

## September 2025 Newsletter

This month, we started our free webinar series, starting with Why Good Staff Make Mistakes: A Scientific Approach to Better Lab Training. The session drew strong interest, and if you missed it, you can now [watch the recording](#) on our website.

### Update for our NSW & VIC clients

With daylight saving time approaching, we've decided to keep all course start times aligned to Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) to accommodate both national and international participants.

This means that courses normally starting at 9:00am will begin at 10:00am during the daylight saving period.

### Featured Article

#### Competence: The Currency of Confidence in Testing Laboratories

Competence is more than a compliance requirement in accredited laboratories - it is the foundation of trust, quality, and performance. Accreditation standards such as ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189 explicitly require laboratories to demonstrate staff competence. This is because competence underpins accurate results, reduces risk, and ensures audit readiness.

A critical distinction is that training alone does not equal competence. Competence is the ability to apply knowledge, skills, and behaviours to achieve intended results. It encompasses technical expertise (e.g. test methods, calibration), soft skills (communication, teamwork), and compliance (procedures, safety). Notably, staff competence is among the most frequently cited deficiencies during NATA assessments, highlighting its importance.

The concept of competency-based performance management emerged in the 1970s, when psychologist David McClelland challenged traditional measures like IQ testing. His work inspired competency models, often illustrated as an iceberg: visible knowledge and skills above the surface, with deeper traits, motives, and values below. These models remain central to how organisations assess and develop their workforce.

Assessing competence requires a structured, evidence-based approach. As W. Edwards Deming famously observed, “Without data, you’re just another person with an opinion.” By grounding staff development in evidence and structured frameworks, laboratories can enhance quality, build confidence with stakeholders, and turn competence into a true competitive advantage.

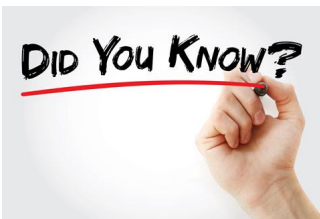
[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

### Related Training



Apply best-practice adult learning principles to deliver successful on-the-job training and assessment outcomes in the laboratory.

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David McClelland is also famous for McClelland's theory, also known as the [Acquired Needs Theory](#) or [Three Needs Theory](#), states that motivation stems from three core psychological needs acquired through life experiences: achievement, the drive to succeed; affiliation, the desire for good relationships; and power, the need to influence others.

