

# Improving VET outcomes using Personalised Learning

Version 4

[www.cli.nsw.edu.au](http://www.cli.nsw.edu.au)



Centre for Learning Innovation

*Promoting and fostering innovation  
in teaching & learning*



# Contents

<b>Executive summary</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Personalised Learning .....	4
Overview of project aims.....	4
Project process .....	4
Major achievements .....	5
Significant challenges .....	6
Major findings and conclusions.....	6
<b>Section A Project details</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Introduction .....	9
Project aims .....	9
Project approach and evaluation methodology .....	10
Description of major tasks.....	10
<b>Section B Project findings</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Pilots supported by the project.....	15
Findings from the research conducted into the new Training and Assessment Training Package .....	15
Professional Learning .....	16
<b>Section C Evaluation</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Pilot projects.....	17
Training and Assessment research.....	19
Professional Learning .....	19
<b>Contact</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix 1 Evaluation methodologies</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix 2 Steering Committee and Reference Groups Members</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix 3 Selection criteria for pilot projects</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Appendix 4 Individual pilot projects</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Appendix 5 Findings from Illawarra and Sydney Institutes</b> .....	<b>50</b>

# Executive summary

The purpose of the 2005 project 'Personalised Learning: Improving VET Outcomes' was to trial some approaches to personalised learning, using information and communication technologies where appropriate.

## Personalised Learning

Personalised learning is what student-focused teachers do when they recognise and address the needs of individual learners. It builds on the principles of flexible delivery and quality teaching to support individual students as they travel along their own learning journeys.

There is a range of elements within personalised learning:

- high expectations of learners
- infrastructure and technology to support personalised learning
- individualised teaching and assessment strategies
- responsibility for own learning taken by students
- involvement and collaboration in learning by groups such as industry and the community
- promotion of personalised learning in the workplace

This project focuses on the processes that encourage high expectations and successful outcomes for every learner. To achieve this, as shown in the outcomes of the pilot activities in this project, you need sound assessment information, learner engagement and targeted attention to local needs.

## Overview of project aims

The project was funded by the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET) to investigate models of personalised learning in NSW Vocational Education and Training. Specifically, the project aimed to:

- Collect current examples of personalised learning as demonstration models
- Provide a forum for these to be showcased
- Encourage dialogue around their wider uses
- Explore how technology can be used to enable personalisation, and
- Support pilot groups.

## Project process

To achieve the aims of the project, three approaches were integrated:

- Pilot projects – eight pilots in personalised learning were initiated and supported
  1. TAFE NSW Riverina Institute: **Training and Assessment Training Package – a personalised approach**

---

*Improving VET outcomes using Personalised Learning. Version 4, November, 2005*

Copyright © The State of New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2005  
Published by Centre for Learning Innovation  
Author – Michelle Ellis, Teaching and Learning Innovation, CLI

2. TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute: **Personalised learning plans for part-time administration students and IT students**
  3. TAFE NSW New England Institute: **Calibration skills**
  4. TAFE NSW North Coast Institute: **Personalised learning in child studies**
  5. TAFE NSW South Western Sydney Institute: **Increasing student voice and choice**
  6. TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute – Open Training and Education Network: **Personalised induction for distance education students**
  7. Central West Community College: **Personalising job placement: barriers and pathways**
  8. East Hills Girls Technology High School: **Student survey data and aligning career advice**
- Research – focused on the release and implementation of the new Training and Assessment Training Package and its impact on the uptake of personalised learning
  - Professional learning – raising the profile of personalised learning and facilitating online professional learning communities, encouraging professional dialogue.

## Major achievements

- Eight pilots of personalised learning were identified and supported by the project during 2005
- Examples of personalised learning in Aboriginal contexts identified the benefits of support for learners as they make the transition from seeking employment to taking up employment and learning at work
- The pilots were showcased in a wide variety of conferences, presentations and online events during 2005, including NSW Department of Education and Training's Personalised Learning and High Expectations Symposium (August 2005) and TAFE NSW International Centre for VET Teaching and Learning conference, The Learning Powerhouse (September 2005). Planning for subsequent activities is underway for 2006
- Dialogue around personalised learning and the wider use of these models was conducted through Professional Learning Communities on the Teaching and Learning Exchange (TaLe) and Education Network Australia (EdNA) websites. These will be continued into 2006. Online forums with high profile visitors Professor David Hargreaves and Professor David Boud attracted over 550 registrations
- Technologies used in the pilots include: online surveys; web platforms for connecting participants and mentoring; web-based induction for students; and use of mobile technologies such as portable data assistants (PDAs). The integration of these technologies in the pilots helped highlight how technology can assist personalised learning and associated issues to be addressed
- An evaluation tool, Evalu8, was used to streamline the selection process for the supported pilots. It is currently being trialled in different contexts and will be available for use across VET in 2006

- The project was featured in various publications during 2005 including Campus Review, Training Agenda and the Centre for Learning Innovation's internal newsletter, Clicks.

The project also commissioned research into the rollout of the new Training and Assessment Training Package and how it can impact the uptake of personalised learning in VET environments. This research will continue in 2006 as Institutes take opportunities available through the Teaching and Learning Exchange (TaLe) and Educational Network Australia (EdNA) websites and professional learning communities to discuss their teaching and assessment practices.

In conjunction with this research, the project team worked with instructional designers from the Centre for Learning Innovation to ensure inclusion of aspects of personalised learning in the teaching and learning resources to support the new Training and Assessment Training Package.

## Significant challenges

Fostering an understanding of the complexities of the term personalised learning was the main challenge faced throughout the project. Ongoing effort was required throughout the project to encourage richer, more complex thinking from stakeholders.

One common challenge identified by the pilots was to develop innovative approaches that cater for the individual preferences of each learner. This was a challenge because of organisational and system requirements that are based on measures such as the number of student hours of attendance. In responding to this challenge, the pilot projects showed that it is possible to create conditions that increase student choice about how, when and where they learn.

## Major findings and conclusions

The major findings and conclusions emerged from the external evaluation of the eight pilots supported by the project, from the research conducted into the impact of the new Training and Assessment Training Package and the professional learning which underpinned the project.

### **Pilots supported by the project**

---

- The pilot projects demonstrated that the implementation of personalised learning requires the integration of many elements such as modified teaching practice, improved learner engagement, changed administrative systems and adapted technology.
- Enhancements to teaching practice, such as web-based forums where students can access each other's work, online mentoring, hand-held digital devices as learning aids, and agreements with students increased the responsibility students took for their own learning.
- Enhancements to career development approaches such as an online career survey, specific career development web-based material, and improved early learner induction improved the engagement of learners.
- Effective implementation of personalised learning will take time and considerable effort. Generally the pilot projects achieved some or most of their objectives (see Appendix 4) after one semester of operation, but needed

*Improving VET outcomes using Personalised Learning. Version 4, November, 2005*

Copyright © The State of New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2005  
Published by Centre for Learning Innovation

Author – Michelle Ellis, Teaching and Learning Innovation, CLI

a second semester to consolidate their early achievements. Undertaking further evaluations in 2006 to determine the longer term outcomes would be very valuable.

- Processes and practices that are transferable to other settings include tools such as checklists, technologies, templates and frameworks. These have been documented and can be replicated.
- For successful transfer of processes and practices to other settings, you need commitment from stakeholders to personalised learning and its benefits for teachers, students and the wider community.
- Sustaining personalised learning projects will require the ongoing commitment of the staff to personalised learning, including management, teachers and support staff.
- The pilot project that used handheld portable data assistants (PDAs) requires ongoing funding to subsidise the expanded use of the technology.
- Further support to enable the pilots to continue into 2006 would allow for time and resources to evaluate the new practices and to make refinements based on feedback. This will also enable the processes to be incorporated into mainstream activities and to involve wider stakeholder groups.
- The pilot conducted by Central West Community College was chosen from a range of initiatives considered for their application to Aboriginal contexts. This pilot has highly transferable strategies and tools, that, with further funding support, could be trialled in other Indigenous contexts.

### **Training and Assessment research**

---

The new Training and Assessment Training Package was chosen because of its importance in VET as the core qualification for trainers. At least three of the competencies in the new Training Package directly encourage the development of personalised learning.

- Illawarra and Sydney Institutes are modelling personalised learning in the way they are delivering the Training Package
- As the Training and Assessment Training Package is in its first full year of implementation, more professional development for Institute staff including opportunities to participate in supported pilots would increase the likelihood of personalised learning approaches being incorporated into the delivery of the Training Package
- The professional development program could investigate whether encouraging higher expectations of the student to take responsibility for their own learning may reduce the need for centrally produced resources and extensive teacher activity.

### **Professional Learning**

---

- The project has been successful in raising the profile of personalised learning
- Several of the pilots indicated that the project encouraged a culture of teacher as learner
- The Professional Learning Communities on the Teaching and Learning Exchange (TaLe) and the Education Network Australia (EdNA) websites have

---

*Improving VET outcomes using Personalised Learning. Version 4, November, 2005*

been instrumental in encouraging professional dialogue. It is recommended that these are maintained into the next phase of implementation

- Emerging technologies such as webinars and podcasts will continue to provide opportunities to further this cultural change and reduce traditional barriers to professional discussion of time and place.

## Section A Project details

### Introduction

Personalised learning is based on the concept that all students can benefit from more individualised support. To achieve this aim, a range of elements need to be aligned:

- a culture that includes high expectations of students
- structures and technology that promote personalised learning
- teaching and assessment strategies that are differentiated for individuals
- students taking responsibility for their own learning
- involvement of and collaboration between parties such as industry and the community
- workforce development that promotes personalised attention to students.

(NSW DET 2005)

In July 2004, the project 'Personalised Learning: Improving VET Outcomes' was funded by the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET) to investigate demonstration models to support teachers in the uptake of personalised learning approaches in NSW VET and schools.

