

**Reengineering Vocational Education in Thailand toward ASEAN Competence: An Era of
Collaboration between Colleges and the Workplace.**

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Abstract

In building human competency for an advanced society, there is a need to develop a comprehensive account of learning through practice that can satisfy the demands of the workplace for competent apprentices. Vocational education in Thailand, especially in the government sector and in technical colleges, suffers from defects in pedagogy and from curricula which are not adapted to the needs of the modern workplace. This has allowed the private sector and international companies to establish their own institutions to train young students to satisfy their own workplace requirements. An urgent need of reengineering vocational education in the government sector and technical colleges is required to meet this critical situation.

A discussion is given of the various steps of collaboration needed between vocational education colleges and workplaces in areas such as international pedagogy, competency-based training, transnational skills mobility, cultural diversity and the national context. The study supports the need for reengineering Thai vocational education pedagogy to enable apprentices in Thailand to develop the necessary skills required in the future in the unified ASEAN community and the global economy.

The main aim of this paper is to discuss the results of two studies of vocational education in Thailand, one study on government vocational colleges and one study on the vocational education strategies of the Toyota Motor Company of Thailand. The first study includes an analysis of the responses to 360 questionnaires given to teachers and administrators in all 36 sectors of vocational colleges in Thailand and to workplace supervisors of apprentices undergoing required work experience. Focus interviews with 6 major policy makers under the Commission of Vocational Education in Thailand were also conducted to find out the disadvantage of workplace apprenticeships in government colleges. A study of private enterprise vocational training by the Toyota Motor Company was carried out through interviews with Toyota managers, employees and apprentices in vocational training programs. The results of these studies were combined with results of studies by other authors of vocational training in the Asia-Pacific region in order to identify strengths and weaknesses of vocational training and to suggest best practice in using workplace based learning in vocational education.

Keywords: Vocational and Technical Education; Office of the Vocational Education Commission;
workplace learning; workplace apprenticeships.

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