

Chapter 3

Effective Teachers and Trainers

Many countries face a shortage of teachers and trainers in vocational education and training (VET) institutions as the current workforce approaches retirement age. Some teachers and trainers are also poorly equipped to teach because they lack recent workplace experience. By contrast, trainers of apprentices and trainees in companies often have no specific pedagogical preparation.

Many countries need measures to encourage the recruitment of trainers in VET institutions, taking into account the opportunities presented by the current economic crisis. Part-time working, with trainers spending some of their time in workplaces, might be further encouraged to improve the understanding of workplaces in VET institutions. Trainers of trainees and apprentices in workplaces need relevant preparation, particularly to carry out their pedagogical role. Interchange and partnership between VET institutions and industry should be encouraged, so that VET personnel spend time in industry to update their knowledge, and supervisors of apprentices in firms have the opportunity and incentive to enhance their pedagogical skills.

Assessment of the skills acquired by students and apprentices during their training provides a basic test of quality in teaching and VET provision. There are demonstrated advantages in evaluating student performance in VET through standardised national assessments. Such national arrangements can improve student performance, improve the signalling value of qualifications, be more cost-effective than locally organised examinations, facilitate recognition of informal and non-formal learning, and promote flexibility and innovation in learning.

3.1 Enhancing the VET workforce

Within any VET system, many people formally and informally are involved in the transmission of vocational skills and knowledge. In this report we shall refer to *vocational trainers* as those, whether in VET institutions or workplaces, who are primarily responsible for imparting practical vocational skills, and *vocational teachers* as those who are primarily responsible for theoretical vocational skills. In addition, many VET institutions also contain *general teachers* who are responsible for general subjects, such as mathematics or second languages. In practice the divisions between different types of teacher and trainer will work very differently in different countries and the boundaries are often blurred: in Norway, for example, theoretical and practical vocational skills are increasingly taught combined, while in Switzerland general subjects (*e.g.* sciences) are often adapted to the relevant vocational field (*e.g.* for electricians).

Sustaining the trainers in VET institutions

The problem: ageing workforces and limited workplace experience

The quality of the teacher and trainer workforce is one of the key elements in overall quality control in VET institutions (see Table 3.1 for the factors against which quality control is measured in VET institutions). In many OECD countries, the teacher and trainer workforce faces two interconnected challenges. First, the workforce is ageing. Many European countries face a shortage of vocational teachers and trainers in VET institutions, or expect to face such a shortage soon (Cort, Härkönen and Volmari, 2004). In Sweden, for example, more than half of the vocational teachers and trainers in upper-secondary VET schools are over 50 (Skolverket, 2007). The ageing VET workforce is also a challenge in Australia (NCVER, 2004).

Table 3.1 Factors examined in quality assurance in VET institutions*

	Curriculum	Training content	Programme duration	Physical resources	Number of training places	Qualifications acquired	Educational performance	Labour market performance
Austria	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
Czech Republic	no	no	no	no	no	yes	no	no
Denmark	no	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	no
Finland	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes
France	no	no	no	no	no	yes	no	no
Germany	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes	no ¹
Netherlands	no	yes	no	no	no	no	yes	no
Sweden ²	yes	no	no	no	no	no	yes	no
Switzerland	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
United States	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no

1. This criterion is used in one programme catering to 11% of all secondary VET students.

2. In Sweden, the principal organiser/the governing board also have the primary responsibility to make sure that provision is of good quality. This will include ensuring that the students get the prescribed amount of workplace training and that the training content is in line with the curriculum.

* For definitions see glossary.

Source: Kuczera, M. (forthcoming), *The OECD International Survey of VET Systems*, OECD, Paris.

Many countries have found it difficult to compensate for the growing wave of retirements. In addition, when recruiting vocational teachers and trainers, VET institutions have sometimes had to compete with industry and are often unable to offer competitive salaries, particularly in fast-growing professions where trainers are most in demand. Currently, this situation is changing fast. The global economic crisis and fast-increasing unemployment in many countries mean that the relative attraction of working as a VET teacher and trainer has increased dramatically. Countries need to be ready to take advantage of these circumstances by creating pathways to retrain those with relevant vocational skills as teachers and trainers.

