



Fast-Track Apprenticeships Grant Funding Project Case Study

Name of Registered Training Organisation

Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE (GippsTAFE)

Title of Project

Certificate III in Engineering Fast-Track Apprenticeship Training Program

Apprenticeship Details

- MEM30205 - Certificate III in Engineering - Mechanical Trade
- MEM30305 - Certificate III in Engineering - Fabrication Trade
- Reduction of duration of apprenticeship to 24 months
- Apprentice numbers – 24
- Industry Partners –
 - Silcar
 - Australian Paper
 - Latrobe Valley Machining
 - Bachon Steel
 - Quality Site Welding
 - Bilfinger Berger
 - Trustweld Engineering
 - Prima Weld
 - John Holland
 - Ray Fielder Engineering

Aim of the Project

The aim of this project was to embed a new mindset into both GippsTAFE Engineering personnel and industry that competency based training and assessment should be understood to be skills, knowledge and attitude based – not time based.

The Fast Track model was developed with sustainability in mind. It was never meant to “convert” people in the short term. It became obvious that there was resistance from the “traditionalists” in industry so the program was sold as a model that would “provide those who could progress quicker” through an apprenticeship with the opportunity to do so. It all came down to learning styles and the various abilities that apprentices either “brought to the table” or the ability to progress through an apprenticeship quickly.

Successful Strategies / Models

This Fast Track model is “work in progress”. There are 78 apprentices online “ready to go” for 2009. What has been learnt is that this takes time to achieve – from an employer’s and industry perspective, right through to the traditional methods that

TAFE teachers in the Engineering department at GippsTAFE deliver their programs. A “cultural change” if you like, is the approach that had to be adopted. It seems that it has been “two steps forward and one step back”, but it is all seen as progress nonetheless. What is exciting is that there will be many unexpected surprises in 2009, (many which will be of a positive nature), which no doubt will benefit the push for a true competency-based training and assessment system that can be implemented.

The Fast Track training delivery model is based on real work outcomes that are contextualised to suit industry and organisational needs. This has been achieved through individualised training plans, a Record Training Book that can reflect real work practices and be signed off in the workplace, scope for anyone to participate in the RPL process and the design, development and implementation of the online component of the Fast Track Apprenticeship program.

Engineering staff conduct assessments and validate pre-determined work tasks when they visit apprentices in their workplace. This ensures that replication of assessment and training tasks are avoided in terms of apprentices having to demonstrate competency away from the workplace. The staff has also implemented online quizzes on the TAFE Virtual Campus and use virtual classrooms to conduct tutorials with their apprentice groups at the end of their work day. The online model is now established, which means the online components now can be used by other apprentices as they enrol.

GippsTAFE Engineering staff proposes to continue to use the models created in the Fast Track initiative and improve on them. They believe that they can now share their ideas and also dialogue with other departments at GippsTAFE. Their models became structured as the months progressed in 2008 and already the Automotive department at GippsTAFE has taken some ideas onboard.

One unexpected scenario that occurred was that an RPL kit developed for the Mechanical Trade became an integral part of the Skills Store recommendations that qualified Automotive personnel were eligible for RPL across to the Mechanical Fitter qualification. This resulted in around 24 people being RPLed using the RPL kit developed using the funding. One of the aims of the project initially was to use RPL as one of the ways to reduce the total time to complete an apprenticeship.

Key Project Achievement

The Fabrication Trade apprentices are all now better positioned to move through their apprenticeships faster as there is now a set framework supported by a solid infrastructure to allow them to do so. Work-based training and assessments and online engagement have successfully been implemented.

The status of the Certificate III in Engineering Fast-Track Apprenticeship Training Program has been increased through the notion of work-based learning and online learning encouraging apprentices to take responsibility for their own work outputs and learning. Technological, organisational and political changes have allowed this “new thinking” to be applied.

In reducing the program duration, this will allow apprentices to undertake further training such as post trade tickets to the Welding Technology Institute of Australia standards.

Contact Details for Further Information

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* http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/RTO/Fast_track.asp