

Workplace Research Centre

Workforce Australia: degree of vision in the GFC

How can we engage all resources for moving forward?

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Overview

The Challenges

- An uncertain future
- Fragmented flows of learning and labour

The response: 'Workforce Development'

- Plan where needed (very limited circumstances)
- Build adaptive capacity (beyond as well as within Ed'n)
- Promote demand for and the use of skills
- Redefine contours of skill: vocational streams



The Challenges 1

An uncertain future – Shell's Scenarios

- 'open doors'
- 'low-trust globalisation'
- 'flags'

=> What's common? What's not? What are the potential vulnerabilities?



The Challenge 2. Fragmented learning + labour flows

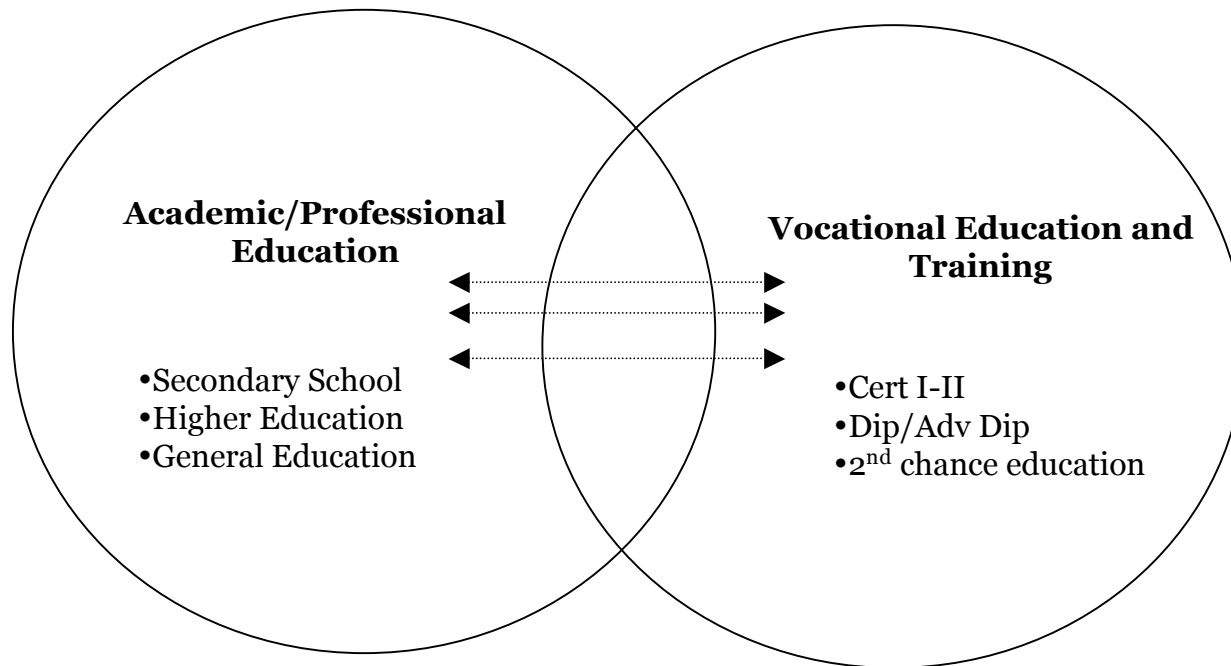


- High access to knowledge for autonomous reasoning



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Challenge 2: Fragmented learning + labour Flows



