussion and analysis of the effectiveness of PBL later in this chapter.

6.1 Making PBL a legitimate choice in TAFE

The consistent theme of integration of theory and practice links the early work of the progressive educational theorists such as Dewey and Kolb who each in their own way identified the value of personal learning in both education as well as the business environment. Project Based Learning
claims to provide a holistic approach to learning and assessment in an institutional environment and provides a link in the quest to validate an approach that supports the notion of competence as being ‘knowledge and learning embedded in practice’ (Gonczi, 2001, p 7).

6.1.1 The Theory/Practice Relationship

The notion of a juncture between theory and practice as expressed by Gonczi (2001) traces its origins to Aristotle who made the distinction between two different types of knowledge as universal and theoretical claiming that young people, although well educated, lacked prudence – the ability to apply their knowledge in a given context. He resolved that this was because prudence (or phronesis) required time and experience. The concept was expanded by Gilbert Ryle and others as propositional knowledge or knowing *that*, and tacit knowledge, which is knowing *how*. Over time, another criterion has been added relating to practical wisdom, more recently captioned knowing *who* and beyond that, knowing *why*. In one incarnation or another, these concepts of knowledge development have influenced contemporary educational thought (Gonczi 2001). Theorizing knowledge progression in VET pedagogy suggests revisiting the existing assumptions of competence as interpreted in Training Packages. Critics of Competency Based Training have long argued that an emphasis on outcomes enhances focus on task function and performativity (Billett et al, 1999; Cornford, 2000; Hager, 1995; Stevenson & McKavanagh, 1992), which we could explain as knowing *how*, and diminishes the other elements that a worker uses to carry out tasks. We could identify those elements as being attributes of critical thinking or *knowing that, knowing who* and *knowing why*. This viewpoint validates a more traditional perception that skills and knowledge are grounded in what is technical and observable and therefore measurable. However, the newer notion of knowledge as a commodity has changed the skill set requirements for work in the contemporary economy (Chappell, 2003a) to one which includes an array of personal aptitudes, capabilities and dispositions. Validating a pedagogical
approach that prepares learners for their future in work and is congruent with a contemporary understanding of competence has been a major focus of this research project.

6.2 What about the learners?

There appears to be a gradual but perceptible shift in VET research regarding the relationship between the learner, the workplace and how and where learning takes place (Boreham, 2004; Brown, M., 2004). Some commentators are of the opinion that the critical thinking skills so highly valued by employers can only be constructed in the process of work itself and are a synthesis of theoretical and experiential knowledge (Billett, 2003; Boreham, 2004; Lave & Wenger, 1991). This stance is reinforced by Hager (2001, p 2) through his emerging paradigm of ‘productive learning’ that proposes that the kind of learning that occurs in a workplace team environment is holistic, context sensitive and actionable. Boreham (2004, p 213) puts forward a convincing argument to suggest that employees only develop these skills as a direct result of the social interactions they encounter in the course of the daily routine of workplace decision making. He describes this as work process knowledge and claims that it is ‘embedded in the routines and practices of the workplace’. If, as Boreham suggests, social interaction in the workplace is the key to stimulating higher order thinking, where does that leave the TAFE Training Package developer for whom learning is still considered to be an individual activity, and particularly in institutions such as TAFE, where learning is removed from the workplace? The discussion that follows seeks to explore this argument in greater detail.
6.2.1 Developing the Contingent Thinker in TAFE

As stated in Chapter 3, TAFE institutional learners constitute 85% of participants in the VET sector. A majority of this cohort are not employed in the industry for which they are being trained (Hager, 1995 in Smith 2002), a claim shared by Boorman (2001, p 2) who states that in 1999, over 30% of those enrolled in either Training Packages or accredited courses were either not in the workforce or unemployed. Developing people to be contingent thinkers has not been overlooked in the development of Training Packages, nor has it been made explicit. The result is widespread inconsistency and confusion amongst those who design, develop, deliver and assess competence (Allen Consulting Group, 2006; Down, 2000). Whilst not specifically related to work in a particular occupation or industry, generic qualities or ‘employability skills’ are embedded into each unit of competence and considered by industry to be important for work, education and citizenship. One of the challenges of my research has been to develop an understanding of how knowledge, skills and generic attributes can best be integrated to prepare institutional learners for a future largely unknown (Bowden & Marton, 1998). During an early review of the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program, the learner co-participants expressed concerns that they ‘weren’t getting enough handouts’. Focus group meetings suggested an underlying resistance to the paradigm shift to learner centeredness and the learners’ response was:

- we need written guidelines
- we don’t have a checklist
- we need individual lessons’ (tutorials)
- there is such a big difference between 2nd and 3rd year.

Upon reflection and after further analysis, it seemed likely that the learners were still accustomed to a content-laden, teacher-centred mode of delivery. Perhaps such reliance on information usually researched and generated by their teacher, placed these learners at a disadvantage in developing their own research skills. Candela, Dalley & Benzel-Lindley (2006) suggest that a
curriculum heavy in content leaves little room for the development of the abilities to acquire and process information – skills so highly valued in the knowledge economy. Conclusions drawn from data in Chapter 5 suggests that learners in the inaugural class of the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program struggled with the ambiguity and ill-structured nature of PBL (Henry, 1994) even though they entered the program equipped with a substantial knowledge base. Initial exposure to a PBL environment caused some learner participants to suffer a crisis of confidence that had little to do with their technical skills and more to do with a realization that their learning environment was mirroring a workplace. One particular learner from the 2001 cohort expressed indignation about ‘being told that school is the workplace and knowing it is not’. One of the most difficult adjustments encountered by teachers and learners in a PBL context is the transition between old and new modes of learning. Some learners were challenged by PBL, citing their preference for a traditional structured approach and a preference for a learning environment that requires less effort on their part. This is supported by Frank & Barzilai, (2004, p 43) who suggest that…

students struggling with ambiguity, complexity, and unpredictability are liable to sense frustration in an environment of uncertainty, where they have no notion of how to begin or in which manner to proceed.

6.3 Teaching Strategies in PBL

Evidence suggests that there are several strategies that teachers can adopt to provide learners with sufficient support structures and coping mechanisms and that the implementation of such strategies can have a significant effect on the successful outcome of PBL implementation (Thomas, 2000). One of the strategies used to effect in the Advanced Diploma (Fashion)
Program is based upon an advancement of the traditional apprenticeship metaphor known as Cognitive Apprenticeship.

Similarities exist between the Cognitive Apprenticeship model and PBL with its attention to contextual learning in an authentic setting comparable to that in which experts actually practice (Resnick, 1989). This model proposes that learners progress through stages of dependence to autonomy and mastery of skills guided by the changing role of the teacher. The exposure that learners have to teachers and experts who model higher level thinking processes is thought to advance and inform their emergent reasoning and decision making skills (Hogan & Tudge, 1999).

Cognitive Apprenticeship makes use of four aspects of traditional apprenticeship practices and incorporates theories of contextual learning:

- **Modelling:** the master demonstrates while the apprentice observes
- **Scaffolding:** the support the learner receives
- **Fading:** support is gradually removed and the apprentice is given more responsibility
- **Coaching:** this lasts throughout the entire apprenticeship and oversees the learning processes and activities involved (Collins, Brown, & Holum, 1991).

Brown, Collins & Duguid (1996) cite reflective practice as the differential between traditional and cognitive apprenticeship, arguing that reflection leads to deeper levels of thinking and learning. Although characteristics of cognitive processes such as scaffolding, fading and coaching as outlined above have been useful in the PBL context at RMIT as both approaches encourage exploration and reflection, it seemed that no particular theory of learning dominated pedagogy. Instead, any approach that positioned the notion of work relatedness at the centre of learning and reinforced its importance through problem setting appeared to heighten learner engagement.
Solomon (2003) explores the concept of the ‘learner-worker’ as one who is situated in an educational institution and whose learning is somehow connected to their future work. According to Solomon, it is the foregrounding of work within an educational context that produces a particular kind of person, possibly one with the right attributes for solving ‘real world’ problems. PBL through its very nature, places the project, and therefore the accompanying workplace practices at the centre of the learning site, enabling the learner to apply their prior skills and knowledge to a simulated work environment. With this comes an assumption that the teacher has adequate work based experience to bring the nuances of the workplace into the classroom. Commentators, such as Billett et al (1999) and Smith and Keating (2003), have identified teacher’s familiarity with current workplace practice as a contributor in the development of transferable knowledge in students, as it allows for the development of appropriate learning experiences (Billett et al, 1999). This is intended to mean that what is learnt in the classroom can be transferred to a workplace in the future and is a concept that is explored in more depth in 6.3.1. Woven into this occupational knowledge is anticipation that teachers also possess familiarity with pedagogical practice, sufficient to frame learning experiences that provide opportunities for skill development whilst maintaining the authenticity of a work setting.

6.3.1 Teaching for Transfer

The research I have undertaken regarding pedagogical knowledge has informed the way in which the learning environment of the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program at RMIT TAFE has been constructed. I have drawn upon my emerging knowledge of learning principles to investigate and facilitate the development of critical thinking skills. In this context, learning takes place with the clear intention that:

*the knowledge and skills resulting from an initial learning foundation will transfer to non-training settings, but specifically the workplace (Cornford, 2005, p 27).*
Cornford (2005) argues that teaching for transfer is achievable in a formal learning setting removed from the workplace but clarifies the statement by making a distinction between near and far transfer. Far transfer being the ability to adapt learning to a new location and context. Participants in the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program appear to have a very clear understanding of what it means to be work ready. They demonstrated a surprisingly articulate awareness of the explicit link between their learning experience at TAFE and intentions for future success. This is most pronounced in the data presented in Chapter 5, the 2003 Questionnaire, where learner participants are asked how they could apply their learning to life outside the institutional environment. Newell (2003, p 57) confirms that such a question prompts the learner to consider what is ‘authentic, real and important’.

*I feel that I have learnt how to be responsible and professional with my work, but also being able to enjoy myself and have fun. I have learnt to work methodically, going through and prioritizing which are most important, including part time work (Mary, 2003)*

*Quite confident for the next project, but perhaps need a bit more routine and balance with work, school, money etc (Vanessa, 2003)*

Learners undertaking the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program are provided with opportunities to practice their teamwork and leadership skills through activities that take place within and beyond the classroom. These activities are not assessed but they are parallel to real world situations that assist learners to establish their identity. Three examples of near transfer of learning are: (1) the Graduate Exhibition, (2) learners undertaking teaching functions and (3) learner-to-learner mentoring.
1. Learners project manage their own graduate exhibition. The graduate exhibition and fashion parade is partly organised by the students and is a major undertaking that attracts over 300 guests. Learners work throughout the year devising fundraising strategies. They develop and distribute a catalogue that showcases their work and they pro-actively manage their own publicity efforts. Each of these ‘mini-projects’ relies upon voluntary help from each member of the group and provides opportunities to practice problem analysis, negotiation, teamwork and communication. Learners are called upon to negotiate with peers, teaching staff and external stakeholders such as industry representatives, event managers and catering staff. They come to know the pressures involved in coordinating a large project that has a critical deadline.