The project has two major components:

1. To model "good practice" personalised learning approaches under the umbrella of training packages such as the new Training and Assessment Training Package. This training package itself makes reference to skills which can be termed personalised learning. This component will identify and develop specific tools, resources and practices which enable trainers to develop their skills in personalised learning.
2. To collect some of the current examples of personalisation in the area of career development. The project will investigate models which use technology or other tools to increase impact for students without depending entirely on one-to-one interactions between, for example, students and careers advisors. The project will also identify personalised approaches that assist in job placement; the transition from study into the workplace.

A second phase of the project is planned to investigate personalised learning in the context of Aboriginal learners. Funding is yet to be obtained for the second phase.

### Project aims

The project was established to improve VET outcomes through demonstrating and sharing innovative, personalised learning approaches. As a demonstration project, the intention was to showcase, pilot and evaluate specific practices that would result in significant and beneficial change across the VET system.

The project aimed to:

- Collect current examples of personalised learning as demonstration models
- Provide a forum for these to be showcased

---

*Improving VET outcomes using Personalised Learning. Version 4, November, 2005*

Copyright © The State of New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2005  
Published by Centre for Learning Innovation  
Author – Michelle Ellis, Teaching and Learning Innovation, CLI

- Encourage dialogue around their wider uses
- Explore how technology can be used to enable personalisation
- Support pilot groups.

## Project approach and evaluation methodology

To achieve the aims of the project, three approaches were integrated:

1. Pilot projects
2. Research
3. Professional learning

The methodology used in the external evaluation of the project is described as follows:

As there were multiple evaluation tasks involved in this project – monitoring learner engagement, describing teacher practice, capturing stakeholder feedback, identifying key learning and determining sustainability factors – a versatile methodology was needed. The methodology used in this evaluation project was a ‘mixed methods’ or ‘pragmatist approach’ (Creswell 2003), in accommodating aspects of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. (Dr John Mitchell, 2005)

Appendix 1 provides further detail of the methodologies used in the evaluation.

## Description of major tasks

The major tasks conducted during the project included:

### **Establishment of project Steering Committee and reference groups**

A project Steering Committee was established to ensure the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders and the necessary expertise for this complex project.

In addition, three reference groups were established:

- Personalised Learning through Training Packages including Training and Assessment
- Personalised Approaches to Career Development
- Industry – Emerging skills shortage areas of Drug and Alcohol, Child Studies, Manufacturing and Training and Assessment.

The reference groups provided guidance throughout the project by:

- Identifying leading practitioners to be invited to briefly document their practices in offering personalised learning for their students
- Evaluating these snapshots against agreed selection criteria to produce a short list of examples to be investigated as demonstration models
- Suggesting possibilities for pilot groups

The membership of the Steering Committee and the reference groups is listed in Appendix 2.

## **Identifying pilot projects**

---

The identification of current examples of personalised learning to be supported as pilots was a major project task. The Steering Committee and reference groups were instrumental in identifying possibilities and an early bird round of nominations was called for in November 2004. From this round, 25 applications were received from across a wide range of VET contexts.

To ensure transparency during the project, selection criteria for the pilots were developed in consultation with the Steering Committee and reference groups. The criteria used are listed in Appendix 3.

Eight pilots were selected for the project.

1. **Training and Assessment Training Package - a personalised approach** undertaken by TAFE NSW Riverina Institute. The aim of this pilot, as set out in the project submission, was to trial web-based processes for the recognition of prior learning and a 'gap training' approach to the new Training and Assessment Training Package.
2. **Personalised learning plans for part-time administration students and IT students** undertaken by TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute. The aim of this pilot, as set out in the project submission, was to support teachers in the development and delivery of individualised learning plans to enable more students to be involved in flexible learning.
3. **Calibration skills** undertaken by TAFE NSW New England Institute. The aim of this pilot, as set out in the project submission, was to provide a personalised learning experience for agriculture students who are learning to accurately calibrate various types of chemical spraying equipment using portable data assistants (PDAs).
4. **Personalised learning in child studies** undertaken by TAFE NSW North Coast Institute. The aim of this pilot, as set out in the project submission, was to personalise the learning in Child Studies programs, particularly through a mentoring system for students.
5. **Increasing student voice and choice** undertaken by TAFE NSW South Western Sydney Institute. The aim of this pilot, as set out in the project submission, is to increase student voice and choice in employment preparation courses at Macquarie Fields College.
6. **Personalised induction for distance education students** undertaken by TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute - Open Training and Education Network. The aim of this pilot, as set out in the project submission, was to develop a web-based facility that provides more detailed information about distance learning and in particular the requirements of the property industry, for potential students, prior to enrolment.
7. **Personalising job placement: barriers and pathways** undertaken by Central West Community College. This pilot aimed to build on the college's success in recent years with placing indigenous trainees in local manufacturing firms as part of the New Apprenticeships program.
8. **Student survey data and aligning career advice** undertaken by East Hills Girls Technology High School (EHGTHS). The aim of the pilot project was to

examine the use of the School to Work Program Student Survey, an online tool to inform practices in careers advice and to enhance the quality of individual student career counselling.

## **External evaluation**

---

The external evaluation of the pilots was a crucial aspect of the project to highlight demonstration models. A selection committee was established as a sub group of the Steering Committee to manage the process of recruiting the external evaluator. Expressions of interest were called and John Mitchell and Associates was selected from the four responses received.

‘Embedding Personalised Learning’, the final report produced by John Mitchell and Associates describes the evaluation process and results. This report will be available on the Teaching and Learning Exchange (TaLe) and Education Network Australia (EdNA) websites.

The findings are summarised in Section B of this report.

## **Integrating personalised learning with the TAA training package**

---

The Steering Committee for the project commissioned additional research into how TAFE NSW delivery of the new Training Package on Training and Assessment “foreground(s) personalised learning”.

Following are extracts from the final report prepared by Dr John Mitchell, ‘Embedding Personalised Learning’, regarding this research.

The key concept behind the Training Package is to allow practitioners to gain competency over time, with an emphasis on evidence gathering and presentation. It models personalised learning by encouraging an individualised approach to professional development for practitioners (learners and facilitators/assessors). It identifies current competency as well as gaps, and learning strategies to address those gaps.

### **Research questions**

Four questions were identified in the brief for this research:

- Which competencies can include specific reference to personalised learning?
- Which personalised learning practices could be included as part of the resources available for delivering Training and Assessment?
- How are TAFE NSW Institutes currently implementing Training and Assessment?
- How can Institutes be encouraged to model personalised learning practices in the delivery of Training and Assessment?

The research involved:

- a meeting on 21 July 2005 at Gymea Campus of Sydney Institute of representatives of both Sydney Institute and Illawarra Institute, together with representatives from the Centre for Learning Innovation
- a visit by the researcher to Gymea Campus of Sydney Institute and to the Shoalhaven campus of Illawarra Institute on 27 September for discussions with staff on-site
- various telephone and email communications

---

*Improving VET outcomes using Personalised Learning. Version 4, November, 2005*

Copyright © The State of New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2005  
Published by Centre for Learning Innovation  
Author – Michelle Ellis, Teaching and Learning Innovation, CLI

The aim of each of the meetings at the two campuses on 27 September was to have a professional conversation about how the TAFE NSW delivery of the Training and Assessment Training Package within Sydney and Illawarra Institutes promotes and aligns with personalised learning.

The key personnel engaged in the professional conversations were:

- Jennifer Harding, Head Teacher Business Studies, TAFE NSW Sydney Institute
- Jennifer Barlow, Teacher, Human Resources and Management, TAFE NSW Sydney Institute
- Carol-Anne Blechich, Dean of Studies Business Services, TAFE NSW Illawarra Institute
- John McDonald, Head Teacher, TAFE NSW Illawarra Institute.

Findings for this research are contained in Section B of this report.

In conjunction with this research, the project team worked with instructional designers from the Centre for Learning Innovation to ensure inclusion of aspects of personalised learning in the teaching and learning resources developed to support the new Training and Assessment Training Package.

This initiative involved a series of meetings, during which the text for videos and learning activities was refined to include references to the major themes and underpinning aspects of personalised approaches to teaching and learning. These resources will be available across the sector to support the delivery of the new Training and Assessment Training Package.

### **Professional Learning and the process of cultural change**

---

The project's communication strategy included participating in a range of conferences and seminars.

- Project workshop conducted as part of the Centre for Learning Innovation/Open Training and Education Network Open Day local event for Networking 2004 (85 attendees)
- Workshop on the project conducted at Flexible Learning Leader Sharing Workshop, 9 – 10 December 2004 (140 attendees)
- Networking 2004 Forum conducted on 'Personalised Learning and Youth' – 199 visitors to the forum from 15 – 19 November 2004
- Networks National Online Event presentation, 8 – 9 June 2005
- Presentation at National Centre for Vocational Education Research conference, 6 – 9 July 2005
- Presentation at TAFE NSW International Centre for VET Teaching and Learning 'Learning Powerhouse' conference – 16 September 2005
- Visits to professional development forums – for example: TAFE NSW South Western Sydney Institute; TAFE NSW Sydney Institute; and Curriculum Centres
- Visits to several TAFE NSW Flexible Learning Centre forums to present the project and encourage dialogue.
- Visit to Adult Community Education Directorate to present the project.

The Teaching and Learning Exchange (TaLe) and Education Network Australia (EdNA) Professional Learning Community forums also provided opportunities for

---

*Improving VET outcomes using Personalised Learning. Version 4, November, 2005*

dialogue around the project and issues in implementing personalised approaches.

High profile visitors to the Teaching and Learning Exchange professional learning community included:

- Professor David Boud (Personalising Assessment; 21 February – 4 March 2005).
- Professor David Hargreaves (9 Gateways to personalised Learning; 14 – 24 March 2005).

A Professional Learning Community was also conducted to support the Personalised Learning and High Expectations Symposium hosted by Strategic Planning and Regulation (15 – 16 August 2005)

### **The Centre for Learning Innovation's Evaluation tool**

---

A useful product emerging from the project is the online evaluation and ranking tool, 'Evalu8', developed to help in the pilot selection process.

The project called for applications for funds to conduct pilots during 2005, and online forms were developed. Short lists were to be drawn up by two separate reference groups, with final endorsement by the Steering Committee. The evaluation and ranking tool was developed with project funds to manage the application and ranking process, and ensure transparency.