A second challenge is ensuring that trainers in VET institutions – and to a lesser extent teachers of VET theory – are familiar with the fast-changing requirements of modern workplaces. Although empirical evidence on this issue is scarce, a review of existing evidence in the United States suggests that having relevant work experience is helpful, particularly to novice teachers and trainers, since it provides them with a context and increases their confidence in teaching for their occupation. Workplace experience above a certain threshold level appears to have no further positive impact on teaching effectiveness, so the nature of work experience may be more important than its length (Lynch, 1998).

In addition, the knowledge and skills of teachers and trainers in VET institutions needs to remain up-to-date. For example, an Australian study (Harris *et al.*, 2001) found that only 28% of full-time and 55% of part-time trainers rated their technical knowledge as up-to-date. Given the overriding importance of the workplace in the objectives of VET, all trainers in VET institutions should be encouraged to spend time in workplaces and if possible work there at least occasionally. Participation in training in practical skills should be encouraged through formal arrangements. Vocational trainers' and teachers' participation in training will always tend to be low if there is no relevant framework. Dalton and Smith (2004) observe that vocational teachers think they are too busy to update their skills and knowledge if in-service training is not part of their workload. The development and updating of work-related knowledge may be encouraged through incentives, particularly wage incentives.

Solution 1: Improving recruitment

Where trainers in VET institutions lack workplace experience, one strategic objective should be to encourage people equipped with practical workplace skills to become trainers in VET institutions. This will both increase recruitment, and help to ensure familiarity with workplaces on the part of trainers. Flexible pathways of entry into the vocational teacher/trainer profession may help with this. Requirements to practice as a teacher/trainer vary among OECD countries, with requirements in many countries (*e.g.* Korea) being higher for vocational teachers than for trainers. A CEDEFOP report on the qualification requirements of vocational teachers and trainers casts further light on this (Parsons *et al.*, 2008).

Vocational trainers in VET institutions are often required to complete a pedagogical course. While such courses help prepare trainers for their work, more onerous requirements may discourage people in mid-career from becoming a vocational teacher or trainer. Allowing skilled workers to acquire their pedagogical competencies in a flexible way (*e.g.* distance learning, recognition of prior learning) would help encourage skilled workers to practice as vocational teachers/trainers. Flexible requirements would also facilitate the hiring of skilled workers from companies on short-term contracts to fulfil

vacancies. Such arrangements exist in Norway, where VET institutions and local employers cooperate to ensure an adequate supply of vocational trainers.

General teachers, for example those teaching physics for electricians in VET institutions, are in a somewhat different position. While workplace experience may be less relevant to them than to their colleagues responsible for practical skills, there remain issues about both the content of what is taught – so that it is most useful in the workplace – and how it is taught – so that its relevance is clear to the student. In Switzerland, teachers of these general subjects in VET institutions are required to take an additional course to ensure that the subjects are made relevant to the needs of VET students. For existing holders of a selective school teacher's certificate at upper secondary level this will involve 300 learning hours.⁴ The institution which commonly provides these courses also serves as a centre of expertise on the training of VET teachers and trainers, and in the professional training of VET administrators (see Box 3.1).

Box 3.1 The Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training

The Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET) is the national competency centre for teaching and research in vocational and professional education and training (VET/PET). SFIVET has regional campuses in three of Switzerland's linguistic regions. Its activities encompass basic and continuing training of vocational teachers and trainers as well as research and development for the government and professional associations.

SFIVET's **Basic Training Division** provides training to full-time and part-time teachers working at vocational schools and professional colleges as well as to other VET/PET professionals. The Master of Science (MSc) degree programme in Vocational Education and Training provides university graduates with the opportunity to gain academic qualifications in the VET/PET field.

SFIVET's **Continuing Training Division** offers continuing education and training courses designed to upgrade the skills of VET/PET professionals; enable VET organisations to develop their activities; provide VET/PET managers with advanced training; and promote quality and innovation within the Swiss VET/PET system.

SFIVET's **Research and Development Division** explores and lays the foundations for basic and continuing training in the VET/PET field. In particular, it carries out evaluations and impact assessments or develops competency measurement concepts that serve as the basis for further VET/PET developments.

SFIVET mainly pursues applied research questions in the VET/PET field. It works closely with universities and other research institutes in Switzerland and abroad. The Research and Development Division is also responsible for assessing and monitoring the quality of the training programmes and courses as well as the quality of consulting and development services provided by SFIVET.

Source: Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology, 2008, *Vocational and Professional Education and Training in Switzerland*. National report from Switzerland contributing to the OECD's review of "learning for jobs" Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology, Bern.

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Other requirements apply to vocational college teachers of professional studies in Switzerland.