2. Relinquishing some teaching functions to students has also progressively extended informal learning opportunities. This intervention requires skilful preparation by the teacher to select instances where an individual learner can be guided to adopt a facilitative role. The scenarios have included situations where learner guides learner (instructing on a technical skill aspect such as the execution of a garment pattern feature) or learner to class group, where an individual learner assumes accountability for class management during a period of teacher absence. Peer teaching, Jarvis (1996, p 165) assures us, is not necessarily ‘the blind leading the blind’ as it makes use of the non technical resources that the learner already possesses. Over the course of the four-year project, I have used this intervention with varying levels of success. Initially, my desire to maintain control of the learner group together with a sense that the learners would not ‘do a good enough job’ instilled in me a reluctance to pass over various teaching tasks and functions; however, the opportunity to work alongside a colleague who practiced this technique regularly in her classes allowed me to observe its success. On several occasions, I observed what Blunden (1997, p 147) describes as the ‘Pygmalion effect’ where the learner goes above and beyond their own comfort level to live up to the expectations of the teacher. Rather than diminish
the identity of the teacher, I noted that the roles and relationships between teacher and student in the PBL classroom assume the characteristics of ‘master’ and ‘novice’.

3. Learner-to-learner mentoring occurs in the Advanced Diploma Program due to the flexibility of learner entry/exit points. At any one time, there can be a spread of learners up to six months apart in advancement. Rather than this being a disruptive situation, I have observed that this situation brings about tacit benefits. The learners who are in their final semester of the program adopt a ‘masterly’ role to the ‘novice’ learners who join the Program mid-term. This approach is consistent with guided learning (Billett, 2001) where I observed that the ‘novice’ learners quickly adopted the pace and intensity modelled by their more advanced peers and within six months, they become the ‘masters’ to a new group of ‘novices’.

Whilst these activities have some validity as strategies to overcome the absence of real workplace experience, their best feature is the confidence they instil in learners. Down & Hager (1999, p 5) support this view stating that:

*The role of Key Competencies within such transfer is enabling, transforming and developmental, and is related to a growing understanding of how to deal with different contexts. In this way non-work experiences can benefit workplace performance and vice versa.*

Learner participants were asked to describe how they thought they had become more independent learners. The following responses lifted from student journals suggests that persistent behavioural change occurs over a period of time (Uden & Beaumont, 2006).

*…at the start of the year I looked to the teacher to tell me what to do, how to do it and why. I found out that they did not have all the answers. I wanted to be told and this made everything very difficult for me and my work*
...I used to be ‘good enough is near enough’ and now I really try to perfect what I am doing. I am happy to take on more responsibility whereas before I hated doing anything

...when I first started this course, I felt like I was wasting my time, then as the year progressed, I realized that the subjects were set out to get us ready for working in the industry and using our own initiative

...my attitude towards time management definitely. The attitude in the industry and how it really is – being realistic about it. I also try to find out things by myself and get help at the same time which is a good combination.

Velde (1999, p 440) argues that the individual cannot be separated from the tasks and considers that ‘the meaning of the task for the students, the teamwork which may be necessary to complete it or the students prior experience’ must be given due attention. It can be acknowledged that PBL, introduced into the RMIT (Fashion) TAFE environment, has provided an environment for learners to use and integrate a variety of skills and knowledge. Opportunities have arisen to apply these skills and knowledge to new and different contexts through participation in co-curricular activities previously mentioned. In this regard, PBL has been successful in establishing near transfer of learning. However continuing and sustained transfer in the workplace could be contingent on managers and future trainers recognising that these graduates are really advanced beginners (Cornford & Athanasou, 1995) who will need ongoing support.

6.3.2 Experiential Teaching Practice

Very little research has come to light regarding the specific use of PBL in TAFE. As a result the approach used in this research study has been an incubator of experiential teaching practice where, as practitioners, we gave ourselves tacit permission to experiment through trial and error. Teachers delivering the Advanced Diploma Program at RMIT use a variety of approaches to
engage learners in the PBL classroom. Their experience is drawn from formal and informal theories of learning (Foley, 2000) and can sometimes be dependent on finding ‘what works’. Such a pragmatic approach can lead to trial and error (Blunden, 1997). Considering the problems that they are presented with, the teachers describe their role as being primarily diagnostic and advisory and admit that they draw heavily upon their industry experience for solutions. The teaching cohort have substantial industry management experience where problem solving is the nature of the job and they have brought with them the kind of ‘lived experience’ that the data shows has been valued by learners and industry partners alike. In order to convey the meaning and merit of a project, Chujo and Kijima (2006, p 2) claim that the teacher’s own skill and experience in Project Management is essential. They observe that ‘if the instructor does not have any real project experience, it is difficult for him or her to teach beyond what is written in the textbooks’.

6.4 The Changing Role of the Teacher

Henry (1994) suggests that in the PBL classroom, the teacher’s traditional role is redefined, but not diminished as it is the project, rather than the teacher who becomes the focus of attention. Blunden (1997) describes several informal theories of teaching that seek to recognise the importance of differing student learning styles and his reference to Fox’s ‘growing theory’ recognises the changing role of the teacher from being an infallible expert, responsible for the final product, to being a guide who is responsive to the context in which the learning is occurring. Teachers co-opted to facilitate in the Advanced Diploma Program at RMIT rely upon broad industry management experience and demonstrate personal characteristics receptive to adaptability in teaching practice. The teaching cohort utilises a spread of specialised skills and encourages learners to maximise consultation time with each teacher’s specialty field. Student
Experience Surveys conducted in 2002 returned a rating of 75% on the Good Teaching Scale. By 2006, the Good Teaching Scale had risen to 90% using the same teaching cohort. To achieve a rating on the Good Teaching Scale, survey participants were asked to judge the level of communication and support provided by teachers. Such a healthy result suggests that learners are very satisfied with the teaching capabilities of their instructors as well as their capacity to understand the needs of learners.

6.4.1 Team Teaching

Although team teaching in the Advanced Diploma Program has been the source of positive and supporting relationships for me, there are traps for the unwary. Varied teaching styles, differing levels of pedagogical expertise and interpersonal relationships have impacted on the success of the team approach. Learners, more familiar with a behaviorist teaching approach, enter the Advanced Diploma Program unaccustomed to receiving divergent perspectives from their team teachers. This can easily set up an adversarial situation where one teacher’s guidance is placed at odds with another’s:

...there is too much confusion in what J and S say. One says one thing, the other another

(Jessie 2002)

...what didn’t work for me was “having two teachers saying different things

(Michelle 2002).

The frustration and confusion felt by these learners is consistent with views held by Goetz (2000) who suggests that the diversity of viewpoints that some students find advantageous creates discontentment in others. By contrast, Oliver (1999) who supports the Cognitive Apprenticeship model advocates the benefits of exposure to multiple opinions, perspectives or beliefs as cultivating, in the learner, a process of deeper understanding. Robinson and Schiable, (1995, in Goetz, 2000 p 1) recommend choosing a team teaching partner with a ‘healthy psyche’, someone
who is neither controlling nor easily offended. I would suggest, then, that the personal characteristics required of a teacher considering team facilitation in the project area are similar to those required in the workplace. To respect each other’s professional expertise, always portray a united front, have the ability to negotiate with and stimulate others and to be constantly aware of opportunities to exercise empathy and understanding with a listening heart.

6.4.2 Correct Sequencing to Facilitate Employment

Smith (2002) reporting on Down’s 2002 research, claims that VET providers are reporting closer links with industry. This view is consistent with the findings of my research which suggests that the sequencing of the four Advanced Diploma (Fashion) projects has proven to be beneficial in terms of both learning and employment outcomes. The order in which the four projects are delivered is now designed to optimize employment opportunities but this was not always so. The first full-action research cycle revealed that project sequence did not capitalise on the potential for learners to undertake extended work placement that could potentially lead to ongoing employment. Following completion of the first full length action research cycle, the projects were delivered in a different sequence to effect the desired change. The two projects scheduled in the second half of the year have a strong industry partner focus that necessitates interaction between learners and prospective employers. Learners sometimes manage to secure employment in the clothing industry prior the completion of the Program but have been reluctant to accept full time work for fear of forfeiting their qualification. In the past, this situation has presented teachers with an ethical challenge, particularly considering the Program’s strong emphasis on creating work/learning linkages. A solution, whereby learners are not required to withdraw from the Program if their job fits within the competencies of the project criteria, means that they have the option of undergoing workplace assessment by a member of the course team. This has become an innovative solution to an otherwise difficult dilemma and is one which has delivered unexpected
benefits by way of closer industry links and greater understanding between teachers, learners and employers.

### 6.4.3 Mentoring

Successful mentoring, ‘… is a complex, interactive process occurring between two individuals of differing levels of experience’ (Field, in Blunden, 1997, p 324) and relies on particular personal characteristics to preserve the quality of relationship with the learner. The most important being trust. Personal trust does not necessarily figure prominently as a feature of traditional face to face teaching where a transmission model of learning is appropriated. In the transmission model, the teacher dispenses knowledge to the learner. Mentoring does, however, share other characteristics with a traditional teaching model such as listening skills, continual instruction, feedback, support and follow through (Herman & Mandell, 2004). Henry (1994) asserts that mentoring students as they move through the phases of project work can be more time consuming than face to face teaching. I have observed in my own teaching practice that a significant amount of ‘outside class time’ is devoted to sending or replying to student emails and text messages. This can be an issue especially for sessional teaching colleagues who are paid for their teaching contact hours. The amount of help required varies amongst the student cohort and increases in volume as the project deadlines approach.

### 6.4.4 Where has the Curriculum gone?

From an early stage, the teaching cohort was disturbed by the absence of written curriculum documentation. Once a project brief is delivered, the learner has responsibility for creating the process for herself through the product she develops. We finally realised that PBL was a living curriculum and the content was the product the learner submitted for assessment at completion of the project. This was one of the most difficult things to justify as a teacher: the lack of written preparation material.
6.5 Assessment

Assessment of competencies in the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program proved to be challenging and complex for teachers during the course of this research study and at the time of writing it remains less than ideal in capturing the full scope of workplace competency. This view is consistent with Edmonds & Stuart (1992, in Connally, Jorgensen, Gillis, & Griffin, 2003) who point out that higher order competencies develop over a longer period of time and are less observable.

When the TCF Training Package was hastily introduced at RMIT TAFE Fashion Department in 2001, it brought with it traditional assumptions about assessment such as task demonstration and direct questioning as a means of verifying competence. However it was not long before we, as teachers and assessors, had a hunch that this approach was no longer reflecting the complexity of vocational activities being undertaken. The original assessment tool itself, designed as a checklist, proved outdated and inadequate. Despite modifications, issues continued to surface about how to integrate and give more recognition to the learner’s capability to engage in non-routine activities using skills such as problem solving, communication and contingency management. Our lack of understanding at the time may have meant that we did not know how to develop an appropriate assessment instrument and the inadequacy of the process of planning and conducting assessment resulted in experimentation through various action research initiatives that sought to develop a foundation of good practice. The assessment checklist has undergone three incarnations and the most recent version has been reported by the teaching cohort to be a significant improvement on previous attempts. Ironically, our industry partners who participate as members of an assessment panel have found it difficult to interpret and understand due to the frequent use of Training Package jargon.
6.5.1 The purpose of assessment in Training Packages

In keeping with the substantial reform of vocational education in Australia in the 1990s, the introduction of Competency Based Training (CBT) and subsequently Training Packages saw a swing away from a syllabus-driven assessment model towards an outcome-based approach based upon explicitly defined standards, meaning that assessment takes place against competency standards rather than against a curriculum (Boud & Hawke, 2003). Using a dichotomous reporting framework of competent or not competent (Williams & Bateman, 2002), specially trained workplace assessors evaluate appropriate levels of performance and make judgments upon whether the individual has reached the required level. The foregrounding of the role of assessment and the assessor appears to be integral to the reform process as qualifications are issued on the basis of an amassing of ‘evidence’ that is judged against pre-determined industry standards (Boud & Hawke, 2003). The professional qualities that a workplace assessor should possess suggest a strong connection with industry and include:

- expert knowledge of the field, a deep understanding of underlying principles, accumulated experience in the practice of the profession, a familiarity with recent advances in the professional knowledge base, and mastery of the best available techniques and tools (Masters 2003, p 46, as cited in ANTA, 2004).