The tool is web-based and a URL can be sent to the 'remote' panel for evaluation and ranking. When the individual applications are opened, separate windows enable the responses to be ranked (in this case from 0 – 5) and comments attached. Panel members are not able to access the comments and ranking of others.

The tool, 'Evalu8', is currently being trialled in the context of assessment validation at Western Sydney Institute-Open Training and Education Network and was used by TAFE NSW Quality Awards for evaluating the applications for 2005 awards. Results from these trials will become available as they are completed during 2006 from the Teaching and Learning Exchange (TaLe) and Education Network Australia (EdNA) websites.

## Section B Project findings

The major findings and conclusions emerged from the external evaluation of the three approaches used to examine personalised learning:

- the eight pilots of personalised learning supported by the project
- the research conducted into the impact of the new Training and Assessment Training Package on personalised
- the professional learning that underpinned the project.

### Pilots supported by the project

- Personalised learning involves many elements – from modifying teaching practice to improving learner engagement to changing administrative systems to adapting technology – and that influencing these various elements takes time and considerable effort. Generally the pilot projects achieved some or most of their objectives after one semester of operation, but needed a second semester to consolidate their early achievements. Further evaluation is needed to determine the longer term outcomes of the pilots.
- There are processes and practices that can be transferred to other settings such as tools, technologies, templates and frameworks that are now documented and can be replicated.
- Effective implementation requires staff that has a commitment to personalised learning and can convince stakeholders, including students and sometimes employers, of the benefits of personalised learning.
- Sustaining personalised learning requires ongoing commitment of the staff to personalised learning, including management, teachers and support staff. The pilot project that used portable data assistants (PDAs) also requires ongoing funding to subsidise the expanded use of the technology.
- Incorporating the pilot activities into mainstream activities will take time, a process of continuous improvement and the wider involvement of stakeholder groups.
- The pilot conducted by Central West Community College was chosen from a range of initiatives considered for their application to Aboriginal contexts. This pilot has highly transferable strategies and tools which could be trialled in other indigenous contexts with subsequent funding support.

Appendix 4 contains summaries of each of the eight pilots and more detailed findings.

### Findings from the research conducted into the new Training and Assessment Training Package

- The new Training and Assessment Training Package is of very high importance in VET as Certificate IV in Training and Assessment will be the core qualification for trainers.

- At least three of the competencies in the new Training and Assessment Training Package directly encourage the development of personalised learning.
- Staffs at the Illawarra and Sydney Institutes are modelling personalised learning in the way they are delivering the Training Package.
- As this is the first year of implementation of the Training and Assessment Training Package, more professional development for Institute staff and opportunities to participate in supported pilots would increase the likelihood of personalised learning approaches being incorporated in the delivery of the Training Package.

Appendix 5 contains more detailed findings from the research into implementing the Training and Assessment Training Package at Illawarra and Sydney Institutes.

## Professional Learning

Professional learning was a key activity underpinning the project in terms of:

- raising awareness of the project
- the principles of personalised learning
- promoting the pilots
- encouraging discussion of their possible application to other contexts.

The success of professional learning communities in encouraging dialogue in wider forums was a positive indication of the project's communication strategy.

## Section C Evaluation

The project was successful in achieving all objectives as established in the initial letter of agreement:

- new collaborative and innovative practices in VET teaching and learning that reflect personalised learning approaches were investigated, documented and showcased
- new collaborative and innovative practices in career advice and job placement were investigated, documented and showcased
- Aboriginal examples identified for investigation in 2006 including Central West Community College Pathways and Barriers model which has significant representation from Aboriginal students
- information and communication technologies to support personalised learning approaches and the professional development of teachers were developed, including learning communities on the Teaching and Learning Exchange (TaLe) and Education Network Australia (EdNA) websites
- the project contributed to cultural change processes by encouraging dialogue around innovative teaching practices in both face to face and online forums.

### Pilot projects

#### **Major achievements of the pilots**

---

Two substantial achievements of the pilot projects were the enhancements made to teaching practice and the improvements made to career development approaches.

#### **Enhancements in teaching practice**

Enhancements to teaching practice included the design and implementation of innovative processes so that learners are able to take more responsibility for their own learning. These innovative processes ranged from the provision of web-based forums where students can access each other's work, to providing online mentoring, to using hand-held digital devices as learning aids, to staff negotiating agreements with students so that students determine the pace of their own progress.

#### **Improvements to career development approaches**

Examples from the pilot projects of improvements to career development approaches included the use by students of an online career survey, the creation of website material specifically designed for prospective students before they enrol, and the provision of thorough induction support for students at the commencement of their learning journey.

#### **Learner engagement in the pilots**

---

Learner engagement improved and was extended in all the pilot projects. Innovations included:

- critiquing each other's work as posted on a collaborative website

*Improving VET outcomes using Personalised Learning. Version 4, November, 2005*

---

Copyright © The State of New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2005

Published by Centre for Learning Innovation

Author – Michelle Ellis, Teaching and Learning Innovation, CLI

- using new technologies to aid their learning
- initiating learning activities without teacher intervention
- communicating more frequently with teachers about their needs via email, phone, SMS or face-to-face.

The pilot projects showed that it is possible to create the conditions for students to be confident and actively engaged in their learning.

### **Findings on the transferability and sustainability of the pilots**

---

Most of the pilot projects developed processes and practices that can be transferred to other settings. This includes tools, technologies, templates or frameworks that are now documented and can be replicated. However, these tools are only useful where the staff have a commitment to personalised learning and can convince stakeholders, including students and sometimes employers, of the benefits of personalised learning.

Ongoing commitment of the staff is required to sustain the innovations in personalised learning developed by the pilot projects. This includes commitment and support of the full range of staff in any Institute, from management through to teachers and support staff. In the pilot project that used handheld portable data assistants (PDAs), ongoing funding is required to subsidise the expanded use of the technology.

It is recommended that further funding is allocated in 2006 and 2007 to trial the application of some of the pilot initiatives in Aboriginal contexts.

### **Critical success factors in the pilots**

---

The two prominent sets of factors that influenced the achievement of objectives were:

- the pilot managers' commitment, approaches, strategies, motivation and enthusiasm
- the support of stakeholders, which includes students.

Organisational and systemic factors had a lower impact on the success of the pilots than anticipated. The contribution and enthusiasm of pilot managers and stakeholders played a much bigger role in the pilot's success.

The structure, culture, technology or workforce development strategies of an established organisation may be challenged by personalised learning, but that may lead to a positive influence on the organisation to change these features to better suit the needs of the learner.

It is recommended that research continues into the longer term outcomes of the pilots and to support the organisational and systemic change required to mainstream the innovations.

### **Major challenge for the pilots**

---

Requirements at an organisational and systemic level were problematic in the implementation of personalised learning approaches in all pilots. Constraints to the development of innovative approaches to individualised learning programs, such as the measure of student hours of attendance, offered a significant challenge in all pilots.

In responding to this challenge, the pilot projects showed that it is possible to create conditions that increase student choice about how, when and where they learn.

## Training and Assessment research

The research conducted into the impact of the new Training and Assessment Training Package was successful in identifying and documenting good practice which will be made available across the VET sector. It is recommended that further professional development be undertaken in 2006 and 2007 to embed these new initiatives into mainstream practice.

Subsequent research could investigate whether delivering Training and Assessment competencies is resource intensive and if encouraging higher expectations of the student to take responsibility for their own learning may reduce the need for centrally produced resources.

## Professional Learning

The project has been successful in raising the profile of personalised learning and several of the pilots indicated that the project encourages a culture of teacher as learner.

The Professional Learning Communities on the Teaching and Learning Exchange (TaLe) and the Education Network Australia (EdNA) websites have also been instrumental in encouraging professional dialogue. The online forums on the Teaching and Learning Exchange with Professor Boud and Professor Hargreaves attracted over 550 registrations and requests were received for forums to continue into 2006.

Emerging technologies such as webinars and podcasts will continue to provide opportunities to further this cultural change and reduce traditional barriers of time and place.

Recommendations for further professional learning initiatives include investigating and piloting of these new technologies and continuing support for pilot managers as mentors in embedding personalised learning across different VET contexts.

# Contact

General Manager:	Raju Varanasi
Organisation:	Centre for Learning Innovation
Phone:	(02) 9715 8150
Email:	raju.varanasi@det.nsw.edu.au

## Appendix 1 Evaluation methodologies

Appendix 1 is taken from Dr John Mitchell's external evaluation report on the project, 'Embedding Personalised Learning', and describes the methodology used during the evaluation of the eight pilots.

### **Pragmatist mixed-methods approach**

The overall methodology used in this evaluation project was a mixed methods or pragmatist approach (Creswell 2003, *Research Design*), in accommodating aspects of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. Creswell (2003) notes that, to derive knowledge about a problem, pragmatists use pluralistic approaches; that is, they deliberately draw from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions. Using a combination of approaches enables the researcher to confidently test theories and then develop themes from the data (Creswell 2003). Features of this methodology, in relation to this project, are set out in Table 1.

**Table 1: Features of the mixed methods research approach applied to this study (based on Creswell 2003, pp.19-20)**

Knowledge claim	Strategies of inquiry	Methods
Pragmatist	Mixed (quantitative and qualitative) Sequential: 1. collection of qualitative data such as project aims and stakeholders' initial hopes and attitudes – through discussions and regular contact 2. use of a predominantly quantitative survey, plus some open-ended qualitative questions 3. observations on site and qualitative interviews 4. analysis of documentation	Use of: – both closed and open questions – both predetermined and emerging (developed in response to changing features of the pilots) evaluation methods – both quantitative and qualitative data and analysis

### **Appreciative inquiry**

The evaluation also incorporated ideas from the 'appreciative inquiry' methodology, in that interviewees and survey respondents were encouraged to focus on what succeeded and how CLI and NSW DET can build on the positive aspects of the pilots. Appreciative inquiry is an emerging approach to organisational development that focuses on what is working or succeeding in a program. Traditionally, "accountancy" evaluation focused mostly on concerns, hurdles and problems. Appreciative inquiry offers evaluators a participative, collaborative and systematic method for discovering and building on the positive aspects of a program. The appreciative inquiry perspective enriched the evaluation, capturing data which might be missed using the limited "accountant perspective" commonly used for such evaluations.