Solution 2: Using part-timers and flexible working arrangements

In many countries, including Mexico and the Netherlands, some trainers in VET institutions already work part-time as trainers and part-time in industry. Part-time working arrangements should certainly not be seen to diminish the status of the staff involved. In fact such arrangements offer particular benefits because these trainers remain in close touch with the needs of the modern workplace, and this pattern of working may appeal to those who wish to develop a career as a trainer but retain a job in industry. In countries where the status of the teaching profession is generally low and VET teaching positions attract few young people, partnerships between VET institutions and industry may help increase the attractiveness of the profession and thus attract well qualified and enthusiastic candidates. To promote such arrangements, close collaboration between providers and industry is crucial. This point is argued further below. In addition, professional qualifications for vocational trainers may improve the overall image and status of VET in the eyes of employers (Spark, 1999 in Dalton and Smith, 2004).

Solution 3: Improving data collection on vocational teachers and trainers

For any VET system, diagnosing a recruitment challenge requires good data. This means collecting data on the age of the workforce, and retirement and recruitment rates, so that simple extrapolations of the trainer labour force can be estimated. Better data would allow policy makers not only to diagnose the scale of any problem, but also to predict its evolution over time (given projected retention and recruitment rates), and to evaluate different potential solutions – for example, making it possible to compare the impact and cost of salary increases with other incentive mechanisms.

But in many countries data on the VET teacher and trainer workforce are weak. In Australia for example, a country which is generally very strong on VET data, there is no single source of workforce information, and state and territory data only cover the most basic variables such as age and sex on a consistent basis. Data are typically held by individual providers and vary considerably in quality (NCVER, 2004, p. 37; Harris *et al.*, 2001). Consistent data are needed on the key characteristics of the teacher and trainer workforce, including previous careers, attrition and turnover rates, and, ideally, information on why people leave the teaching profession and where they go. Longitudinal data, at least on a sample basis, would help to understand the factors influencing key career decisions. Such data exist, for example, in the United States and have been used to identify key factors affecting the teacher and trainer workforce.

*Training for the trainers in industry**The value of wider pedagogical skills*

While VET institutions often want to improve their trainers' familiarity with the workplace, the concern in industry is more often to equip the supervisors of apprentices with the necessary pedagogical skills. Supervisors play a key role, they pass on practical skills, but also transmit theoretical knowledge, help apprentices get used to the social codes of the workplace, and more broadly, are responsible for the management of apprentices (Gérard *et al.*, 1998).

The capacity to convey a practical skill involves more than the ability to exercise it. Teaching requires special competencies. A study from Australia found that apprentices

highly value the social skills of supervisors such as communication skills and the capacity to deal with conflicts, but many supervisors felt they lacked the skills to respond to these expectations (Harris, Simons and Bone, 2000). Country evidence suggests that when apprentice supervisors receive specific training, they do a better job of developing the skills of apprentices. In Australia, workplace trainers felt that targeted training courses were helpful in developing supervising competencies (Harris, Simons and Bone, 2000). According to a study conducted in the UK, supervisors without relevant training tend to focus on specific occupational skills and neglect key social competencies such as communication and team-working. They also perceive their role of supervisors as additional to their main job (Evans, Dovaston and Holland, 1990). Training for workplace trainers may also have spill-over benefits, since the competencies acquired tend to be shared within the company. This is particularly important, since regular colleagues also contribute to the learning experience of apprentices by answering questions, showing apprentices how to perform tasks, or providing informal feedback. Such informal training is an important part of workplace learning, especially in SMEs (Robertson *et al.*, 2000). It is therefore important that all workers involved in students' training, including those who support learning in informal ways, have the required skills (Harris, Simons and Bone, 2000).

Ensuring minimum standards of trainer preparation

Formal entry and in-service training requirements for trainers in companies vary among OECD countries. In most countries relevant work experience is necessary to become a trainer, but, trainers are less often expected to have pedagogical training or develop management competencies. Some of these latter requirements can be found in countries with strong apprenticeship systems *e.g.* Austria, Germany, and Switzerland (Kirpal and Tutschner, 2008). Box 3.2 shows a Swiss approach to trainers' training.