According to the National Training Board (1992, p 29), Assessor Assessment characteristics relate to the dimensions of competence:

1. the requirement to perform individual tasks (*task skills*);
2. the requirement to manage a number of different tasks within the job (*task management skills*)
3. the requirement to respond to irregularities and breakdowns in routine (*contingency management skills*);
4. the requirement to deal with the responsibilities and expectations of the work environment (job/role environment skills), including working with others; and to transfer the skills to new tasks and situations.

The method of collecting evidence against these dimensions of competence is described in the TCF Training Package as a four-pronged approach that distinguishes it from merely one of ‘testing’ to a process of gathering sufficient information to enable an informed judgment of the performance of an individual. Although recommending four primary approaches, it suggests that in many instances the most appropriate method of gathering evidence will be a combination of each method.

They are:

- Samples of performance (such as the evaluation of simulated products or processes, examination of finished products or processes and demonstrated skills to reflect work activity)
- Observation of performance in the workplace – also known as *direct evidence* (such as the evaluation of product and/or process, management of changing context and requirements and interaction with related work activities)
- Evidence of prior performance – also known as *indirect evidence* (for example the evaluation of previous work through samples, portfolios, projects, work history, supervisor and referee reports)
- Supplementary information – also known as *supplementary evidence* (for example, the questioning, presentations and contingency analysis) (ANTA, 2000)

To this extent, direct observation constitutes only one of four methods of assessment and yet, it has evolved to be the one used most regularly, possibly because its use has been carried over
from the past in the form of tests and examinations (Boud & Hawke, 2003). This was certainly the case in the Fashion Department and was the basis upon which assessment for the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program developed.

Drawing upon elements of the TCF Training Package Assessment Guidelines, four key principles guide the assessment process: validity, reliability, flexibility and fairness. These principles are defined below:

- To be **valid**, the assessment must assess what it claims to assess. Sufficient evidence must be collected that is relevant to the standard being assessed.

- To be **reliable**, the assessment methods and procedures must ensure that competency standards are applied consistently.

- To be **flexible**, assessment must be able to take place in a variety of settings, either on the job or off the job or in a combination of both. Assessment should allow for diversity of how, where and when competencies; have been acquired.

- To be **fair**, the assessment must not disadvantage any individuals. As such, consideration should be given to the language, literacy and cultural needs of the individual when planning the assessment (ANTA, 2000).

In reference to the Advanced Diploma AQF Level 6, the Clothing Production Training Package states:

> the breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and skills gained in this qualification will prepare a person to perform a significant range of fundamental principles and complex techniques across a wide and often unpredictable variety of contexts in relation to varied or highly specific functions.

> Contribution to the development of a broad plan, budget or strategy is involved and adaptability for self and others in achieving the outcomes is involved. ANTA (2000, p 36).
These characteristics suggest that learning outcomes should contain features that enable an individual with this qualification to demonstrate, in the workplace, analytical, conceptual, technical and diagnostic skills and knowledge and be capable of executing judgments with accountability across a broad range of functions.

6.5.2 The Assessment Process

My teaching colleague and I were initially indecisive about ‘what’ and ‘how’ to assess in a project-based environment. Our teaching experience to date was reflective of working in the VET TAFE sector - prescriptive, behavioural and the assessment practices we were familiar with were atomistic. Although we had attended briefing sessions relating to the introduction of Training Packages, there was still an element of uncertainty to our undertaking. We arrived at the task of devising a suitable assessment tool for the program with different industry skills, knowledge and teaching experience to draw upon, and discovered very quickly that we were moving from the known to the unknown. Commentators such as Dierick & Dochy (2001, in VandenBergh, 2006) emphasise the importance of creating alignment between learning outcomes and assessment. Known as ‘auto-dissolving prophecy’, they suggest that an educational innovation will dissolve itself when the assessment is not congruent with the teaching method.

Research supports the notion that assessing competencies in higher qualifications can be problematic. The complexity of competencies that require a capacity to reflect, predict, analyse and evaluate suggests a different approach – and an awareness on the part of the assessor to be able to synthesize many different sources of evidence (Connally, Jorgensen, Gillis, & Griffin, 2003; DETYA, 2001). In my experience, the context of having to conduct assessment in an institutional environment adds a greater, but not insurmountable challenge to an already difficult situation. A study by Boorman (2001) to investigate institutional responses to Training Packages reveals scepticism towards institutional assessment. Boorman’s study participants (for example
the retail industry) believed that competence could only be assessed at the workplace whilst other RTOs declared that they only offered management level competencies to those already in employment.

It is against this background that Boud and Hawke (2003) propose that it is the way we view assessment practices, regardless of the location of assessment that is in need of attention. They assert that the interpretation and implementation of traditional assessment practice distorts and deskills learners’ ability to become lifelong learners and caution that assessment of observable elements of performance for immediate competence may result in learners achieving to a level that satisfies assessors, instead of learning to establish and determine the appropriate standard for themselves. They suggest that institutional learners in particular, learn to make their own judgments about what constitutes satisfactory performance so that when they are confronted with complex situations in real settings, they can develop their own understandings of learning and assessing. Empowering learners to understand the process of assessment seems like a natural progression that flows from them understanding their own learning. This research study proposes that assessment using a combination of direct, indirect and supplementary evidence, such as portfolio assessment, is one way of achieving this outcome.

### 6.5.3 Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio assessment has become more widely used in vocational education because it demonstrates active learning and performance (Bateman & Griffin, 2003; Bragg, 1995; Brown, B., 1997); criteria which are essential in the assessment of Training Packages outcomes. Portfolio assessment was used in the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program as it displays the products the students have produced, which are simulations of what would be required in the workplace, using multiple sources of evidence gathered over a long period of time and from many different sources (Brown, B., 1997; DETYA, 2001). Essentially, each of the four projects completed by the
Advanced Diploma (Fashion) students have a similar mapping process of design product, develop product, produce product and evaluate product. Therefore the portfolio of work submitted by each student comprises a combination of practical and written work.

A storyboard of fashion clothing designs, a set of cardboard patterns and three completed sample garments made up the practical component, which was underpinned with written documentation in the form of a report. The report included a design rationale, garment specifications, surveys and questionnaires, data analysis and conclusions. Each student was given the assessment checklist consisting of four sections:

- design
- patternmaking
- garment construction
- reporting or documentation

Assessment took the form of a half-hour presentation where the students displayed their storyboards and presented their work individually to the teaching panel.

The first time the checklist was used it became apparent that the criterion that we were assessing against was technical proficiency alone, a method which has been described as ‘tick and flick’.

During the course of the first cycle in 2001, a critical incident arose with two students that highlighted the inadequacies of the assessment checklist. The Project required that the students develop a small business fashion concept, develop a business plan and produce prototype garments reflective of the range. One particular student demonstrated great initiative and resourcefulness by sourcing and ordering specialised technical fabric from interstate. Due to the short timeframe of the project, she waited anxiously for its arrival. As is typical in the clothing industry, the fabric did not arrive until one week before the deadline. Anticipating this possibility, the student purchased similar fabric and proceeded to sew the product in the substitute fabric.
Being an enterprising young person, her business concept was picked up by an interested fashion company, resulting in forward orders to be manufactured, of course, in the original Sydney fabric. By contrast, the second student who also encountered supply problems with her fabric simply could not see a way through the situation and ultimately applied for the project deadline to be extended.

We found that there was no provision anywhere on our checklist to acknowledge how well the first student had carried out her contingency plan compared with the second student who failed to use initiative. We were simply marking and assessing explicit technical proficiency in sewing up the item and the completion of any required documentation. The result was disheartening and yet, according to our marking guide and our interpretation of the Training Package guidelines, it was clear that once the second student has submitted her work, both learners had achieved competency. After discussion with my peers, it appeared that they too had recognized a gap between what was being assessed (skills and knowledge) and what they tacitly knew from their lived experience, were valuable qualities (employability skills) in the workplace. In the Fashion Department of RMIT TAFE, professional development concerning the introduction of Training Packages was limited to brief planning sessions. The literature suggests that my experience is not uncommon. The findings of Clayton et al (2004, in Bateman, 2005), indicate that factors such as poor initial assessor training, lack of on-going support/professional development and insufficient knowledge of current workplace practices, has resulted in a paucity of assessor expertise.

Consistent with this observation, it is noted by Virgona et al (in Smith & Keating, 2003) that the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace training does not give teachers the skill for this task. We sought answers in the RMIT Course Guide generated by the Fashion Program Coordinators for each Course, but found that of the 12 Assessment tasks listed, all were prefixed by verbs such as ‘prepare’, ‘conduct’, ‘assemble’, ‘attach’ and ‘specify’. This suggested to me that the assessable tasks were focused on skills and knowledge and did not reflect the initiative,
resourcefulness and problem-solving opportunities that we were witnessing in class, possibly as a result of the project work that the students were undertaking. One factor that had been overlooked to some extent was the triangulation between project briefs, the learning outcomes and assessment requirements. We suspected that in order to validate assessment of these dispositional characteristics, we should firstly teach them. As a resolution to the concern, the teaching cohort progressively introduced brief workshops that covered strategies commonly encountered in the workplace, such as effective communication, teamwork, contingency planning and negotiation skills.

From a teacher’s perspective, performance of these generic skills improved significantly over the duration of the research study and was explicitly demonstrable through the delivery of two major public events. Firstly, the students organised their own graduate exhibition and fashion parade and used fundraising as a means of financing the event. Secondly, they negotiated and managed an ongoing static display of their work at a major fashion supplier. Results of Student Satisfaction Surveys conducted in 2002 and again in 2006 indicated a downward trend in students’ own perception of whether their generic skills had developed through engagement with the program. Participants in the Student Satisfaction Survey of 2002 registered 82% median satisfaction with the level of student engagement the program provided. Four years later, participants returned a 77% satisfaction rating when asked similar questions. This minor downward trend could possibly be attributed to altered presentation of data and would need further analysis. Since the conclusion of this research study, subsequent research has revealed a widespread uncertainty in the VET sector over lack of clarity in the Training Package guidelines regarding the place of generic skills. As a result of the major review in 2005, more explicit guidelines have been established and included with the Training Package Development Handbook as Employability Skills (DEST, 2006).
6.5.4 Professional Judgment

By identifying portfolio assessment as an outcome of Project Based Learning we had to identify the major function of the portfolio. Where multiple learning outcomes need to be assessed, research indicates that the portfolio approach has several advantages. It gives teachers an insight into the learning process of the student, it emphasises self–responsibility, and it facilitates planning, reflection and critical thinking (Arter & Spandel, 1992; Wagner, 1998). It appeared to be the ideal adjunct to project-based learning. Concerns, namely how to determine the fairness, validity and consistency of evidence arose from the decision to use portfolios as an assessment tool for the Advanced Diploma Program. The performance criteria outlined in the Clothing Production Training Package describes only the essential aspects of performance, thus it avoids specifying procedures or methods of how to implement learning and teaching (ANTA, 2000). It is this ambiguity, perhaps deliberately vague, that can either encourage more flexible assessment approaches, or cause anxiety and concern to the assessor.