## Appendix 2 Steering Committee and Reference Groups Members

### Project Steering Committee

Members included:

- Sue Beveridge – Assistant Director, Teaching and Learning Innovation, Centre for Learning Innovation (convenor)
- Michelle Ellis – Manager, Connected Learning, Centre for Learning Innovation
- Rachel Wilson – Senior Manager, Innovation and Development
- David Michaels – Senior Manager, Skills Strategy
- Wendy Richards – Cluster Manager, Policy and Support
- Julie Bell – Vocational Education in Schools, Principal Officer Vocational Learning
- Helen Gregory – A/Manager, Quality Systems, Quality Assurance Services
- Lynette Riley-Mundine – Representative from Aboriginal Programs Unit
- Lynne Stallard – Chief Education Officer, TAFE NSW International Centre for VET Teaching and Learning (ICVET)
- Sue Bishop – Chief Education Officer, Adult and Community Education

### Personalised Learning through Training Packages including Training and Assessment

Members included:

- Tim Dein – TAFE NSW, Sydney Institute
- Kaye Waddell – Retraining Unit
- Merelyn Treanor – TAFE NSW Western Institute
- Chrisna Dixon – TAFE NSW North Coast Institute
- Beth Hobbs – TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute
- Robyn Spurway – Vocational Education In Schools
- Susan Jeavons – Access and General Education Curriculum Centre

### Personalised Approaches to Career Development

Members included:

- Gesina Meerman – Manager, TAFE Counselling and Support
- Jill Brown – Open Training and Education Network
- Steve Montgomery – Vocational Education in Schools
- Sheryn Simmons – Marsden High School
- Donna Hensley – TAFE NSW Programs for Young People

---

*Improving VET outcomes using Personalised Learning. Version 4, November, 2005*

Copyright © The State of New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2005  
Published by Centre for Learning Innovation

Author – Michelle Ellis, Teaching and Learning Innovation, CLI

## Industry Reference Group

### Members included:

- Wendy Shepherd – Director, Child Study Centre, Institute of Early Childhood, Australian Centre for Educational Studies
- Gary Moore – Executive Officer, NSW Council of Social Services
- Diana McConachy – Manager, Workforce Development Program Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA)
- Susanne Fraser – Director, Pentagy Pty Ltd
- John Quick – Education and Training Advisor, Australian Industry Group
- Wayne Bleakley – Employee Relations Advisor, Industrial Relations Advisory Unit, University of New South Wales
- Ian Stone – Managing Director, Advance Metal Products
- Jeff Pollock – WCM Engineer, ResMed Ltd
- Peter Wright – Associate Director, Metals, Engineering, Construction and Transport Curriculum Centre
- Margaret Sullivan – Associate Director, Community Services, Health, Tourism and Recreation Curriculum Centre

## Appendix 3 Selection criteria for pilot projects

Criteria used in the selection of pilot projects included:

- indicating structures and processes which generate high expectations of student performance
- increasing student empowerment and engagement with the learning process
- processes which do not require sustained additional work from teachers
- demonstrating some generalisation to other contexts
- targeting individual needs and aspirations of learners
- individualising learning using initial assessment, regular monitoring and feedback
- involving community and partnership approaches to personalised learning
- encouraging collaboration between VET practitioners and between these practitioners and specialised support staff
- involving innovative practices in blended teaching and workplace learning
- encouraging cross agency collaboration
- suggesting scalability to other environments

## Appendix 4 Individual pilot projects

The following are extracts from the external evaluator's report, 'Embedding personalised Learning', prepared by Dr John Mitchell.

### Pilot 1 Training and Assessment Training Package - a personalised approach

The pilot was undertaken by TAFE NSW Riverina Institute. The aim of this pilot, as set out in the project submission, was to trial web-based processes for the recognition of prior learning and a 'gap training' approach to the new Training and Assessment Training Package.

#### **Initial aims**

---

An aim of the pilot was to enhance current teaching practice in order to offer students a more personalised learning experience, in the following way:

Recognition (of prior learning) and gap training has always been a personalised process. However, with the support of Jess Chalmers who will be the nominated lead assessor for this Institute and Colin Alcock, Professional Development and Learning manager, templates and examples of portfolio and evidence documents, as well as a bank of gap training activities will be placed on a website using the Janison platform. This will offer a highly personalised approach to recognition and we also will use action learning to close gaps in evidence (initial submission by pilot manager Peta McGrath).

#### **Key findings**

---

- Some ambitious features of this pilot were the focus on the new Training Package in Training and Assessment (TAA) and the use of a web platform for a variety of purposes, particularly to meet the problem of vast distances separating participants across the seventeen campuses of the organisation.
- This pilot project achieved all of its original objectives in the first semester of 2005, such as the effective use of a web platform for showcasing evidence applicable to recognition of prior learning and the use of the web platform for the lead mentor and for mutual mentoring.
- The second stage of the pilot achieved the original objectives in more depth and led to more flexible approaches and to a higher retention rate of participants.
- The staff believes the bar may have been set too high in semester one, in terms of their expectations of students.

## Description of the pilot

The following description of the pilot was drawn from the pilot manager's completed survey in June 2005.

**Table 1: Description of pilot at TAFE NSW Riverina Institute**

Feature	Description
<b>Organisation</b>	TAFE NSW Riverina Institute
<b>Pilot manager</b>	Peta McGrath
<b>Participants and stakeholders</b>	The Lead Assessor and Mentor, Participants, Professional Development and Learning Unit, management of Riverina Institute
<b>Objectives of the pilot – restated in June 2005 survey</b>	To pilot a web-based recognition and gap training approach to the new Training and Assessment Training Package To provide participants with a highly personalised approach to the Training Package through their voice and mutual mentoring
<b>Elements of personalised learning focused on</b>	Structure and technology, teaching and assessment and student responsibility
<b>Training package focus</b>	Training and Assessment (TAA) Training Package
<b>Specific delivery context</b>	Teaching, learning and assessment services and career development services are covered in this project. It is a pilot recognition and gap training programme in Training and Assessment The mutual mentoring design was influenced by this context, but the design was driven more by the distance between locations.
<b>How learner engagement will be enhanced</b>	Learner engagement (was provided through) group support via the website which facilitated mutual mentoring, but initially by a face-to-face workshop
<b>Pilot methodology: resources, processes and inputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– website</li> <li>– mutual and individual mentoring</li> <li>– face-to-face workshop</li> <li>– feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Planned project outcomes</b>	Institute capacity to deliver the new Training and Assessment Training Package – participants need to successfully complete the recognition process. To pilot a personalised approach for recognition that will be able to be used across other training package areas.
<b>Formative evaluation steps taken by pilot team</b>	Feedback from learners – via teleconferencing; and completion of the recognition process
<b>Summative evaluation steps to be taken by pilot team</b>	The website complete with templates, evidence samples and a bank of action learning activities for gap training Participants gaining the new qualification Transferability of the pilot to other Training Packages Evaluation of the personalised approach, by surveying participants

## Pilot 2      Personalised learning plans for part-time administration students and IT students

The pilot was undertaken by TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute. The aim of this pilot, as set out in the project submission, was to support teachers in the development and delivery of individualised learning plans to enable more students to be involved in flexible learning.

### **Initial aims**

---

The pilot was expected to enhance a current teaching method to offer students a more personalised learning experience, in the following way:

Over the past 5 years the Administration Services section at Baulkham Hills College has developed a more flexible approach to the delivery of all courses managed by the section. They range from Diploma to Statement of Attainment. This approach includes structured classes, online delivery, flexibly delivered tutorials (for technology based modules), workshops and projects. Regular evaluation conducted each semester has resulted in a number of changes to the program. One of the biggest issues is combining recognition of students' prior skills with a delivery approach to their learning that meets the needs of the individual while still giving structure to the learning. We have found that the retention rate has dropped when students are given too many options and not enough structure to their learning program. Over the last 12 months the Information Technology section has piloted online delivery with Diploma students in order to provide them with individual learning pathways. However this approach has been fairly unstructured and feedback has indicated that we need a more structured approach. (E. Hobbs, June 2005)

### **Key findings**

---

- Some innovative features of this pilot were the emphasis on the regular surveys of learners, both online and face-to-face, for feedback, and the development of administrative systems for ensuring learners' needs were monitored and supported.
- By June 2005, the mid-point in the pilot, some original objectives were achieved, such as incremental improvements to student support systems through counselling individuals and providing improved documentation for students to use to monitor their own progress.
- The second stage of the pilot, from July-September 2005, enabled the pilot manager to monitor more closely student retention and course completion rates, as ways of measuring the success of the improved processes.

## Description of the pilot

The following description was drawn from the pilot manager's completed survey form in June 2005.

