

Heather Glass

(Japan Australia Word Services Pty Ltd)

Practitioners – born, or made?

Australian governments position T&I in multicultural and ethnic affairs portfolios, and it is a rare practitioner whose ethnic heritage does not loom large in their choice of profession. Meanwhile, the allegedly 'complex cognitive' nature of T&I fires debate about the efficacy of occupational over academic training, while a brief test – accessible with general education and a language other than English - is the holy grail of the government, the profession, and its stakeholders.

The findings of a new research project designed to explore and summarise the 'state of play' in relation to practitioner training and education will be presented. The research is given context by the national project to scope competency based training in the T&I field; a project which identified powerful tensions between and within the industry and its stakeholders, and highlighted industry's own inability to effectively articulate what practitioners do and how.

International concepts of 'competence' and 'competencies' will be described, as will their contemporary application to T&I. The core research will explore the perceptions of industry players, including: the nature of interpreting and translation; 'language' skills vs T&I skills; and the efficacy of education over training. The findings will reveal whether there is consensus on the question: 'Are T&I practitioners born, or made?'