In creative disciplines such as art and design, the best evidence to demonstrate student competency is a product that has been made as part of the learning process (Brown, S. & Knight, 1994). Interestingly, the RMIT TAFE Advanced Diploma (Fashion) learners regularly voiced their concerns about equitability and sufficiency of work during the period of research but strangely these anxieties were not made explicit in journals or quantitative surveys. The assessment criteria required completion of one garment, which could mean something as complex as a bridal gown or something as simple as a t-shirt, which in both cases left some students agonizing over whether they had ‘done enough’ to guarantee a pass. This view is supported by Brown,S. & Knight (1994) who suggest that it is not identicality that is sought but equivalence of experience of assessment. Discussion with colleagues recalled what Argyris & Schön (1978) call double-loop learning: an opening up to engendered criticism and the ability to discuss concerns and alternatives. It revealed that the problem was deep rooted in some students’ reluctance to
work beyond the minimum requirements on the basis that assessment was reported as competent/not yet competent. Even the most ambitious and hard working students were frustrated in their attempts to do well. The later introduction of graded assessment into RMIT University TAFE programs highlighted the possibility that there could be differences in the difficulty levels of elements of competence (Bateman, 2003).

The Training Package arrangements call for criterion based assessments that are clear and overt. However, others have noted the role of judgment in competency based assessment. Jones (2005), in her research concerning assessment judgments in VET, describes this ‘knowing’ as tacit knowledge that is often situated within a personal or historical context, and suggests that the notion of developing a sense of the standards through practical application as opposed to the documented curriculum or training, turns assessment into a social process. In our situation, our ‘knowing’ was drawn from our own rich vocational experience. However this was of no insight to the learners who typically had never been employed in any field of practice relating to their studies. As a result, the use of exemplars carefully selected over a period of years assisted learners to comprehend requirements. In many instances, the learner would present work for assessment based on personal taste and aesthetics. We found that objectivity could be more easily maintained by using a panel of assessors and engaging in moderation.
6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to articulate the linkages between teaching, learning and assessment taking into consideration the inclusion of PBL as the preferred instructional and assessment approach. Its focus on the tensions and difficulties of establishing transfer of learning has highlighted the changing role of the teacher and the importance of appropriate holistic assessment. The discussion concedes that there are challenges involved in training and assessing away from the workplace but establishes that PBL has been used to effect in the RMIT Fashion research study. The next chapter explores more fully implications for other institutional Training Package users and endeavours to draw meaningful conclusions and recommendations that may be useful in broader application.
Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS and IMPLICATIONS

Influenced by emerging trends and changes occurring in workplace practice, the Fashion Department at RMIT TAFE sought to develop a Training Package Program that prepared graduates for work in the new knowledge economy. Graduates would need to be flexible, responsive and skilful contingent thinkers, equipped with capabilities necessary for knowledge production. The focus of this research investigation centres on the notion of the place of Project Based Learning in a Training Package context. Using a Training Package Program introduced at RMIT TAFE as a research study, the research proposes that implementing a PBL approach has been an effective means of integrating Training Package outcomes with an instructional method that facilitates thinking, problem solving and communication skills.

7.1 Significance of the Study

The research study began with the challenge to design, develop and implement a curriculum model for an AQF Level 6 Training Package Program that could meet the competency standards required in the TCF Training Package and at the same time address the unique difficulties of teaching and assessing higher order problem solving skills. The study is significant because the use of PBL as an instructional approach represents a shift in the way vocational education is traditionally delivered. The use of PBL raised a set of questions about its appropriateness in a standards based environment. More commonly established in Higher Education, the application of PBL in VET was, at the time, unconventional.
Using a framework based around participative, action-oriented ‘practice’ research, the project was located in my workplace and focussed on an issue central to my working life. The effectiveness of PBL is discussed in Chapter Six through analysis of the collected data and although my research is highly situational and context specific, it is hoped that there is scope for its application in a broader sense beyond RMIT where it may be useful to others including TAFE teachers who wish to reconcile the behaviourist nature of Training Packages with the constructivist approach of PBL.

### 7.2 Findings and Conclusions

A major outcome of this research study is the notion that a student-centred learning environment can be situated within the context of a Training Package Program. The juxtaposition of the principles of competence based training and student centeredness, often regarded as behaviourist versus constructivist approaches to learning do not appear to be under tension in the localised PBL TAFE classroom at RMIT. Perspectives surrounding the relationship between teaching, learning and assessment have also emerged as issues of concern throughout the research: each underpinned by Training Packages, PBL and their conventions. The study reveals some outcomes favourable to the process of PBL but the findings should not be generalised due to the highly situated nature of the research. Here are some major findings.

Firstly, data evaluated in Section 5.2 found that learner participants enrolled in the Advanced Diploma of TCF (Fashion) Program appeared to recognise a change in the way they approached learning in a PBL environment compared with their previous learning experiences. Their burgeoning self reliance and sense of work readiness proved to be an interesting finding that emerged from the research study. Section 6.2 illustrates the various ways in which those learners
progressively demonstrated the existence of personalised, deep learning in a local context through exposure to ‘real’ issues and scenarios brought about in this instance by the project environment. When applied to the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program introduced at RMIT, this observation is consistent with Cornford (2005), Down & Hager (1999) and Henry (1994) and suggests that PBL has been a successful pedagogical innovation. Although the study was conducted with a small scale learning cohort, the satisfactory results imply that it may have application for larger groups. Consideration may need to be given to the scope of project scenarios and the facilities available and caution is advised if PBL is implemented in the lower AQF levels of Certificate and Diploma where fundamental technical proficiency needs to be firmly established.

Secondly, assumptions regarding the incongruity of each of the behaviourist/constructivist approaches to learning in a Training Package environment are discussed in Section 3.2.1. As the Training Package experience has become more familiar to the RMIT teaching cohort, the notion of competency based training and assessment being incompatible with PBL has been dispelled and replaced with a realisation that PBL does offer a high degree of flexibility that can be accommodated within a competence based regime, in particular the learning and assessment of higher order competencies. We can conclude that this research study has capitalised on the innovative teaching strategies available to Training Package developers as described by Hawke & Cornford (1998) and Waterhouse (2000). Teachers involved in this study moved from being ‘compliant’ to ‘creative’ and still fulfilled the statutory requirements of Training Packages.

Thirdly, the research study has highlighted the changed role of the teacher in the PBL classroom from transmitter of knowledge to facilitator of independent learning. It has brought forth a more subtle, more complex and perhaps more reflective practitioner. Section 6.3 highlights the significant areas of changed practice, notably in the area of team teaching. RMIT Fashion’s
utilisation of a team teaching approach to develop and deliver the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program allowed teachers to access colleagues’ specialist skills and foster a wider network of information and resources. Although Chapter Six identifies literature that suggests prudence when selecting the teacher pairings, the RMIT Fashion experience was relatively trouble free.

7.3 Unexpected Outcomes of the Research

Section 6.4 notes that the correct sequencing of projects and the use of exemplars appeared to assist the learning continuum of the student participants in this research study. This could not be foreseen at the commencement of the research study and was only uncovered as a result of the Participatory Action Research inquiry process undertaken as part of the investigation.

Assessment frameworks developed for the Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program proved to be consistently challenging throughout the duration of the research study. Literature presented in Section 6.5 recognises the linkages between teaching, learning and assessment and supports the findings that assessment of higher AQF level competencies can be inherently difficult, possibly requiring a holistic approach. This issue continues to be vexatious and remains, at the time of writing, less than ideal in capturing the full scope of workplace competency.

7.4 Limitations

This research study is limited to the development and implementation of a single Training Package Program located in an institutional environment. Therefore the results are highly situational and could be influenced, in part, by factors such as (a) the immediate physical environment and (b) the demographic of a specific learner group. Solomon (2003) in Section 6.3 refers to the foregrounding of work within an educational context as influential in producing
capable and competent graduates. As acknowledged in Section 2.5, RMIT Fashion students have access to excellent facilities and equipment of a standard similar to that which is currently located in the fashion industry. No claim is being made that exposure to the latest equipment guarantees competence, however it has been beneficial to reinforce a workplace focus.

An overwhelming majority of learner groups who took part in the research were school leavers who had never worked in the fashion industry. This is consistent with Smith’s (2002) observations discussed in Section 3.2.1. Although this study has been limited to a specific group of TAFE participants, there is scope for other VET providers with different site arrangements to consider the PBL model of delivery.

The voice of employer groups has been silent throughout this study. This is because the investigation has concentrated on pedagogy and praxis. Much has been written about the needs of industry, in fact the Training Packages exemplify this. Whilst recognition is given to the important role of industry partners involved in this particular case study, the study has sought to focus more on the design and development of a suitable learning model in TAFE.

7.5 Recommendations and Implications

Training Packages have prompted renewed calls for flexible and innovative approaches to learning, training, delivery and assessment. Section 3.3 posits PBL as a model of innovative practice but its implementation has required teachers and learners to adopt significant changes in attitude and behaviours. Evidence provided in Section 5 suggest this has been a positive development leading to improved, lifelong learning habits and more flexible teaching practices. Whilst the implementation of PBL into a Training Package Program at RMIT TAFE may be
innovative in this particular context, others may not find it to be so. This Action Research Project has endeavoured to generate ‘actionable’ knowledge with the purpose of changing professional practice and in this particular instance, it has been successful. The research has implications for further inquiry by other Training Package developers as a contemporary model of vocational learning.

7.6 The Research Experience

My experience during this research study uncovered rich learning across the discipline of teaching praxis and served as a reminder to me that there is still much to discover. I am embracing the notion of becoming a lifelong learner alongside my students and am grateful for the opportunity to be introduced to the form of collective, self-reflective inquiry that is action research. I now have the ability to review my own practice more thoroughly whilst facing the truth that my ideas may not always work. As I have searched the prescribed methodologies to support hunches I’ve developed, I have noticed that the research has undoubtedly added more rigour to my practice, making me more accountable for what I do. In a broader sense, it has brought me to the realisation that in spite of changing conditions in VET, there is still scope for the realisation of imaginative and innovative pedagogical practice.
APPENDICES

List of Appendices

Appendix A  Implementation of Strategic Review recommendations
Appendix B  School of Fashion Group Forum
Appendix C  2002 – 2004 Learner Survey Template and Responses
Appendix D  Questionnaire 2003 Template and Responses
Appendix E  Student Satisfaction Survey 2002
Appendix F  Student Experience Survey 2006
Appendix G  Annual Program Report 2002
Appendix H  Annual Program Report 2003
Appendix A .............. Implementation of Strategic Review recommendations

FACULTY OF ART, DESIGN AND COMMUNICATIONS

Principles & Process for Staffing the New Structures in the School of Graphic Technology and the School of Fashion and Textiles

1. Introduction

This document has been prepared for all TAFE staff in the School of Graphic Technology and the School of Fashion and Textiles. It outlines the principles and the process to be followed for the implementation of the reviews of these schools in relation to staffing matters.

The Dean of the Faculty of Art, Design and Communications and the AEU have endorsed the processes and principles outlined in this document. The contents of this document have been based on the University’s Organisational Review Principles and Guidelines, which can be accessed http://www.rmit.edu.au/departments/hr/st/ogrev/orpg.html.

2. Background

2.1 School of Printing: Strategic Review

In 2000, a strategic review of the School of Printing was undertaken, for the primary purpose to:

- Articulate the strengths and opportunities for growth for the School;
- Determine the market position the School should pursue, in line with emerging global technology trends;
- Establish the future strategic direction of the School in a way that achieves synergy with multimedia and design disciplines and ensures financial viability in the long term;
- Refresh and revitalise program offerings, in terms of content and mode of delivery; and
- Facilitate research and innovation in partnership with business and industry.