**Table 2: Description of pilot at TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute**

Feature	Description
<b>Organisation</b>	TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute
<b>Pilot manager</b>	Elizabeth (Beth) Hobbs
<b>Participants and stakeholders</b>	<p>Full time and part time vocational teachers</p> <p>Students enrolled in courses delivered by Administration Services section</p> <p>College and Institute executive</p> <p>Other stakeholders that are not necessarily key but are important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer Services Staff at the College</li> <li>- Counsellor</li> <li>- CBU Coordinator</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives of the pilot – restated in June 2005 survey</b>	<p>To support teachers in being more student focused in addressing the needs of individual learners</p> <p>To enhance current flexible approaches to delivery.</p> <p>To enable more students to be involved in flexible learning.</p> <p>To skill teachers in the development and delivery of individualized learning plans.</p> <p>To enable a process or system to be in place for teachers and students to help them throughout their learning journey, not just at the beginning and end.</p>
<b>Elements of personalised learning focused on</b>	Student responsibility, teaching and assessment, structure and technology
<b>Training Package focused on</b>	Business Service Training Package and Information and Communication Technology Training Package
<b>Specific delivery context</b>	The delivery of services primarily in teaching, learning and assessment
<b>How learner engagement will be enhanced</b>	<p>Learners are better informed about their choices of delivery modes, times and content (electives). Learners take a proactive role in determining their learning pathway in all these areas.</p> <p>Individual learning programs are reviewed constantly in consultation with the learner.</p>
<b>Pilot methodology: resources, processes and inputs</b>	<p>Information sessions and flyers were given to inform students of options within course programs, including about delivery, timetabling and electives.</p> <p>Students filled in question sheets to enable us to get to know the students' goals as well as prior knowledge and skills, work experience and time commitment.</p> <p>Individual interviews and recognition processes then an individual program which took into consideration RPL as well as elective options and time commitment of each individual student.</p> <p>The two main tools used are course module check sheet and</p>

	individual program.
<b>Planned project outcomes</b>	<p>Guidelines to enhance current processes and systems used for monitoring individual learners.</p> <p>Questionnaire that can be used to gather information from prospective students to help with developing their individual learning plan.</p> <p>Tool that can be used to set up the individual learning plans.</p> <p>Tool for reviewing and checking progress by the individual and personal learning plan coordinator.</p> <p>Monitoring system for students with individual learning plans.</p> <p>Implement individual learning plans for all part time students accessing the Flexible Delivery program in Admin Services at Baulkham Hills College</p>
<b>Formative evaluation steps taken by pilot team</b>	<p>Conducting online surveys of all students with personalised learning plans, this is done mid-way through their course as well as at the completion.</p> <p>Monthly review with each individual student on their progress</p> <p>Documentation from team meetings with Personalised Learning Coordinator, communications teachers and 'flex' facilitators.</p>
<b>Summative evaluation steps to be taken by pilot team</b>	<p>A number of the desired outcomes are tools or resources that we will be using during semester two 2005. Improvements put in place as a result of the feedback from students from semester one 2005.</p> <p>All part time students enrolled in semester one 2005 will have individual learning programs.</p>

## Pilot 3 Calibration skills

The pilot was undertaken by TAFE NSW New England Institute. The aim of this pilot, as set out in the project submission, was to provide a personalised learning experience for agriculture students who are learning to accurately calibrate various types of chemical spraying equipment using portable data assistants (PDAs).

### Initial aims

---

The pilot is expected to enhance current teaching practice, to offer students a more personalised learning experience, in the following way:

Currently the majority of students have much difficulty in mastering calibration and are daunted by the task. This pilot will trial a system which will allow them to continue to practise the skill until mastery is achieved, in the field and within different workplaces. Different types of workplaces use different types of chemicals and various types of application equipment. The system being piloted will allow the students to develop generic skills in calibration which they can apply to a range of equipment no matter whether they are – at a farm, at a nursery, national park or any other site that requires the use of agricultural chemicals. The use of mobile handhelds allows the student to apply the learning material in a personalised way irrespective of the workplace. Additionally, this training method has the potential to capture evidence of student participation and competence to support the assessment process. This practice is not always available using current delivery techniques due to considerations of cost. (Sam Meredith, June 2005)

### Key findings

---

- This pilot involved the unique use of personal digital assistants (PDAs) by agriculture students in the field, to test new skills.
- By June 2005, the mid-point of the pilot, original project objectives were achieved, such as re-programming the handheld device to suit the calibration activity and training the staff in the use of the device.
- The second stage of the pilot enabled the pilot manager to monitor student use and learning, to measure the effectiveness of the device as a learning tool.
- While the students and staff saw the PDA as a useful learning aid, the full benefits of this approach were reduced by the lack of an ideal internet service and by the amount of text from chemical labels that needed to be read from the small screen of a PDA.

## Description of the pilot

The following description was drawn from the pilot manager's completed survey form in June 2005.

**Table 3: Description of pilot at TAFE NSW New England Institute**

Feature	Description
Organisation	TAFE NSW, New England Institute
Pilot manager	Sam Meredith
Participants and stakeholders	CLI Personalised Learning Project Manager, BVET, agriculture students, NEI Armidale Campus Agricultural Skills Centre staff, TAFE NSW Curriculum Centre project manager, agricultural industry representatives, personalised learning project evaluator
Objective of the pilot – restated in June 2005 survey	To teach calibration skills for chemical mixing to learners in the field and maximise the opportunities for them to develop mastery
Personalised learning areas focused on	Teaching and assessment and structure and technology
Training Package focused on	Rural Production training package in particular RTC 3704 Prepare and apply chemicals.
Specific delivery context	Delivery where possible will be in the field and at the workplace. Context of use meant that the delivery system needed to allow for easy access to training and assessment resources in the field. Handheld devices together with a access to a database via website allow easy upload and download of resources
How learner engagement will be enhanced	Students can experience difficulty with the farm chemical calibration task. The project was aligned to assist learner engagement by providing a range of chemical calibration tasks in the field which students can practice as much as they like, to achieve mastery. Uploading and downloading of information to the website provides students with the opportunity to engage with their teacher/trainer for learning assistance and marking of assessments
Pilot methodology: resources, processes and inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– development of chemical calibration skills scenarios</li> <li>– software for upload and download of information from Handhelds to a website on dial-up or via cradle connection to a PC with internet access</li> <li>– training of teachers and students in how to use the system</li> <li>– communication and comment between teachers and students via the system to confirm student mastery of calibration</li> </ul>
Planned project outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Some learners, e.g. those with lower literacy and numeracy ability, struggle with the calibration task. Provide simple screens and easy to use systems to help alleviate this</li> <li>– Allow easy drill and practice in the field, including provision of immediate feedback to self-assessment tasks related to calibration. This to build learners' confidence in their ability to work through calculations and assist them to reach mastery.</li> <li>– Upload of assessments completed in the field, complete with images for example of chemical labels, for swift marking by the assessor to confirm with the learner that</li> </ul>

*Improving VET outcomes using Personalised Learning. Version 4, November, 2005*

Copyright © The State of New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2005

Published by Centre for Learning Innovation

Author – Michelle Ellis, Teaching and Learning Innovation, CLI

	<p>their calculations are correct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expose the learners to a variety of calibration scenarios to allow them to develop mastery of generic skills in calibration. They will then be able to apply these skills to various contexts e.g. farm, a nursery or national park etc.</li> <li>- Easy capture of assessment evidence in the field to support the teaching and learning process.</li> </ul>
Formative evaluation steps taken by pilot team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular meetings of the core team in person or by phone</li> <li>- Testing the Handheld system with teachers and students in order to make refinements</li> <li>- Checking developments against the project plan.</li> </ul>
Summative evaluation steps to be taken by pilot team	<p>Plan is to have a group of six learners use the Handhelds for calibration skills training. A control group of learners will use the traditional paper-based methods of instruction. This latter group can provide comparative data for the trial.</p> <p>Alternatively, the trial group of 6 could experience both training via Handhelds and via paper-based, and evaluation comments sought from them. Project evaluator can suggest the most appropriate method.</p>

## Pilot 4 Personalised learning in child studies

The pilot was undertaken by TAFE NSW North Coast Institute. The aim of this pilot, as set out in the project submission, was to personalise the learning in Child Studies programs, particularly through a mentoring system for students.

### Initial aim

---

The pilot was expected to enhance a current teaching practice to offer students a more personalised learning experience, in the following way:

The idea is to take our current practices and customise for the learners to ensure that their needs are being met whilst still engaging in quality teaching practices. It is also envisaged that these systems will enable a much more streamlined approach to the provision of flexible delivery courses. By personalising the teaching approach and introducing a mentoring system, closer relationships will be built with learners enabling both learner and teacher to identify gaps in knowledge and skills and collaborate to determine appropriate strategies to address these gaps be implemented on an individual basis.

### Key findings

---

- A key feature of this pilot was the use of mentoring of students and a mix of face-to-face sessions and independent learning, for the convenience of students who reside and work in towns some distance from their teachers in Coffs Harbour.
- By June 2005, the mid-point in the pilot, some original objectives were achieved, such as requiring students to take more responsibility for their learning without a teacher being present.
- The second stage of the pilot enabled the pilot manager to trial personalised learning with a large, new cohort of students, drawing on lessons learnt from the first cohort of students.
- The second stage enabled the manager also to develop proformas and administrative processes that will assist the provision of personalised learning in the future.

## Description of the pilot

The following description was drawn from the pilot manager's completed survey form in June 2005.

**Table 4: Description of pilot at TAFE NSW North Coast Institute**

Feature	Description
<b>Organisation</b>	TAFE NSW, North Coast Institute
<b>Pilot manager</b>	Margaret Spears
<b>Participants and stakeholders</b>	Learners Teachers Industry
<b>Objectives of the pilot – restated in June 2005 survey</b>	<p>Develop a system for the provision of recognition materials to learners at the beginning of the semester so they can self assess their own prior learning and then apply for full or part recognition in conjunction with an experienced facilitator.</p> <p>Develop or adapt a system to track individual student's progress.</p> <p>Examine other flexible delivery systems and tools and seek how these can be adapted to ensure greater individualisation for the learner. We will investigate customising 'Prove it' to establish lessons for other flexible delivery learners.</p> <p>Develop or adapt individualised training plan documentation that learners and teachers can agree on and sign off against.</p> <p>Develop a system for individual mentoring and feedback for all learners</p> <p>Develop a system for negotiation of learning between teachers and learners</p>
<b>Personalised learning areas focused on</b>	teaching and assessment, structure and technology
<b>Training Package focused on</b>	Community Services – Children's Services – CHC50302
<b>Specific delivery context</b>	<p>The targeted audience for the implementation of the project is a group of 25 mixed mode Diploma in Children's Services students who are joining us after the completion of a Certificate III either through TAFE or a private RTO in February 2005. The group will be run according to individual learners needs identified at the beginning of the course within the confines of the budget. The students are geographically based in an area ranging from Laurieton, south of Port Macquarie to Yamba, north of Grafton, out to Inverell in the west.</p> <p>Travel for students to come to Coffs on a regular basis would place a large financial burden on many of the students in the pilot. It also places an extra time burden on these students who are often working in services full time and have family commitments. It is hoped that by personalising the learning and providing services closer to them geographically that we will be able to meet student learning needs and retain students.</p>
<b>How learner engagement will be enhanced</b>	The goals of the project were designed to give learners more control over their learning through the provision of recognition processes and the development of personalised learning plans. We needed to more effectively track their progress and provide