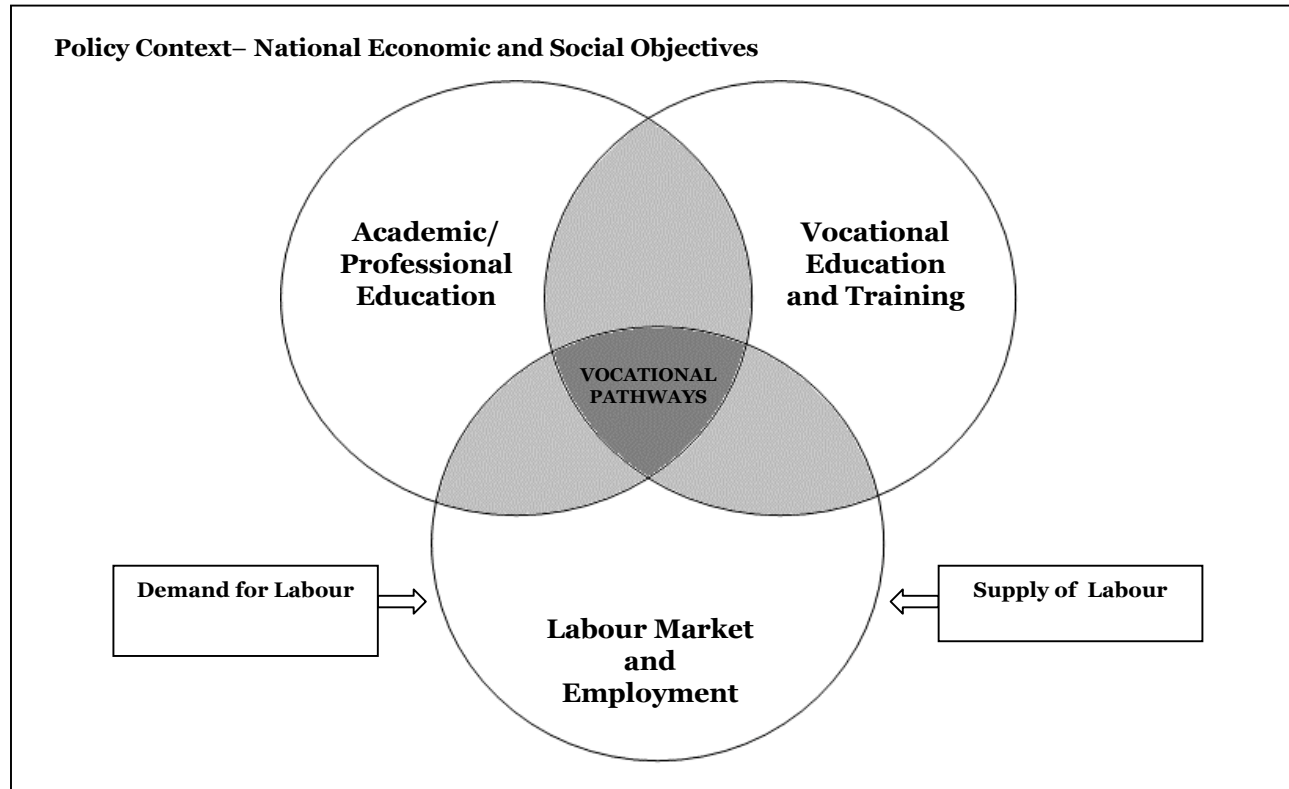
- Limited access to knowledge for autonomous reasoning



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Challenge 2: Fragmented flows of learning and labour

Political, economic and social context – globalisation, sustainability, economic cycle, cultural and social change



Overcoming the challenges

(a) handling uncertainty (Skills Australia)

- Plan where needed
- Build Adaptive Capacity
 - Leading the impetus for change
 - Resource change processes
 - Guide reform and catalyse change
- Promote demand for and the use of skills
 - Enable new industry connections
 - Address skills use directly
 - Developing the capacity of enterprises
 - Developing the capacity of service providers



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Overcoming the challenges

(b) transcending fragmented flows of learning and labour

- Need to move beyond
 - Narrow definition, often exclusory, 'professional' notion of occupation
 - Disaggregated definitions of skills embodied in competency standards
- Need more than
 - Administrative reform (eg current approach to ISCs, modern awards)
 - 'Skill sets' derived from atomised competency standards, lacking transferability



What do we mean by vocational streams?

Initial elaboration of content

- Need coherent ways of identifying clusters/ensembles of skill, which allows for cumulative development of capability
- May exist in the areas of
 - Care work
 - Logistics
 - Engineering
 - Information technology
 - Business/organisational services
 - Animal and land husbandry



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5. Conclusion

- Uncertainty and fragmentation can be overcome
- Workforce development and vocational streams offer a way forward
- Engaging all resources requires:
 - Clear, inclusive leadership
 - New adaptable capacity within education as well as within and between workplaces
 - Skills Australia providing an exciting new framework
 - Further work remains to be done in defining the contours of skill (what does a career look like today?)



5. References

- John Buchanan, Serena Yu, Simon Marginson and Leesa Wheelahan, *Education, Work and Economic Renewal*, paper prepared for the Australian Education Union, June 2009
- The Skills Australia, *Workforce Futures Trilogy* October 2009
 - *Overview Paper*
 - *What does the future hold? Meeting Australia's skill needs*
 - *Powering the workplace: Realising Australia's skill potential*