2.2 School of Fashion and Textiles: Strategic Review

Similarly, during 2000, a strategic review was undertaken of the School of Fashion and Textiles. Of significance, the review had, as its key objectives, the need to:

- Clearly articulate its program offerings and scholarship in the disciplines of Fashion, Textiles and Merchandising;
- Ensure that the distinct characteristics and value of TAFE and HE are maintained and enhanced in the development of new programs and in the re-shaping of the School’s academic architecture;
- Strengthen connections with industry as a way of enhancing research opportunities, particularly in the area of supply chain management and materials logistics;
- Develop a global reputation in terms of scholarship and program delivery; and
- Re-focus effort on the key capabilities required over the 3 management horizons and putting in place an appropriate organisational structure.
Appendix B  School of Fashion Group Forum  (page 1 of 3)

RMIT  
SCHOOL OF FASHION AND TEXTILES

AGENDA  
SCHOOL FASHION GROUP FORUM

9.30am Wednesday 27th June 2001  
Building 513, Level 2, Room 014/015  
Brunswick Campus

1. **Introduction**: Karen Webster

2. **Overview**  
   1.1 Overview of what HE Fashion does: Karen Webster  
   1.2 Overview of what TAFE Fashion does: Tina Gugliemino Rhonda Kirakos

3. **Level 1 Management Issues**  
   3.1 Objectives for next two years  
   3.2 Ideas for discussion  
      • Articulation opportunities/stream demands  
      • Funding and earning projections  
      • Staff profile/job flows  
      • Where are the opportunities?  
      • How do we establish ourselves as a research base?  
      • Post graduate focus  
      • Location and space implications
Appendix B

School of Fashion Group Forum cont’d (page 2 of 3)

Plan for 2003 Undergraduate Articulation Pathways – Fashion
Prepared by Karen Webster, July 2001

Please find attached a proposed diagram for discussion.

This diagram outlines a possible structure for the undergraduate fashion programs commencing 2003. This is an attempt to fulfil the University objectives of respecting the differences and unique qualities of TAFE and HE programs while offering articulation pathways between the two.

How it works:

Students apply and enter into either TAFE or HE programs through our normal channels. Students can complete their qualifications along the traditional pathways:

TAFE – Three Year Advanced Diploma with options of Diploma (after two years) or Certificate (after one year) qualifications along the way.

HE – Three Year Degree: We will maintain specialist streams in:
   Applied Design: This stream has a design focus working within the framework of product design and development and its application to industry. Students work towards developing new and exciting fashion products with a thorough understanding of the related business and marketing requirements. This stream prepares graduates to work in the areas of design, product development, retail, buying and management.

   Exploratory Design: This stream concentrates on creative design linked to appropriate technical and experimental processes. This stream is suited to those students wishing to pursue a career in the independent and specialist fashion areas of the industry. It enables students to explore design in a variety of fields; those wishing to work in investigational and conceptual design have the opportunity to extend their abilities within the exploratory design stream.

We need to assess and investigate whether the degree in this area is best titled Bachelor of Design, (as opposed to Bachelor of Arts).

The plan for 2003 is that all students entering into the HE program would do a communal foundation first year and then at its successful completion select which stream they move into for years two and three.

Alternative pathways to the above are then offered to students who wish to refocus their career and specialise their skills. Articulation pathways can be offered with the following options:

1. Commence and complete one year of TAFE, fulfil requirements of a design orientated bridging program, (most probably offered as a full fee short course over the summer break) and commence year two of the HE Bachelor of Design.
2. Commence and complete two years of TAFE, fulfil requirements of a design orientated bridging program, (also offered as a full fee short
Appendix B

School of Fashion Group Forum cont’d (page 3 of 3)

course over the summer break) and commence year three of the HE Bachelor of Design.
3. Commence and complete two years of HE, fulfill requirements of a technical orientated bridging program, (also offered as a full fee short course over the summer break) and commence year three of the HE Bachelor of Technology.
4. Commence and complete two years of TAFE, fulfill requirements of a selection process that would assess academic prowess and on successful selection commence a one year top-up program of a HE Bachelor of Technology. This year could incorporate the same curriculum structure of the Advanced Diploma, (and be run simultaneously) plus additional theory based courses that provide the academic rigour of a degree.

These pathways could also be used a major marketing tool to attract international students who have completed diplomas overseas and wish to move into degree programs. The bridging programs and the Bachelor of Technology provide options that could be most attractive to international applicants.

Students who have completed either the Bachelor of Design or Bachelor of Technology and achieved distinction and above for their major project area could apply to do an honours year.

Issues we need to consider:

We cannot run a bridging program without analysis of its financial viability. Students would most likely be required to pay full fee for these programs, that would be offered in a short course format. We would need to do some figures on minimums. If there is demand to articulate across we would also need to consider the consequent impact on numbers and reduced load in one area and potential increased load in another at latter year stages.

Due to all students enrolled in a degree being required to complete two context curriculum subjects of 6 credit points each, we would need to look at the impact of this when students articulate from TAFE to HE at a latter year stage.

Due to the commencement of a one year degree (B.Tech) that tops up the TAFE qualification combined with the potential of a number of students wishing to articulate from TAFE to HE through the bridging program process. We would need to appeal to the School/Faculty for increased COG profile to support these changes. As the fashion area is the most financially viable sector within the School such a request should be supported. The move into a technology related program fits the objectives of the University and assists us in extending our reputation and enables us to 'grow the business'.

I would propose that we establish a working party within the fashion discipline with staff from TAFE and HE to start working on the implementation of this proposal as soon as possible.
Appendix C  2002 – 2004 Learner Survey

ADVANCED DIPLOMA PROGRAM
LEARNER SURVEY

What has been your personal aim in participating in the Advanced Diploma Program?

(a) To be work ready
(b) To develop own skills in a particular area
(c) To be an independent learner
(d) To be self responsible
(e) To fill in the year before looking for a job
(f) Other – please describe

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

How have you gone about achieving your personal goals?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

What else do I need to make this happen?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

What has changed about your approach to this kind of work during the course of the year?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Do you think you have become a more independent learner? In what way? Give a story to illustrate this. (Use the reverse side of paper if necessary)

J.WrightLearnerSurvey2002

Learner Survey 2002: Student Responses:
What has been your personal aim in participating in the Ad Dip

1. to be work ready
2. to develop own skills in a particular area
3. to be self responsible
4. to fill in the year before looking for a job
5. other please describe

1 = 3 responses
2 = 7 responses
3 = 6 responses
4 = 5 responses
5 = 3 responses
6 = other please describe 0 responses

How have you gone about achieving your personal goals

• “Working responsibly by tuning into the teachers advice and knowledge.
• Participating in competitions and any publicity for your work”
• “returning back to school. Trying to gain work experience on free days
• Talking to people in the industry job recruitments – asking for traineeships”
• “I have stayed in the program even when things get too hard. I have also working in the areas I would like to in after I finish my Ad Dip.”
• “Become more self-reliable. Using my own initiative, become more aware of what my skills are and trying to improve them (not focussing on things that I’m not good at)”
• “To develop my own skills in a particular area. I have improved in that area especially in my patternmaking. To be an independent learner to not rely on my teachers for assistance and try to do it myself.”
• “Personal goals by: knowing my personal skills more better. Knowing what to do and how to achieve them: being more independent learner by looking up books for my information; and knowing my skills to get the job in the future.”
• “by learning and listening to every bit of knowledge and taking on board where my faults are and improving these areas. i.e. time management to lead to being a fashion designer”

What else do I need to make this happen?

• “You can never stop learning – so I guess, knowledge”
• “To give me more encouragement in my patternmaking skills, and give me a push with I get stuck”
• “I need more self incarge and to belive that I can achive anything”
• “More encouragement to take up every opportunity given”
• “I need to get a full time job”
• “Asking as many questions”
• “Enjoyment of the work being done – you need this to be motivated”
What has changed about your approach to this kind of work during the course of the year?

- “Become more independent and responsible – I have matured a lot and become a lot more self confident through the work I have done”
- “knowing that I have come back to school because I want to, and to really appreciate the fact that I want to learn the inside and out of patternmaking. I have learnt that a fantastic patternmaker was not born overnight, it’s a learnt trade.”
- “I have changed my mind about what area I’d like to work in and I think I have become more open minded about the fashion industry.”
- “When I first started this course, I felt like I was wasting my time, then as the year progressed, I realised that the subjects where (sic) set out to get us ready for working in the industry and using our own initiative.”
- “I become to set myself a chart and try to follow it”
- “Changed: handing work with a deadline date. Handing it in by working with a gantt chart. Also learning garments with difficult styles and learning different patterns”
- “My attitude towards time management definitely. The attitude in the industry and how it really is – being realistic about it. I also try to find out things by myself and get help at the same time which is a good combination.”

Do you think you have become a more independent learner? In what way? Give a story to illustrate this?

- Time management
- Take responsibility for own actions
- Ask for help when I need it
- Accept constructive criticism and not be intimidated by it, but improve from it
- I used to be ‘good enough is near enough’ and now I really try to perfect what I am doing. I am happy to take on more responsibility whereas before I hated doing anything
- Working with a gantt chart helped me with more independent learner because last year we were given a lot of dates, but no guide lines on what to do and how many weeks. Also, last year we were given a lot of subject to do, and had to put everything together, but this year, we had to do all of these ourselves, but it gave me more independent o my learning, than last year.
- Oh, definitely. I believe now I am ready to find myself a job.
- Yes. I have put more of my skills and ability into this 3rd project as I feel like I am capable of completing it to a satisfactory level.
- At the start of the year I looked at the teacher to tell me what to do, how to do it and why. I found that they did not have all the answers. I wanted to be told and this made everything very difficult for me and my work.
- I was at the point of dropping out of the course when I chose to finish the project I was working on first and doing it how I think I should do it. I found that everything started to fall into place.
- After that I have found I have become a more independent learner and I have found I am now enjoying the course a lot more.
- Purchasing books appropriate to patternmaking and sewing.
- Asking questions
Appendix D............................................. Questionnaire 2003 Template and Responses

Questionnaire  April 4, 2003

Advanced Diploma (Fashion) Program

Question 1:
How do you feel about the Project you have just completed and what are your feelings regarding the next Project?

Question 2:
Can you give an example of an occasion when you didn’t confront a difficult issue?

Question 3:
What do you regard as the biggest danger to your success?

Question 4:
At what stage did you commit to the Project?

Question 5:
What do you most need from RMIT and your teachers?

Question 6:
What aspects of the Program have helped you the most?

Question 7:
How can you apply what you’ve learnt to your life outside RMIT?

Question 8:
How can you contribute to the strength of the class?
### STUDENT RESPONSES QUESTIONNAIRE: 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. How would you evaluate your performance now that the first project is complete?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• I am pleased with the project result. This is the most time and effort I’ve put into a project. It’s good to know what to expect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Happy, Proud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal issues got in the way but I’m glad its over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concerned due to the amount of work and short time frame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tired, relieved happy it’s over because I know I will be more organized next time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I believe I did well. I have received some positive feedback from my target market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I feel proud that I I able to complete this project without dropping out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I needed more time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I feel quite good about the project; I felt I did the best that I could-I managed my time satisfactorily.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. What would you do differently next time?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• It’s hard to get the ball rolling and motivation to do it all over again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get the report organized earlier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Confront problems earlier and don’t put off because of fear of failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Better Quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Better work/life balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bit more enthusiastic but realistic as to how much work is ahead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Better organised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Monitor the Gantt chart better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do designing and storyboards over the holidays so I don’t get behind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More organised.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. What stopped you from completing necessary tasks?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Afraid to ask for help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Didn’t speak up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Motivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Giving up too easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Procrastination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disregarding the report till the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thinking I’ve got more time than I really have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not following the Gantt chart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I often put things off because I can’t be bothered or something better to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not confronting external suppliers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scared of failing or not doing as well as others so practiced avoidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rushing things at the last minute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not asking for help in case it meant more rework for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Couldn’t commit to final designs, missed a few classes and I putting off my work &amp; wasted time to start making my patterns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of research led to non commitment to design.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Can you recall the time when you decided to change your behaviour?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 2/3 of the way thru I realized that I didn’t have time to complete so started to work harder. I became more prepared before class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I changed my behaviour when I I required to present first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2 weeks before due date I wrote a list of things to do and realized that I may fail – I always knew in my head that I would get it done because I did in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Better organized towards the end of project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2 weeks before due date decided to start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2 weeks before the due date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leaving it till last 2 weeks then consulting gantt chart.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 5. How can you apply what you’ve learnt in 3rd year to being employable?