	<p>the type of support the learners needed. The development of a system of negotiation between learners and teachers on a one-on-one basis will also enable learner engagement as the teacher becomes aware of the individual learning needs to students and attempts to accommodate them.</p>
<p><b>Pilot methodology: resources, processes and inputs</b></p>	<p>Moving away from a unit/subject/module based approach towards a mentoring co-assessment approach</p> <p>Development of a personalised learning plan to give students more control over their learning.</p> <p>Fostering of mentoring geographically based groups would lead to smaller groups interacting and supporting each other</p> <p>Empowered students to state their needs through surveys and face-to-face questioning.</p>
<p><b>Planned project outcomes</b></p>	<p>For staff to be more responsive to students needs</p> <p>To develop strategies for dealing with distance more effectively</p> <p>To develop systems for tracking and planning more personalised programs for learners</p> <p>To try new methods of delivery to become more personalised.</p>
<p><b>Formative evaluation steps taken by pilot team</b></p>	<p>Mid semester evaluation form by students</p> <p>Retention levels of students</p> <p>Beginning of next semester – survey students to see what they were happy with and what they are wanting for the coming semester.</p>
<p><b>Summative evaluation steps to be taken by pilot team</b></p>	<p>Retention of students compared to past groups – if figures are available</p> <p>Satisfaction of students with processes implemented</p>

## Pilot 5     Increasing student voice and choice

The aim of this pilot, as set out in the project submission, is to increase student voice and choice in employment preparation courses at Macquarie Fields College. The pilot is being undertaken by TAFE NSW South Western Sydney Institute.

### **Initial aims**

---

The pilot is expected to enhance current teaching practice in order to offer students a more personalised learning experience, in the following way:

The implementation of a personalised pre-course service, adult learning plan and induction program will engage learners in decision making processes from the beginning of their learning journey. Flexible programming options will provide students with increased choice. Mentoring support will ensure students to have a productive relationship with a person who will provide individual, personal and timely advice and support. Work-placement and/or volunteer work will empower students in making a contribution to their local community. Also the increased use of ICT will emancipate students to engage in learning at their own pace, in their own time, in their own location. All these features of more personalised approaches to learning will assist the individual to develop self esteem, a sense of empowerment through meaningful engagement and a capacity to contribute to their community. The concurrent engagement of teaching staff in personalised professional development to enhance their capabilities to deliver personalised learning will promote a community of shared learning.

### **Key findings**

---

- A feature of this pilot program was the implementation of multiple strategies to assist a student cohort who may be vulnerable at the first stage of a new learning journey.
- By June 2005, the mid-point in the pilot, some original objectives were achieved, such as empowering students to take more responsibility for their own learning journeys and enabling teachers to successfully engage with students through unorthodox but rigorous approaches.
- The second stage of the pilot enabled the pilot manager and her staff to further refine and embed the systematic but innovative support systems used for the first time in semester one 2005.
- While this pilot project initially focused on improving career preparation strategies, the project also resulted in substantial changes to teaching practice.

## Description of the pilot

The following description of the pilot is drawn from the pilot manager's June 2005 survey.

**Table 5: Description of pilot at TAFE NSW South Western Sydney Institute**

Feature	Description
<b>Organisation</b>	TAFE NSW, South Western Sydney Institute.
<b>Pilot manager</b>	Liz Renshaw
<b>Participants and stakeholders</b>	Students, ABE/ESOL teachers directly involved in the personalised learning programs experience, teachers indirectly involved in the personalised learning experience, teachers from other Faculty areas who worked on the program, and Employment Preparation Faculty staff – located at this site  Two groups of students are involved: the Adult Basic Education group and the English as a Second Language group.
<b>Objective of the pilot – restated in June 2005 survey</b>	To increase student voice and choice of learning experiences in Employment Preparation at Macquarie Fields College
<b>Personalised learning areas focused on</b>	structure and technology, teaching and assessment and student responsibility
<b>Training Package area focused on</b>	Certificate I in Foundation and Vocational Education and Career Education and Employment for Women (not a Training Package)
<b>Specific delivery context</b>	Context was a highly significant factor in the design of the project, as was extensive past experience with the student group, a group of people who had a history of innovation and organisational accountability factors
<b>How learner engagement will be enhanced</b>	The initial aim was to increase learner engagement in order to empower students to take more responsibility for their learning and career development
<b>Pilot methodology: resources, processes and inputs</b>	Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Experienced full time and part time staff from both Adult Basic Education/ESOL and vocational staff</li> <li>– Recurrent state funding used to implement program</li> <li>– CLI grant</li> </ul> Processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Planning, implement and evaluation of personalised learning (PL) project</li> <li>– Professional Conversations between staff</li> <li>– Specific pd activities</li> <li>– Development of many planning/programming tools</li> <li>– Talks to units of organisational external to the project</li> </ul> Inputs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ideas/initiatives from staff about design and elements of PL</li> <li>– Students ideas and suggestions</li> <li>– Student mentoring group – ideas</li> <li>– Other PL project ideas</li> <li>– My self evaluative activities, reflections, readings, and professional exchange</li> </ul>

<p><b>Planned project outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All PL students to have a clearly planned and executed career pathway</li> <li>- All PL students to negotiate, review, and achieve short term PL learning goals</li> <li>- PL students to have an increased voice in the design, implementation and evaluation of PL</li> <li>- PL students to take more responsibility for their career development</li> <li>- Increased collaboration between staff and students in designing, implementing and evaluating program</li> <li>- Improve pathways planning , coordination and service delivery between differing faculty areas to ensure that students could make more successful transition to vocational options</li> <li>- Increased use of ICT as communication and teaching/learning approach for students and staff</li> <li>- Introduction of PL principles into other program areas, not directly involved in PL process</li> <li>- Improve transition of all students ( new and continuing) into the PL program by looking at creative ways to induct students into PL process</li> <li>- Build a community of practice that is an exemplar of innovation</li> <li>- Energize, enthuse, and capture the imagination and professional expertise of staff to increase levels of job satisfaction, sense of well being and commitment to community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Formative evaluation steps taken by pilot team</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professional conversations including a Big Day Out</li> <li>- Student workshops – run by student mentors to evaluate program</li> <li>- Student survey – levels of learner engagement and empowerment</li> <li>- Staff survey</li> <li>- Data on student completion rates, course outcomes and student plans</li> <li>- Measurement of National Reporting Scheme (NRS) ratings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summative evaluation steps to be taken by pilot team</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Survey and interview students and staff on levels of student engagement and empowerment</li> <li>- Changes in NRS ratings</li> </ul>

## Pilot 6      Personalised induction for distance education students

The pilot was undertaken by TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute - Open Training and Education Network. The aim of this pilot, as set out in the project submission, was to develop a web-based facility that provides more detailed information about distance learning and in particular the requirements of the property industry, for potential students, prior to enrolment.

### **Initial aim**

---

The pilot was expected to enhance current teaching practice, to offer students a more personalised learning experience, in the following way:

Student 'induction' will allow the pre-enrolled student to make an informed assessment of the appropriateness of a course on how it meets their personal and professional needs. This information will be available via web-based facilities that will allow public (pre-student) access 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. (P Goleby, project submission)

### **Key findings**

---

- This pilot project set out to provide pre-enrolled students with course information on the Institute's website. It is the first example of this service within the Institute and is expected to lead to other teaching units following suit.
- By June 2005, the mid-point in the pilot, some original objectives were achieved, such as compiling much of the data for the web-based service.
- The second stage of the pilot enabled the pilot manager to implement the web-based induction service.
- The next stage in the development of this initiative will be to conduct trials with prospective students.

## Description of the pilot

The following description was drawn from the pilot manager's completed survey form in June 2005.

**Table 6: Description of pilot at TAFE NSW, Western Sydney Institute, Open Training and Education Network**

Feature	Description
<b>Organisation</b>	TAFE NSW, Western Sydney Institute, Open Training and Education Network
<b>Pilot manager</b>	Paul Goleby
<b>Participants and stakeholders</b>	<p>In the first instance the students and the teachers in the Property Services Section are the key stakeholders.</p> <p>At a secondary level the Teaching and Development and Course Information sections of OTEN also have an interest and benefit from this project</p> <p>Finally, other teaching sections of OTEN as well as other TAFE Institutes can benefit from the implementation of a pre-enrolled student Induction facility.</p>
<b>Objective of the pilot – restated in June 2005 survey</b>	<p>Student 'induction' that will allow the pre-enrolled public to make an informed assessment of course of study that is appropriate to their personal and professional needs.</p> <p>This information will be available via web-based facilities that will allow public (pre-enrolled student) access 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.</p>
<b>Personalised learning areas focused on</b>	Property Development and Management – PRD01
<b>Personalised learning areas focused on</b>	student responsibility and workforce development
<b>Specific delivery context</b>	<p>By enabling the public to access and make their own assessment for what course most suits their needs rather than relying solely on contact with teachers or Course Information staff.</p> <p>By providing concise, easy to understand information, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A glossary of terms</li> <li>- Career or industry requirements</li> <li>- Legislative requirements</li> <li>- Courses available and what qualification they will provide</li> <li>- Obligations of the student and the Organisation</li> <li>- Example 'tasters' of study material and/or assessments.</li> </ul> <p>By allowing the public to make their own assessment of what area of study best suits their needs, the results in learning of that person as a student will greatly increase.</p> <p>In addition, this availability of this information will allow teachers more time to teach.</p> <p>The modern use, acceptance and availability of the Internet are essential to this project.</p> <p>The Internet allows for the public to access this information any time they require.</p> <p>It would not have anywhere the same impact if the Internet was</p>

