

## SO WHAT DOES "BEING QUALIFIED" REALLY MEAN?

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## What is Competency International

A company that:

- is committed to enabling people to gain qualifications through their workplace learning and performance
- believes that assessment should be a process that is positive and allows reflection and growth
- brings together the skills of a group of professionals in the training and development industry
- works with a wide range of industries, government departments and tertiary institutions both nationally and internationally
- has a track record in innovative and interesting approaches in learning and assessment



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## Why this paper?

- Team musings about the candidates we've been assessing
- Questions around whether qualification and competence are synonymous
- The body of research that has been emerging about the nature of informal and situated learning
- Feedback from our candidates



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## Some questions?

- Who would you choose to be your gardener?
- Why?
- What does the term "qualified" mean to you?
- Would a senior practitioner view "being qualified" it in the same way as a person early in his/her career?
- What does "qualified" mean in a workplace that doesn't have formal credentialing?
- How do you know whether someone is competent?
- What implications are there for complex work environments and team performance requirements?



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## Our findings

- The concept of “being qualified” varies according to the context
- There has been a huge growth in National Qualifications Frameworks largely to:
  - **the need to credential informal or workplace learning,**
  - **upskill national workforces**
  - **redesign socially constructed views of the value and power of education and qualifications**
  - **redress social inequities**
- This development is, in part, a recognition that qualification does not necessarily, or indeed often, equate with competence



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## Our findings cont.

- Conversely it needs to be recognised that lack of formal qualification does not mean that someone is not competent
- Although the need for credentialing can be challenged it has undoubtedly provided workplace learners with recognition of their knowledge and skills in a way that is tangible, motivating and has meaning in employment situations
- There has been a backlash from some traditional tertiary providers against the provision of workplace competency based assessment and award of qualifications based on this assessment. This is often as much about social constructs and resistance to change as it is about concerns about the quality of assessment



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## Our findings cont.

- However, care needs to be taken to ensure the rigour and relevance of such assessment and qualifications but in doing so, RPL/RCC assessment should not be more arduous and costly than traditional assessment



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## Where to from here?

- Further research into the issues of what being qualified means in complex work and in team based performance environments
- Challenging our own assumptions about the relationship between credentials and performance
- Using different measures and assessment methodologies when assessing current competence, such as evidence of reputation, professional conversation and others that may be developed for the purpose
- Ensuring that the “credentialing industry” does not stifle creativity and innovation in assessment or use practices that devalue credentials



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