- Recognising strengths and weaknesses.
- More confidence in yourself and your work.
- Get over it and get on with it.
- Be responsible for your own outcome.
- Don’t put anything off: do it when you get it.
- Learning to work with people you may not always get along with.
- Time management in all areas of life.
- Work/life balance.
- Prioritising.
- Forced to find connections – networking.
- Forced to work to a deadline.
- Dealing with industry whilst being a student.
- Feel more responsible and professional but can still enjoy myself and have fun.
- Work methodically.
- The ability to do more than one task at a time.
- Quick deadlines.
- Learnt to delegate responsibility when I need to. I learnt to work as a team member and listen to others and open my mind to other ways of thinking.
- Presentation, selling yourself.
- Being able to cope with failure – not the right person for the job. There is always something you can do to make it work instead of fail.
- Work/life balance.
- Improved my research skills and contact with suppliers.
- Enabling me to finish tasks faster and with less pressure.
- Gained more confidence in dealing with suppliers and sourcing my fabrics and trims.
- Improved technical skills.
- Pressure, workload and deadlines.
- Gained more confidence in dealing with suppliers and sourcing my fabrics and trims.
- Improved technical skills.
- Pressure, workload and deadlines.
- Business plan help to get loan and essential for beginning business.

### 6. What can you contribute to the strength of the team and what are you willing to take responsibility for?

- Supporting/encouraging other class members.
- Positive attitude.
- Giving feedback to teachers about downfalls or positives of class/course.
- Help others.
- Show 2nd and 1st years the high standards expected.
- Help others and promote the course.
- Being friendly and making sure people are coping. By doing this I pleasantly surprised that I I receiving the same treatment and help in return.
- Positive attitude.
- Effective team member.
- Provide my help in areas that I am strong in.
- I can support class members in stressful times and help them if I am able to.
- More commitment.

### 7. What do you need from your teachers?

- More info relating to the course at the start of the project at the start of the day. As much practical advice as possible.
- Maybe a one day workshop on presentation skills.
- Need more tutorials on teachers area of expertise, but overall like this way of working – to do the work myself and get help with problem areas.
- Time management skills.
- Motivators.
- Help with production techniques and toiling.
- Need teachers to check my work all the time so I can be updated.
- More individual time.
- Knowledge about industry.
- Help with interview skills and resumes.
| Strengths of the Program | • Being critical.  
|                         | • Industry specs.  
|                         | • It has pushed my capabilities I am now able to handle greater workload. |
Appendix E................................................................. Student Satisfaction Survey 2002

RMIT

Student Satisfaction Survey 2002
Quantitative Report – Version 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name:</th>
<th>Advanced Diploma of Textile, Clothing &amp; Footwear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Code:</td>
<td>C6025 / KH60A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Contact:</td>
<td>Rhonda Kirakos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Location:</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty:</td>
<td>Art, Design and Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Teaching</td>
<td>Annie Holdsworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality/Feedback equivalent:</td>
<td>Enrolments/Respondents: 18/13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commencement Year</th>
<th>Program Based</th>
<th>Previous Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City</td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Tafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Higher Ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Citizenship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>Australian Citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>Permanent resident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Current Occupation*</th>
<th>LOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P/Time</td>
<td>F/T paid job</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/Time</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Rural Relocate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*% of total for each response

Prepared by: Quality Consultancy Unit
Student Feedback Project
C:\Documents and Settings\Web21166\Local Settings\Temp\C6035 A06p TCF.doc

Contact: S. Scarlett
sandra.nikit@rmit.edu.au
### Appendix E

**Student Satisfaction Survey 2002 cont’d page 2 of 7**

**Communications and Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. The staff make a real effort to understand the difficulties you have with your learning</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I normally receive helpful feedback from teachers</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I am encouraged by your teachers to do well</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Teachers regularly tell me how I am performing</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The teachers have a good knowledge of the subject they are teaching</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. You are easily able to talk to your teachers when required</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. The way in which you are developing skills through the program matches the skill you are required to develop on the job</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. You feel you will be able to use what you have learned in the program on the job/in every day life</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The topics covered in the program are interesting</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. This program helps me to develop my problem solving skills</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The topics covered in the program are sufficiently challenging for you</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. This program has helped me develop my ability to work as a team member</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I feel this program will be useful to me in my work (now or in the future)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepared by Quality Consultancy Unit
Student Feedback Project
C:\Documents and Settings\c2100\Local Settings\Temp\C20025 ADp TCF.doc

Contact: S. Scarlett
susan.scarlett@rmit.edu.au Page 2 of 7
Appendix E

Student Satisfaction Survey 2002 cont’d page 3 of 7

Your experience of your program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clear Consistent Program</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Assessment tasks are clearly linked to the stated learning outcomes of the program
8% 15% 77% 13

4. You were given a clear idea of what you could achieve by the end of the Program
0% 46% 54% 13

2. You got all the information you needed to make choices about your program
15% 54% 31% 13

16. Assessment tasks are an appropriate measure of what I have learnt
0% 8% 92% 13

3. The information given to you by RMIT University gave you a clear idea of where the program might lead in terms of future career and job prospects
0% 31% 69% 13

Student Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Feedback</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. During the program teachers seek feedback from students about their satisfaction with the program
0% 8% 92% 13

Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Equipment or materials are often not available when you need them*
23% 23% 54% 13

*Question re-coded to obtain mean:

Prepared by Qualiy Consultancy Unit
Student Feedback Project
C:\Documents and Settings\keith\Local Settings\Temp\C0025 ADp TCF.doc

Contact S. Scarlett
ssoan宠爱@gmail.edu.au
Page 3 of 7
Appendix E

Student Satisfaction Survey 2002 cont’d page 4 of 7

RMIT

Student Satisfaction Survey 2002
Quantitative Report – Version 2

Your experience of your program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall*</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Thinking in general about the program you are undertaking, or have undertaken, at RMIT University, how would you rate your program?*

*Question contains incorrect response scaling

28. If any of your program is online, please choose one or more of the following to describe the sort of online activities you used?

- Received regular announcements: Engaged in online discussions with other students
- Accessed lecture notes: Communicated with my lecturer/ tutor(s)
- Accessed information about labs or tutorials: Researched information from other web sites
- Looked at my Program Guide: Submitted assignments electronically
- Had a detailed Program Schedule or Learning Guide to refer to: Completed quizzes or surveys

29. Up to now, how much experience have you had using online activities and materials provided by your program?

- None: 0%
- A little: 31%
- Some: 15%
- Quite a lot: 15%
- A great deal: 0%

30. How would you describe your experience of using these online resources?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grouping</th>
<th>(% of all respondents by grouping*)</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>(% of all respondents)</th>
<th>(% of all respondents experience of using online resources by grouping)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Helped my</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Accessible off</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyable</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrating</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>Hard to access</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Frustrating</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lonely</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*for example a choice of any of the Useful grouping counts only as one respondent for useful, so this is a proportion of total who made at least one choice from this group.
Appendix E

Student Satisfaction Survey 2002 cont’d page 5 of 7

RMIT

Program Name: Advanced Diploma of Textile, Clothing & Footwear
Faculty: Art, Design and Communication

Finally:

1. What would you say has been the best part of your experience in this program?

Being able to go out into the industry and experience what is related to the industry. And having teachers that are currently working in this field.
Being able to put the learning of 2nd year studies in the one project + having our own resources.
Expand my knowledge.
Gaining new skills, knowledge's, gaining confidence to apply what we have learnt for future reference, experience.
Learning “industry” based skills.
Learning industry standard sewing & pattern making, learning to stick to deadlines. Quality was also great to learn as it is an important aspect of the project. Overall it has made me a lot more confident in my approach to work.
Learning the production of garments (clothing) I am very satisfied that I can make up my designs into good quality garments.
Learning the skills to a very high standard & becoming confident to apply them.
The industry experience.
The projects.

Two of the teachers in this course have made a change to me in the way of 'making' me more interested in the course & making me want to give my all in the projects.

When I get out of it.

2. What would you most like to see improved?

Applied learning - to force students to REALLY learn. More design development & presentation of work (boards etc.)
Equipment + Materials to be up to the best standard and the facilities to be up to date + modern.
I think more skills should be taught in the design area, product development, range development.
Improve on “AMS”
Make the projects more realistic; you never ever have to get sponsorship when you are working.
Organization of the 3rd year course structure.
Standards of work.
The design aspect - although this course is industry based and the main focus is on this. Our course lacks in presentation and design and I see it could be one of the major areas where it holds us back - experimenting with different mediums (paint, charcoal, etc.) will benefit the students.
The planning and structure of the course needs to be organized better. The course also needs to offer more information about each project.
The use of resources available to students. The design aspect of fashion - learning more presentation skills
Using teachers that know how to teach and not talk about their own work/industry experiences. This might be insightful but does not help student complete assignment/outcomes.

3. If you could change one thing about RMIT, what would it be?

All of RMIT student working together.
Apply more design classes that teach sketching drawing illustrations, life drawing.
As above. Nothing else I can think of.
Library open earlier and Saturday and Sat Sunday
Make this course a bridging course to the DEGREE Fashion course where possible.
More organised - Have not yet received any final paperwork for the certificate or diploma.
Organization - administration, advanced diploma outlines.
Organization within the administrative department, i.e. results, enrolment, certificates
“Results’ access & delivery of results on time.
The results of subjects should be sent out at the end of each term.

Prepared by Quality Consultancy Unit
Student Feedback Project
C:\Documents and Settings\scott\Local Settings\Temp\C6025 ADip TCF.doc

Contact S. Scarlett
susan.scarlett@rmit.edu.au
Page 5 of 7
Appendix E

Student Satisfaction Survey 2002 cont'd page 6 of 7

RMIT

Student Satisfaction Survey 2002
Qualitative Report – Version 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name:</th>
<th>Advanced Diploma of Textile, Clothing &amp; Footwear</th>
<th>Faculty:</th>
<th>Art, Design and Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

O1 Learning industry standard sewing & pattern making, learning to stick to deadlines. Quality was also great to learn as it is an important aspect of the project. Overall it has made me a lot more confident in my approach to work.
O2 The design aspect - although this course is industry based and the main focus is on this. Our course lacks in presentation and design and I see it could be one of the major areas where it holds us back - experimenting with different mediums (paint, charcoal, etc.) will benefit the students.
O3 Organization - administration, advanced diploma outlines.
C1 Gaining new skills, knowledge's, gaining confidence to apply what we have learnt for future reference, experience.
C2 The use of resources available to students. The design aspect of fashion - learning more presentation skills
C3 Organization within the administrative department, i.e., results, enrolment, certificates
C1 Extend my knowledge.
C2 Improve on "AAAD".
C3 Library open earlier and Saturday and/or Sunday.