*Improving VET outcomes using Personalised Learning. Version 4, November, 2005*

Copyright © The State of New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2005  
 Published by Centre for Learning Innovation  
 Author – Michelle Ellis, Teaching and Learning Innovation, CLI

	not such an effective tool as it is today.
<b>How learner engagement will be enhanced</b>	<p>Learner engagement and student empowerment is the very heart of this project.</p> <p>As indicated prior, by allowing the public to make their own assessment of what area of study best suits their needs, the results in learning of that person as a student will greatly increase.</p>
<b>Pilot methodology: resources, processes and inputs</b>	<p>The use of the web will be the major resource that will facilitate learner engagement. The information base comes from teacher experience gained over time and seeing the same questions and problems being repeated over and over.</p> <p>This 'induction' resource in its own right will enhance learner engagement.</p>
<b>Planned project outcomes</b>	<p>The desired outcomes are to have good information available on the web that the pre-enrolled public can access at time suitable to them and then make their own determination as to the appropriateness of a course or the program of study.</p> <p>The ultimate goal is to have the student in the right course that is being delivered most appropriate to their circumstances and needs. This will result in better results for the student as they will be more motivated, and the statistical information for a TAFE institute will improve.</p>
<b>Formative evaluation steps taken by pilot team</b>	<p>Results for a previous survey indicate the desire of student to have some/more induction information available.</p> <p>Evaluation of this project will also be via an electronic survey requesting the students own evaluation as well as any comments they have as to the value that they gained from the induction.</p>
<b>Summative evaluation steps to be taken by pilot team</b>	<p>Student completion rates would be the major measure of a success.</p>

## Pilot 7 Personalising job placement: barriers and pathways

Central West Community College is an independent not-for-profit organisation providing a range of integrated training, recruitment and community support services in the Central West. This pilot builds on the college's success in recent years with placing indigenous trainees in local manufacturing firms as part of the New Apprenticeships program.

Initially the pilot involved the trialling of a collaborative approach to conducting a skills audit prior to recruitment for engineering trainees. After the pilot commenced, the focus of the pilot shifted to encompass the good practices used by the training provider to support indigenous people as they move along the pathway from seeking employment to gaining employment and effectively learning at work.

### Key findings

---

- Working in collaboration with a range of stakeholders including employers, CWCC has developed a range of good practice strategies to assist indigenous Australians to move along the pathway towards employment and continual skill development on-the-job.
- These good practice strategies locate personalised learning within a comprehensive approach to career preparation and initiation.
- The successful implementation of these strategies in conjunction with Jeff Hort Engineering Company in Orange NSW provides a compelling case study of how partnerships can result in outstanding outcomes for both the individual and the business.

### Career development practice

---

The context for this pilot was the regional town of Orange (population 38,000) which also draws students and potential employees from the surrounding local towns and country area. The career development support for the CWCC students and potential employees is provided both in CWCC's town offices and at the workplace.

Pilot manager Sandra Gray said that one of the drivers of the initiative to improve career preparation and development processes was employers: "Employers want staff with the right attitudes". So it is important for CWCC to screen applicants before they are placed with a new employer, "to make them ready for that pathway" (S Gray, September 2005).

The CWCC pilot involved reflecting on and refining the steps taken by the training provider before and after the individual commences employment. For instance, CWCC uses a number of strategies with prospective trainees to ensure learner engagement. The strategies include extensive discussion with the learner about how the skills audit will assist them; and follow-up contact with trainees, to enquire about their satisfaction with these personalised career development approaches. CWCC also uses different interventions such as interviews and assessments, to gauge learners' readiness for learning and working. "CWCC's job is to get the client to the skills benchmark set by the employer" (Felicity Willis, Central West Recruitment, September 2005).

## Stakeholders

---

The main stakeholders in the CWCC model of career preparation and development are trainers, career counsellors, employment consultants, employers and potential and new employees. This pilot concentrated on the collaboration between a range of local bodies and personnel:

- Central West Community College as the training provider, providing prevocational engineering training and Certificate 11
- a local manufacturing firm, Jeff Hort Engineering
- Central West Recruitment (a division of CWCC) as the local job network provider
- a New Careers for Aboriginal People (NCAP) Officer to provide job search assistance for indigenous applicants and mentoring for any selected trainees
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relationships (DEWR) Indigenous advisor to assist with implementing a Structured Training and Employment Projects (STEP) initiative.

## Project outcomes

---

The outcomes expected for the CWCC pilot project included clarification of the career preparation approaches needed to improve performance and enhanced learning in the workplace, particularly for indigenous trainees. The project has clarified the need for strong collaboration between different stakeholders: for instance, the training provider “needs to be a partner with the job network provider” (S. Gray, September 2005). The training provider also needs to work closely with the employer, starting with the identification of the skills needed by the organisation and the development of a plan to meet the demand for those skills. Sandra Gray sees a triangle of collaboration: the three parties on the corners of the triangle are the employer, the training provider and the job network provider, with the learner in the middle of the triangle. “The learner has to obtain the skills the employer needs”, says Sandra Gray.

One of the findings from the pilot is an increased understanding of the role of the training coordinator:

We now realise the need to support a team of assessors to be focused on learner needs and the requirements of the workplace. There are two key people for assessors to consider: the learner and the employer. (S. Gray, September 2005)

Sandra Gray believes that CWCC has now developed a workplace learning model that also includes a community development model: “We keep improving the model, as we are prepared to listen”.

In summary, CWCC’s success in placing trainees is attributed to the following good practices:

- a detailed recruitment process where applicants are interviewed by the job network agency
- a prevocational engineering training program to equip applicants with the skills to apply for positions

- a structured induction program for new employees including the company's code of practice, policies and procedures, enterprise agreement and occupational health and safety (OH&S) requirements.
- a training plan for each trainee customised in partnership with Central West Community College and organisation career paths
- a designated workplace mentor with responsibility to either Production Manager, Shift Supervisor or Shift Leading Hand
- allocated time for training on the job and overtime rates paid for attendance at workshops held after normal working hours
- flexible delivery of training including timetabling workshops to suit production schedules and online components
- a workplace trainer/ assessor on site for 5 hours per week to conduct one to one interviews, group tutorials and workplace assessments. (CWCC pilot project documentation, 2005)

This list of good practice strategies underpins CWCC's effectiveness in assisting indigenous Australians move along the pathway towards employment and continual skill development on-the-job. These good practice strategies locate personalised learning within a comprehensive approach to career preparation and initiation.

## Pilot 8 Student survey data and aligning career advice

This pilot was undertaken by East Hills Girls Technology High School (EHGTHS). The aim of the pilot project was to examine the use of the *School to Work Program Student Survey*, an online tool to inform practices in careers advice and to enhance the quality of individual student career counselling.

The focus of this pilot is the modelling by the school's student career adviser of the effective use of the survey tool, in support of the Department of Education and Training's *School to Work* program.

### **Key findings**

---

- Multiple factors contributed to the successful implementation of the online survey tool at EHGTHS, including the students' ability and motivation to take responsibility for their learning and career development.
- Other critical success factors included the culture of the school which encourages girls to achieve high results, the school's focus on technology, the staff and parental support for the online initiative, and the expectation of staff that students will be comfortable with an online tool.
- The online survey tool fits well with EHGTHS special focus on student goal-setting.
- Data from the online tool can be combined with other student information, enabling the school principal and careers adviser to develop an extensive profile of each student with regard to their current academic progress and their career aspirations and preparation.

### **EHGTHS context for the School to Work Program Student Survey**

---

The following information was provided by the Vocational Education in Schools Directorate, NSW DET regarding the *Online School to Work Program Student Survey* tool and its trial use within East Hills Girls Technology High School. It provides a summary of the origins and evolution of the innovative, online survey tool.

The School to Work Program Student Survey originated in 2002 as a self-efficacy tool for students to report on the intended outcomes of the School to Work Program. It was also developed to provide actual student outcomes data. In 2004 it was piloted as an online survey with 108 schools and 18,302 students in Years 9 and 11. These students were located in the Hunter/Central Coast Region and the South Western Sydney Region.

All students who completed the survey online received an instantaneous feedback report, which included a personalised combination of direct feedback and qualitative scored feedback. The report encourages students to take responsibility for their own career development and gives practical ideas for progressing this goal.

School careers advisers have password entry to a secure website which gives careers advisers direct access to their school's student survey responses and feedback reports to enhance the quality of individual student career counselling.

Principals of schools who participated in the pilot received reports for their school which include aggregated responses to each question for both Year 9 and Year 11, broken down by gender. Each region also has access to aggregated area and regional reports for each of the survey items, broken down by gender. The reports include aggregated responses for Year 9 students, Year 11 students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and Arabic students.

The careers adviser at East Hills Girls High School has indicated interest in using both individual student data and school data to better inform the school's engagement with the School to Work Program.

There is also an opportunity for the careers adviser to work with individual students to determine the effectiveness of the survey and personalised feedback as a careers counselling tool, and as a tool that informs student career self-management.

As a result of the above considerations, the Department proposed that this potential use of the student survey by the careers adviser at East Hills Girls Technology High School be documented as a case study for the BVET Personalised Learning Project.

## **Stakeholders**

---

Stakeholders directly involved in this pilot project were the students, career adviser and other staff including the information technology staff and the principal, and the Vocational Education in Schools Directorate. Stakeholders indirectly involved were parents, employers and community personnel.

The Vocational Education in Schools Directorate was very clear about the importance of schools modifying the program to suit their specific context:

Successful initiatives in this area are dependent upon sound local knowledge of particular student needs, community and business capability, and regional profiles. To ensure that local issues are effectively addressed this new approach places the regions at the centre of activity as key drivers of change and as sources of support for their schools. (Vocational Education in Schools Directorate summary of *School to Work: Creating Future Pathways*, 2005)

The career adviser at EHGTHS, Jenny Williams, believes that the program's *Online School to Work Program Student Survey* fits well with her school's focus on student goal setting:

The online tool is good because it will make students think about the future and it fits with the school's program on goal setting. (J. Williams, October 2005)

The school principal, Veronica Necyporuk, added that the online survey "supports the strategies of this school. The online survey will assist future planning. It is setting pathways for connected learning."

