Developing higher-level VET teaching skills

What do VET educators need to develop?

Teachers value learning from each other. Fostering opportunities for teachers to share their experiences and learnings is an important element for teacher development and is valuable for new and experienced teachers.

Here are their ideas:

Strategies for further developing teaching skills	
Used and effective	
Mentoring	Problem-solving sessions, potentially developing action plans for students experiencing difficulties
Participating in Communities of Practice	Participating in peer review (teacher feedback)
Engaging in reflective practices and sharing learnings through debriefing sessions	Drawing on internal and/or external networks
Shadowing other teachers	In-house professional development, with others
Team teaching	Being a learner (undertaking other courses/training)
Additional ideas	
The ability to draw on the skills, knowledge & practices of teaching award winners to improve practice	Resources on how to develop the skill of learning in adults (learning how to learn)
Video examples of VET teachers' approaches in a classroom or online	A reflective practices toolkit
A network to enable the collaborative development of resources and practices	Sample session plans, including examples of planned sessions incorporating UDL strategies and activities and accommodating diverse needs and/or preferences

What do VET educators need to implement higher-level teaching practices?

VET educators can learn new teaching skills and approaches but how do these skills get put into practice? Three areas that may require structural change or a shift in the sector's culture to enable the implementation of good teaching practices are presented in the following table.

Implementing higher-level teaching practices

Structured support and quality induction for new teachers

Important for:	critical for teaching skill development and retention
Important because:	initial teaching qualification is enough to get started but that additional learning over the next 12 to 24 months can refine skills
Practice example:	Three-month orientation program that includes - ▪ additional support ▪ substantial PD ▪ mentoring
Suggested solutions:	▪ lighter load in the first year, to enable time and space to hone skills ▪ internship/cadetship model ▪ access to coach or mentor ▪ opportunities to shadow experienced trainers.

Dedicated time and space

Barriers to implementing new practice:	▪ most trainers are time poor ▪ teachers who excel are investing their own, unpaid time ▪ sessional staff do not have the same professional development journey.
Solution:	more time, used creatively - ▪ time is needed to develop and refine materials and delivery techniques. ▪ it was noted that this can be done iteratively, and there are creative ways to build a suite of resources over time.
Solution:	support of managers - ▪ the support of managers is important to allow sufficient time and flexibility to experiment with new ways of doing things.

Recognition of the skills and human element of teaching

Teaching VET is complex:	VET educators are considering many things, including - ▪ content development ▪ teaching approaches ▪ learning/support needs ▪ student engagement ▪ assessment ▪ compliance.
Solution:	recognition of the strong human element to teaching in VET ▪ VET teachers need a degree of freedom and the ability to use their own judgement in determining the most effective ways for teaching their student cohorts, by drawing on their own individual styles and strengths.
Solution:	recognition of skills ▪ Progression and pathways for teachers are important but noting that progression into management roles can result in teaching expertise being lost from the classroom.

This research insight is produced from content available in the research summary *Effective teaching and learning: teacher perspectives on what works best for whom* (Griffin & Davidson 2025). A collection of resources has also been compiled to provide VET educators with access to educational resources to support their professional development and enhance their teaching practices. This is available from the VET Practitioner Resource: <https://www.voced.edu.au/vet-practitioner-resource>.