O1 Learning the production of garments (clothing). I am very satisfied that I can make up my designs into good quality garments.
O2 I think more skills should be taught in the design area, product development, range development.
O3 Apply more design classes that teach sketching drawing illustrations, life drawing.
C1 Learning the skills to a very high standard & becoming confident to apply them.
C2 Applied learning - to force students to REALLY learn. More design development & presentation of work (boards etc.)
C3 More organised. - Have not yet received any final paperwork for the certificate or diploma.

O1 When I get out of it
O2 Standards of work
O3 All of RMIT student working together.
O1 Being able to put the learning of 2nd year studies in one project + having our own resources.
O2 Make the projects more realistic, you never ever have to get sponsorship when you are working.
O3 As above. Nothing else I can think of.
C1 The industry experience.
C2 The planning and structure of the course needs to be organised better. The course also needs to offer more information about each project.
C3 The results of subjects should be sent out at the end of each term.
O1 Learning 'industry' based skills
O2 Organization of the third year course structure.
O3 'Results' access & delivery of results on time.
O1 Being able to go out into the industry and experience what is related in the industry. And having teachers that are currently working in this field.
O2 Equipment + Materials to be up to the best standard and the facilities to be up to date + modern.
O3 Make this course a bridging course to the DEGREE Fashion course where possible.

Prepared by Quality Consultancy Unit
Student Feedback Project
C:\Documents and Settings\42\09\Local Settings\Temp\C:\9995 ADip TCF.doc

Contact: S. Scarlett
saran.scarlett@rmit.edu.au
Appendix E

Student Satisfaction Survey 2002 cont’d page 7 of 7

RMIT

Student Satisfaction Survey 2002
Qualitative Report – Version 2

O1 2 of the teachers in this course have made a change to me in the way of 'making me more interested in the course & making me want to give my all in the projects.'

O2 Using teachers that know how to teach and not talk about their own work/industry experiences. This might be insightful but does not help student complete assignment/outcomes.

O3
Appendix F................................................................................. Student Experience Survey 2006

STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name:</th>
<th>Adv Dip TextilesClothgFootwear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio:</td>
<td>DSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Code:</td>
<td>C6025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School:</td>
<td>Fashion &amp; Textiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents:</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Demographics (% of total sample size)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commencement Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>Brunswick 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre 2002</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Bundoora East 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Bundoora West 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>City 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>City-Tivoli 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Distance 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Workplace 0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Citizenship</th>
<th>LOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAFE Certificate</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Yes 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE Diploma</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>No   67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance Type</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Time</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Yes 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Time</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>No 75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final year of program</th>
<th>Main Funds Source</th>
<th>Rural relocate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Yes 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Cadetship</td>
<td>No 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youth Allow/Austudy</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AusAid/IDP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scholarship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Savings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Rural relocate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part Time (&lt;14 hrs)</td>
<td>Yes 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Time (15-20 hrs)</td>
<td>No 83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Time (21-34 hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Time (35+ hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snapshot Scales 2006</th>
<th>Prepared by Survey Services Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching</td>
<td>Student Experience Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic Skills Scale</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section One - Student Experience

Good Teaching Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%AGREE</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. My instructors have a thorough knowledge of the course assessment
2. My instructors provide opportunities to ask questions
3. My instructors treat me with respect
4. My instructors understand my learning needs
5. My instructors communicate the course content effectively
6. My instructors make the course as interesting as possible

Generic Skills Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%AGREE</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. My training develops my problem solving skills
13. My training sharpens my analytical skills
14. My training helps me develop my ability to work as a team member
15. My training improves my skills in written communication
16. My training helps me to develop the ability to plan my own work problems

Appropriate Assessment Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%AGREE</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. I know how I am going to be assessed
8. The way I am assessed is a fair test of my skills
9. I am assessed at appropriate intervals
10. I receive useful feedback on my assessment
11. The assessment is a good test of what I was taught

Learning Experience Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%AGREE</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. My training makes me more confident about my ability to learn
19. I gain the skills I want to learn from my training
20. As a result of my training, I am more positive about achieving my goals
21. My training helps me think about new opportunities in life

Overall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%AGREE</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Valid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of this training

Prepared by Survey Services Centre
Student Experience Survey
Contact: L. Ar
lauren.armstrong@rmit
## Section Two - Campus Life

### Learning Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Valid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I am satisfied with the Library's e-resources collection</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am satisfied with the Library's book collections</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Library staff provide quality service</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Library's study facilities are adequate</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Library opening hours meet my needs</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Computing Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Valid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am satisfied with access to computer facilities at RMIT</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am satisfied with access to the specialist software I require</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The availability of computer printing facilities</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The standard of service from computing support staff</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Learning Support Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Valid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Study support</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. English language support (International Students)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Online Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Have you ever accessed online activities and materials provided by your program?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Were you satisfied with the standard of online materials you accessed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Satisfied</td>
<td>Strongly Dissatisfied</td>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Were you satisfied with the standard of online activities you accessed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. It's difficult for me to access the World Wide Web</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 hrs</td>
<td>1 - 10 hrs</td>
<td>10 - 20 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrequently</th>
<th>Once or Twice</th>
<th>3 or 4 Times</th>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Campus Life and Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel personally safe on campus</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMIT is friendly to people from all backgrounds</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am treated with respect at RMIT</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to have more contact with students in other programs</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The RMIT campus is a good place to spend time outside classes</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the Orientation programs run</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel empowered by being involved in programs / activities run by students for students</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepared by Survey Services Centre
Student Experience Survey

Contact: laurie.armstrong@rmit.edu.au
### Student Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of services</th>
<th>Have used this service</th>
<th>Use own community service</th>
<th>Not needed this service</th>
<th>Didn't know about it</th>
<th>Could not find it</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Hub</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health advice and treatment</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and scholarship advice</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling services</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career planning and advice</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability support</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing advice and assistance</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International students advisory services</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Building and Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are the following areas clean, well maintained well ventilated and at a comfortable temperature</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Theatres</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratories</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General access computer labs</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilets</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifts</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Administration and access

| Time tabling and room bookings are well organised                                           | 0%                | 9%             | 36%             | 55%               | 0%             | 11              |
| RMIT deals fairly with complaints                                                          | 9%                | 18%            | 36%             | 36%               | 0%             | 11              |
| RMIT has kept an accurate record of my name/address                                        | 0%                | 0%             | 27%             | 36%               | 36%            | 11              |
| I received accurate/timely info about my enrolment                                         | 9%                | 18%            | 18%             | 27%               | 27%            | 11              |
| If I had a complaint about RMIT I would know who to go to                                  | 0%                | 36%            | 27%             | 36%               | 0%             | 11              |
| RMIT effectively resolves any administration issues                                        | 9%                | 18%            | 36%             | 36%               | 0%             | 11              |

### Outcomes

| As an RMIT graduate I will be highly employable                                              | 0%                | 0%             | 33%             | 50%               | 17%            | 12              |
| As an RMIT graduate I will be able to run my own business                                   | 8%                | 0%             | 50%             | 33%               | 8%             | 12              |
| RMIT will take notice of the results of this survey                                         | 8%                | 17%            | 35%             | 42%               | 0%             | 12              |

### Notes

The scale %AGREE is calculated by adding up all the items scored Agree/Strongly Agree across all respondents. This is divided by the total number of items answered across all respondents. Blanks, doubles or N/A's are excluded. Percentages represent the %age of the total valid responses per question, with the exception of the demographics section which represents the %age of total responses. Charts are rescaled on valid responses to total 100%. An asterisk (*) indicates a negatively worded question recoded to calculate %AGREE. Values may round to 101%.
## The Student Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Undecided</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectively represents students' interests to the University</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaigns and provides information and resources seeking to improve conditions for students</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would provide valuable support and advice if I had a problem with a course or teacher</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the opportunity to get involved in clubs &amp; collectives</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides opportunities for students to access social activities such as bands, competitions, tickets and short courses.</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a valuable resource in its student media, such as Catalyst, SYN FM and RMITV</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## RMIT Union - Importance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Lesser Importance</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>More Importance</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information and hire services</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lounge space</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying/bind services</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of food</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vending machines</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail outlets</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport fitness and rec. services</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual arts, performing arts, gallery</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and tax and accidents insurance</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental service</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## RMIT Union - Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information and hire services</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lounge space</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying/bind services</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of food</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vending machines</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail outlets</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport fitness and rec. services</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual arts, performing arts, gallery</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and tax and accidents insurance</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental service</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepared by Survey Services Centre
Student Experience Survey

Contact: L. Armstrong
laurie.armstrong@rmit.edu.au

Page 5 of 136
Appendix G ................................................................. Annual Program Report 2002

ADVANCED DIPLOMA OF CLOTHING PRODUCTION PROGRAM REPORT 2002

FACULTY:                        ART, DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION
SCHOOL:                         SCHOOL OF FASHION AND TEXTILES
TEAM:                           FASHION
DATE:                           FEBRUARY 13, 2002

1. INTRODUCTION

The Advanced Diploma of Clothing Production Program was first delivered at RMIT Brunswick Campus in 2001. Curriculum development began in mid 2000. 7 students commenced the Program in 2001; with a mid year intake of another 5 students. So far in 2002, a further 10 students have enrolled.

2. STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAM

-the Purpose of the Program
In planning the curriculum for the Advanced Diploma Program, we recognised the need to consolidate skills and knowledge acquired at Certificate and Diploma level. Practical application through project work both individually and in groups, with Industry Partners and mentors, has ensured that students are becoming more interactive with current industry practice.

-Educational Design
The Program has been designed around the AQF Guidelines and is aligned with Training Packages. It has a strong focus on currency and relevancy. The program is student centred with an emphasis on open enquiry and research. The year is divided into 4 Term Projects. Each project focuses on a different area of the Clothing Industry. Three of the four projects are individual rather than group projects.
Project 1: Small Business
Project 2: Manufacturing and Production Planning systems
Project 3: Industry Partners
Project 4: Niche Markets

-Equity/Management
A team of specialist teachers work collaboratively on each of the different Term Projects ensuring fairness and impartiality. Student assessment is holistic and staff meet regularly with students to discuss their progress and gain feedback.

-Resourcing
Students have access to materials and equipment required to make patterns and produce garments. Industry Partners (W.L. Gore) provided materials and accessories for the students use. Other resource materials have been generated by staff who have spent many hours designing and developing the program.

-Evaluation and Maintenance
The flexibility of the Training Packages provides a broad framework upon which to develop curriculum. Feedback is constantly sought from all stakeholders: students, staff and industry partners.

Stakeholder Requirements
Ongoing consultation with stakeholders provides the necessary tools for swift change implementation as required. Due to the design of the Program, stakeholders feel they have a voice in managing the outcomes of the Program.
PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT BASED ON STUDENTS FEEDBACK FROM 2001

The following issues were highlighted by students for Program improvement:

1. A greater emphasis to be placed on understanding of time management skills
2. Wanted to learn more computer skills in relation to Report Writing and Presentations
3. Needed more guidance in understanding How to Research
4. Competency grading was inadequate

Excellent progress has so far been made in addressing No. 1-3. The grading scale has been introduced for our use this year.