## **EHGTHS experience with the online survey**

---

Due to the EHGTHS special focus on technology and the support and encouragement for students to use technology, it is not surprising that there were

---

*Improving VET outcomes using Personalised Learning*. Version 4, November, 2005

Copyright © The State of New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2005  
Published by Centre for Learning Innovation  
Author – Michelle Ellis, Teaching and Learning Innovation, CLI

high levels of acceptance of the tool by students and that staff including the careers adviser and the principal remain positive about the value of the tool.

The online tool was effectively used by a range of EHGTHS students in both 2004 and 2005 to inform their thinking about careers; the careers adviser used teaching sessions to promote the tool and encouraged students to complete the survey and to bring their results to one-on-one counselling sessions; and the principal found the aggregated data of considerable value in contributing to a fuller profile of each student in her school.

### **Critical success factors**

---

There were a range of critical success factors that led to the implementation of the online survey at EHGTHS. One factor contributing to the successful use of the online survey was the basic expectation the staff have of students that they will be comfortable using information technology: “We didn’t see any problems with the survey being online: students have a very strong focus on information technology” (V Necyporuk, October 2005).

Another factor contributing to the successful use of the survey was the culture of the organisation:

This school has a very strong culture of learning and we are inspired to motivate girls to achieve high results, to challenge themselves. The majority do this. This approach is popular: we are a high-demand school and we get more applications than we have places. (V Necyporuk, October 2005)

A further factor contributing to the effective implementation of the survey is the school’s focus on technology:

Our school has a very strong focus on technology. The word ‘technology’ in our school’s title was recently reviewed and we have kept it in our name. This is the only girls’ technology high school in the state, and our students are very familiar with technology. In years 9 and 10, technology courses are mandatory. Technology is integrated in all our courses and students do exams and assignments online. (V Necyporuk, October 2005)

Approaches by staff also contributed to the implementation of the online survey:

Staff are very professional and have an incredible amount of expertise. They are committed and we are united in our focus on technology. They are aware of the impact of technology on our students’ learning. (V Necyporuk, October 2005)

Another factor assisting the use of the online survey is students taking responsibility for their learning and career development:

We have a culture of learning in this school, but we wanted to build a stronger culture, and now we have seventeen committees to extend the student leadership program. We gave students increased decision-making with the accompanying responsibility. (V Necyporuk, October 2005)

Stakeholders also influenced the results. “Parents are very supportive and the IT faculty helped the Year 9s to complete the survey, while the Year 11s did it independently” (V Necyporuk, October 2005).

## Project outcomes

---

Year 10 students at EHGTHS who used the online survey tool in Year 9 saw benefits in using it:

It's well done. It helped guide me. It supported my wish to be an architect and/or do other things. It helps you to have a better understanding of your career options. (R Butkobich, October 2005)

It showed me I could do things in different ways...It helped me with which subjects to select. The main thing it helped was to show me there are different branches or paths. If I don't get a high enough UAI I can go in different directions. (S Omeros, October 2005)

The careers adviser considers that the online tool assists students to develop realistic goals:

In year 9 we ask students about their career aspirations and we tell them they have to have a goal or a plan. If a student is a low achiever, I will use the survey results as way of saying to students to be realistic about your career goals, to have a plan. Students want the best for themselves but they are often unrealistic. I say to them do you realise the pre-requisites for the career you are aiming for. Many students watch television shows like CSI and want to become forensic scientists (J Williams, October 2005)

The careers adviser is committed to using the online survey in future:

I will use the student's results in my career counselling. By going through the students' responses and prompting further discussion, I will try to help and give them some strategies to use. (J Williams, October 2005)

Data generated by the online survey will be helpful at interviews the careers adviser conducts with each student in future:

I will encourage all students to do the online survey and to bring their print-out of results with them when they come to me for an interview. (J Williams, October 2005)

Useful comparisons might be made between the individual's results and the groups, and between different year groups:

I could compare the individual's different results over time with the results from the whole class group. I will also look at the differences in results between year 9 and 11. (J Williams, October 2005)

The School Principal believes that the positive results from the use of the online survey "gives us a base for further directions as to how we can develop personalised learning in our school". The principal found the online survey data affirming:

The results of the program were very positive. It was reaffirming to the student about what additional career information she may wish to seek and it was reaffirming to careers adviser Jenny Williams about what support she need to provide to individual students. If we saw anything of concern in the survey data we would address it. If the data indicated an area of need, we would address it. I hope the initiative stays. (V Necyporuk, October 2005)

The online survey helps students to clarify their career goals:

The school is strong on goal-setting and leadership and getting students to plan their future pathways. But sometimes on questioning students we find they have short-term blocks and students are setting unclear goals. This online survey helps the students to clarify their goals without realising it. (J Williams, October 2005)

The careers adviser sees the online tool supporting personalised learning:

Personalised learning is the individual taking responsibility for their own learning and actions. Any tool that can assist that is good. It is up to the individual to take on board what the tool shows them. If students feel they need additional assistance with career planning, they can use the tool at any time. The girls can go and do it themselves. (J Williams, October 2005)

## Appendix 5 Findings from Illawarra and Sydney Institutes

Appendix 4 contains the findings from the research undertaken by Dr John Mitchell into the implementation of the new Training and Assessment Training Package at two TAFE NSW Institutes, Illawarra and Sydney.

### How is the Training and Assessment Training Package currently being implemented by Sydney and Illawarra Institutes?

Sydney Institute made the decision to only offer the new Certificate IV in Training and Assessment commercially – that is, at commercial rates. In semester two 2005, Sydney Institute staff at Gympie Campus was delivering Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to two different groups: a day-time group of thirteen and a night-time group of six. No internal staff was involved in these groups.

From May 2005 onwards, Jennifer Harding and Jennifer Barlow actively participated in a national community of practice that examined ways to implement the new Training and Assessment Training Package. The community consisted of representatives from TAFE colleges in each of the states and territories, and was chaired by Tim Dein, from TAFE NSW Business Arts & Information Technology Curriculum Centre (Sydney Institute), and facilitated by Jennifer Harding and Nicola Pegum.

To develop implementation strategies, the national network conducted fortnightly teleconferences from June to November and held one workshop in Sydney in September. Additionally, an online forum provided a mechanism for discussing issues as they arose. Each teleconference included a case study presentation from a member, based on a key question. For Jennifer Harding, one key learning point from this community of practice was the danger of “setting the bar too high” in terms of expectations of students, particularly with regard to the amount and type of evidence participants might collect for their portfolios, if seeking recognition for prior learning.

As of September 2005, Illawarra Institute had not offered Certificate IV in Training and Assessment commercially for external clients, but had offered internal staff and external people the opportunity to upgrade to the new Certificate IV from the previous Assessment and Workplace Training qualification. This upgrade involved eight competencies from the new Training Package. Seventeen people commenced this program and five dropped out. Most of the participants were from other registered training organisations (RTOs). To undertake this upgrade, a recognition of prior learning (RPL) approach was taken: participants attended one workshop conducted in semester one, followed by regular telephone and email contact between the tutor, the participants and John McDonald. Participants developed a portfolio of evidence, often with the support of a ‘buddy’:

The new certificate is gained more on experience than on the logging up of time, which gives it more rigour. The old certificate was often ‘dumbed down’, and was offered as a short course. With the RPL approach, people have time to develop skills and gain experience. They can simulate the

environment or practice in the workplace, and keep a journal. (J. McDonald, September 2005)

Illawarra Institute also offered to the general community the opportunity to acquire statements of attainment for two competencies in the areas of teaching environment and delivery. This opportunity was offered at five campuses for groups of around fifteen people, in semester two.

## Which competencies within Training and Assessment could best be used to demonstrate the concept of personalised learning?

It was put to the four VET professionals at the two Institutes that examples of competencies that could best be used to demonstrate the concept of personalised learning include the following:

- TAAASS401A Plan and organise assessment
- TAAASS402A Assess competence
- TAAASS403A Develop assessment tools
- TAADEL413A Facilitate individual learning
- TAADEL404A Facilitate workbased learning

The three competencies that were singled out most were from the delivery suite of competencies, as follows.

The competency 'TAADEL413A Facilitate individual learning' suggests processes that could be used as evidence including:

- How communication skills have been used in facilitating/learning, particularly questioning techniques, listening and interpretation, and why
- How the individual's learning area, style and context were matched to the learning facilitation methods, process and activities utilised
- How new learning was structured to build new skills, and why
- How reflection and insight into learning was developed in the learner
- How the trainer/facilitator relationship was terminated, and why. (TAADEL413A)

Similarly, some of the processes that could be used as evidence of the competency 'TAADEL404A Facilitate workbased learning' align closely with personalised learning, including:

- How individual learning needs were identified and why
- How learning opportunities were matched to work
- How learning was organised/reorganised to reflect learning needs
- How learning was promoted. (TAADEL404A)

The competency 'TAADEL402A Facilitate group-based learning' includes some processes that could be used as evidence that support personalised learning including "How individual learning needs were managed".

While Jennifer Harding sees the above three competencies as aligning best with personalised learning, overall she believes that "personalised learning fits with the whole philosophy of Training Packages".

## Which personalised learning practices or tools could be included as part of the resources available for delivering Training and Assessment competencies?

Sydney Institute staff has developed a range of personalised learning tools that support the delivery of Training and Assessment competencies, including a form that sets out the many different assessment tasks for the delivery suite of three competencies and a form that is used as the template for a personalised learning plan. These are included in the external evaluation report prepared by Dr John Mitchell and will be available on the Teaching and Learning Exchange (TaLe) and Education Network Australia (EdNA) Personalised Learning Communities.

## How can Institutes be encouraged to model personalised learning practices in the delivery of the Training and Assessment Training Package?

To ensure the quality of the delivery of the new Training Package using personalised learning, the practices of personalised learning need to be formalised and publicly promoted.

Jennifer Harding believes that building personalised learning into the delivery of the new Training and Assessment Training Package will assist the dissemination of personalised learning:

We're constantly learning ourselves. If you can use personalised learning with the TAA Training Package, particularly by encouraging the processes that can be used as evidence, personalised learning can spread. (Jennifer Harding, September 2005)