Program improvement evaluation can be measured in a variety of ways:

- Through monitoring of the critical path
- Ensuring that Progress Reports are up to date
- Through brainstorming sessions/feedback
- Measured by student satisfaction
- Through demand for student places
- Successful job placement of students

REFLECTIONS
In order to nurture the shift in culture from teacher-centred learning to student centred inquiry, it has been recognised that the students require more tools in managing their "soft skills". Such things as learning and re-inforcing:

- responsibility,
- reliability
- contingency planning
- team work strategies
- research skills
- report writing
- resume writing
- approaching employers
- interview/ presentation techniques

ACTION PLAN FOR 2002 - 2003

Intensive class based workshops at the commencement of the year dealing with Time Management Skills
Engage more Guest Speakers relevant to the topic
Investigate Scheduled Class time devoted to Advanced Computer Applications such as use of Excel, Microsoft Project
Follow up of 2001 Graduates
Pursue the issue of Articulation to HE and how/if it relates to the Advanced Diploma Program
Acquaint students with the use of Software Packages commonly used in the Clothing Industry
Students to develop a working knowledge of Global Operations

SUPPORT REQUIRED FOR 2002

A better re-imbursement system so that teachers do not have to put student receipts through their own pay.
Load Excel onto the computers in Level 2 Building 513.

DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM

The 4 Courses which make up the content of the Advanced Diploma Program share some commonality. They are linked together through a consistency in final presentation of work in Report Format. Each of the 4 Projects results in a comprehensive report generated by the student.
Some proforma sheets e.g. Specification Sheets can be used in the same format over /through all 4 projects.
Each has a similar mapping process: Design Product, Develop Product, Produce Product

GRADUATE CAPABILITIES/COMPETENCIES
Our student feedback indications are that our students have had a very clear idea of what they will be able to achieve by the end of the Program. This is even further enhanced this year as we have 12 months experience to draw upon. It has been most advantageous to have an overlap of students from the mid-year intake in the class with new starters as they can use the experiences they've gained to offer peer advice.
CURRENCY OF THE PROGRAM

RECRUITMENT
In these early stages, students are being accepted into the Program upon successful completion of the Diploma of Clothing Production. Students have indicated that they have found the 3rd year to be a consolidation of skills and knowledge as well as an opportunity to network with prospective employers.

The Program has attracted international students as well as students returning to school after being in the workplace.

DEMAND FOR GRADUATES
There is a high demand for graduates in any of the Clothing Programs. Employers are constantly in contact with the University looking for students to employ. Most applications relate to Product Development, Patternmaking and Production Assistants.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE INDUSTRY
In the last 5 years, the demand for Technology has increased with the use of Industry specific software packages like CAD, CAM, PhotoShop, Adobe Illustrator, BASS etc. Program design reflects these changes as students integrate a working knowledge of these programs into their learning. In so doing, the students are developing an awareness of the mapping of the Global workplace.

Info. Tech has had a huge impact on the practice of delivery of our program. We have encouraged research and understanding of current practice and together with our industry partners we have developed an open and trusting relationship. The design of the Projects encourages students to engage in dialogue with prospective employers; to observe, analyse and evaluate systems and processes in industry.

Planned action will depend on the outcome of the 2nd cycle: Perhaps the further development of the industry/mentor relationship beyond the term of the project.

ACHIEVEMENTS BY STAFF AND STUDENTS THIS YEAR

- 2 students from the Advanced Diploma Program as finalists in the Fashion Group International Awards
- 1 Student from the Advanced Diploma Program awarded a High Commendation in the 2001 Textile Institute Competition
- 1 Staff Member undertaking Post Graduate Studies
Appendix H ................................................................. Annual Program Report 2003

Annual Program Report 2002

ADVANCED DIPLOMA OF TEXTILES, CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR (FASHION) (C6025)
DIPLOMA OF TEXTILES, CLOTHING + FOOTWEAR (FASHION) (C5112)
CERTIFICATE IV IN CLOTHING PRODUCTION (C4849)
CERTIFICATE III IN CLOTHING PRODUCTION (C4861)

FACULTY: ART, DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION
SCHOOL: FASHION AND TEXTILES
PROGRAM COORDINATORS: RHONDA KIRAKOS
JOANNE HADDOW

DATE: 18TH FEBRUARY 2003

1. Achievements

- Staff
  - All on-going staff have completed Cert IV in Workplace Assessor, with the final 3 sessional staff commencing program in 2002
  - 5 staff continuing Masters by Research
  - 2 staff continuing Masters by Coursework
  - 2 staff completed training on Photoshop/Illustrator
  - 7 staff received notebook computer training and have completed the necessary requirements
  - One staff member completed 2 weeks of Industry Release
  - Staff involvement in many activities during Melbourne Fashion Week including, the MFF Business Seminar to keep abreast of key industry initiatives and innovative ideas to enhance teaching and learning issues
  - Program Co-ordinators involved in management and training short courses
  - Ongoing subject related professional development
  - Staff participated in many courses from RMIT Open Learning initiative.

- Students
  - Fashion Group International Awards presented for outstanding skills in the Diploma of TCF (Fashion)
  - Textile Institute Students Awards - 10 students received awards for addressing a design brief and producing garments. The final prize of attendance at the Paris Academy to continue her studies was awarded to Bethany Davis
  - Hamilton Wool Awards - 5 student prizes awarded to the Advanced Diploma students
  - Successful end-of-year student exhibition and parade
  - Ongoing, successful industry partnership projects in our Diploma and Advanced Diploma

H:\Fashion\Meetings\Annual Program Report 2002.doc 3/4/03
2. Program Performance Outcomes - DIPLOMA OF TCF (FAHION)

2.1.1 From the data provided from the NCVER surveys the following have been identified as the top 2 positive performing areas in the:

Diploma of TCF

1. "Student Engagement" – data reflected a strong alignment to students perceived industry requirements and that course content was interesting and relevant. Staff have broad and current industry skills, which is evidenced in the resulting data.

2. Excellent feedback on the standard and availability of resources, equipment and facilities. Fashion (TAFE) is located in a 3-year-old, state of the art building with realistic, current programs and industry relevant set up of equipment.

Advanced Diploma of TCF

2.1.1

1. "Communications and Support" – data indicated student satisfaction in staff knowledge, accessibility and feedback. Staff involved in the Advanced Diploma are currently working in the TCF industry and therefore provide up to date information.

2. "Student Engagement" – data reflected a strong alignment to students perceived industry requirements and that content was interesting and relevant. Staff have broad and current industry skills, which is evidenced in the resulting data.

2.1.2 - Diploma of TCF

From the data, it is evident that teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they are teaching. However data indicates a need for regular feedback of student performance.

- Advanced Diploma of TCF

Data indicates that students are extremely satisfied with the feedback received. We believe that committed teachers encourage a community atmosphere, which promotes personal confidences within the students. Data is of a high standard and shows no real areas of concern.

2.1.3 - Diploma of TCF

Two areas of concern where performance was less than satisfactory were:

1. "Clarity of assessment task requirements" – During our department planning days strategies were developed to assist in clarification of assessment tasks. Each assessment that is forwarded to students must now document how the assessment task relates to a planned learning experience; which is taken directly from the Student Learning Unit Guide (SLUG). Staff were encouraged to clarify each assessment task with students and provide adequate time frames for student submission. Assessments submission dates over the entire program are now being co-ordinated.

2. "Feedback after each assignment" – Each assessment task is now returned with an accompanying feedback sheet showing mark break down and written feedback. Staff are encouraged to give feedback verbally on an ongoing basis.
- Advanced Diploma of TCF
Two areas of concern where performance was less than satisfactory were:

1) "Information on program choices"—Program Coordinators and staff
effort to relate the program experiences of current Advanced Diploma
students to the current Diploma students. These students are encouraged to
view the work from each Advanced Diploma project and discuss the program
with the Advanced Diploma students.

2) "Design Development needs upgrading and presentation skills to be
included." Students are now encouraged to use skills developed in their
Diploma CAD courses in the presentation of their work.

2.2.1,2,3,4,5 Selection, Retention and Completion

From the OPIS data provided for Certificate IV in Clothing Production demand for our
programs continues to remain high. However, no data was supplied for the Diploma or
Advanced Diploma and the data for Certificate III and IV proved to be inaccurate and
unreliable.

3 Program Activities

3.1 Program amendments/changes

2002 was the inaugural year of Training Packages at Diploma level. During our program
planning process, in order to give a more realistic industry perspective, planned learning
experiences were developed that incorporated a selection of competencies from the
training package into various courses. This involved direct interaction with industry in
the planning, delivery and assessment stages. Feedback from both staff and students has
indicated a worthwhile learning experience with positive outcomes. During 2002, staff
were trained on the DLS requirements with the intention of commencing to place class
notes on-line. Staff/Students are beginning to communicate via email to make
appointments and submit work electronically.

3.2 Program Renewal

a) Student graduates are more "work ready" as they are now much more aware of the
entire design and production process as a result of our previously mentioned
initiatives of industry projects.

b) Students are now being directed to individual research tasks electronically rather than
solely face-to-face class teaching experiences. We have found these students to show
more initiative and drive than past years.

3.3 Assessments and Moderation

Department planning days are held regularly and the effectiveness of assessment is an
ongoing agenda item. Assessment tasks are directly related to the competencies listed in
the training packages at these team meetings. Ongoing development of course outlines
and associated assessment tasks are maintained to ensure standardisation across the
courses. Moderation occurs via regular team discipline meetings and formally towards
the end of each semester. These meetings are minuted and filed in the Program log.
3.4 Student Feedback

Our feedback indicated that students were dissatisfied with the courses, as they could not see the connection. To resolve this concern with the introduction of isolation of Training Packages we ensured that the interaction of courses provided industry projects rather than isolated courses. Student feedback to date has been positive.

3.5 Consultation with stakeholders and program Accreditation

3.5.1 – Not applicable

3.5.2 – Accreditation – 2003- all programs from Certificate III to Advanced Diploma

3.6 Program Management

Communication is developed via:

a) Fortnightly team meeting with staff
b) Minutes of meetings to all staff
c) Email/pigeon hole drops for immediate information
d) Students mentoring systems where staff keep students up-to-date with information
e) "Open Door" policy where students and staff can access program co-ordinators
f) All students have access and are encouraged to use the staff email system.

Document Control
The past twelve months has seen an improvement in the use of processes in relation to document control. Staff are beginning to ensure that all student handouts can be traced back to the originator. Staff have been involved in training regarding Headers/Footer and saving/filing of documents. Staff have been made aware of the requirements for document control.

Student Files
Comprehensive individual student files are kept securely on past and present students. All staff file any communication in these files along with all other administrative paperwork.

Revised Course Guides
A master copy of the course guides is regularly updated and available to all staff.

Program Log
Kept up-to-date and filed in the Program Co-ordinators office

Both good and bad feedback in relation to the program is discussed with the Program Manager and all issues are addressed. We need to continue to improve our Document Control procedure and professional development in this area will be offered in 2003. Program promotional material is continually updated and recorded in central files.

3.7 Pipeline students

Not Applicable
### 4. Program Action 2003

#### 4.1 Program Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROPOSED ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>PROF DEV</th>
<th>TIMELINE</th>
<th>MONITORING</th>
<th>EVALUATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Continued Development of Industry Projects</td>
<td>Allocation of time to visit industry and network</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Broadening our base of industry contacts and set projects</td>
<td>Positive feedback from students and industry partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Monitoring and improvement of “Student feedback” as listed in 2.1.2-3</td>
<td>Planning Days</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Student satisfaction survey</td>
<td>Positive results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Clarity of Assessment Task Requirements as listed in 2.1.1-3</td>
<td>Planning Days</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Student satisfaction survey</td>
<td>Positive results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Sessions for students progressing into following year</td>
<td>-Post student work -Staff/Program Co-ordinator's</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Decline in individual student enquiries and concerns regarding program choices</td>
<td>Satisfied students ensuring adequate class numbers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