Box 3.2 Preparation of vocational trainers in Swiss companies

In Switzerland, firms need to meet quality standards supervised by the canton to take apprentices. For those supervising apprentices, there is a required course of 100 learning hours. The learning hours cover pedagogy, the law, the VET system, and problems with young people, including drugs and alcohol. Apprentice supervisors have to show a certain level of education. The training is backed by inspection and quality assurance. Cantonal inspectors speak with the apprentice and the people in the company and check that the apprentices are learning something useful. If there is a problem the cantonal staff provide some "coaching" to the company. The companies see that this is to their advantage, in that if they look after the apprentices better they get more out of them.

Kirpal and Tutschner (2008) report that trainers in companies often do not perceive themselves as a distinct category, nor are they recognised as such in their work environment. They are instead seen as workers providing training on the margin of tasks carried out in the company. The study argues that trainers who are not aware of their role are less likely to develop skills related to training. Similarly, companies that do not distinguish trainer responsibilities from other tasks performed by the worker tend to provide fewer opportunities for their training staff to develop relevant training skills. Given this evidence, in formal apprenticeship schemes, some training of apprentice trainers should be obligatory. In Germany, the suspension of compulsory training for workplace trainers seems to have had a negative impact on the overall quality of apprenticeship training (BIBB, 2008). In the past, employees who wanted to work with

apprentices had to pass a national exam with an optional preparatory course. This requirement has been suspended for five years, as firms complained that it was a barrier to them offering apprenticeships. The first evaluations of this initiative show that it has adversely affected the quality and overall success of initial VET. In companies without qualified training staff, apprentice dropout rates were higher and the same companies complained about the poor performance of their apprentices. A survey of sectoral organisations of social partners revealed that social partners associated the suspension of formal qualifications for trainers with a deterioration in the image of VET and its overall quality. Both training and non-training companies considered formal requirements for workplace trainers as a guarantee of minimum standards (BIBB, 2008).

Clearly obligatory training implies additional costs for firms. This may be burdensome, for SMEs in particular, and might become an obstacle to the supply of workplace training. At the same time, it should also provide benefits to companies. Better supervision is likely to increase the productive contribution of apprentices during the training period, improve learning outcomes and create a better pool of potential recruits for the company. In Switzerland, for example, companies can reap net benefits out of apprenticeship despite obligatory training for trainers and no subsidies from the State (Mühlemann *et al.*, 2007). A survey among French trainers who received training shows that many small firms participate in the training of trainee supervisors: 52% of trained trainers worked in companies employing less than ten people (Gérard *et al.*, 1998). To avoid excessive burdens on companies, minimum requirements need to be defined in a way that balance the need for quality in apprenticeship training with the need to encourage employers to offer workplace training. Requirements therefore need to be set appropriate to the national context.

Ways of funding the training for trainers differ across countries. For example, in Austria big companies cover either all or part of the costs. In Germany, the cost of courses preparing for the exam for trainers is mainly covered by the participants, whose training qualifications lead to better career prospects and a higher salary (Gérard *et al.*, 1998). Again, the cost-sharing arrangements need to reflect national circumstances, so that the costs and benefits of apprenticeship training are shared sensibly between employer, trainee and the government.

Strengthening the links between VET institutions and industry

Collaboration and exchange between VET institutions and industry might advantageously be linked to enhancing the VET workforce. They can be used to improve familiarity with the workplace among trainers in VET institutions. Exchanges can also develop the pedagogical skills of workplace trainers, which in turn might help to create in companies a pool of people trained in teaching techniques who might at some point work as trainers in VET institutions. This would promote flexible career pathways between industry and the trainer profession in VET institutions and help to solve the recruitment challenge.

In some European countries, there is a trend for trainers in VET institutions to work in companies for a one-off period of two to three months in order to update their vocational competencies (Cort, Härkönen and Volmari, 2004, see also Box 3.3). In Australia links between VET colleges (TAFEs) and companies have fostered mutual understanding and exchange of knowledge (Harris, Simons and Moore, 2005). In many countries, the quality of partnerships depends heavily on personal relationships. While these are important, they need to be systematically supported, perhaps through a small

fund promoting innovative local initiatives. Best practice examples might then be shared at the national level.

Box 3.3 Teacher-worker pairing: co-operation between VET institutions and industry in Finland

The *Telkkä* programme in Finland is based on close co-operation between teachers and workplace trainers. It aims to improve the ability of VET to respond to the needs of working life.

The programme included a two-month on-the-job period for vocational teachers, during which teacher-worker pairs were formed. This offered an opportunity for teachers to update their professional skills and for workers who also work as workplace trainers to improve their pedagogical skills. The training period was preceded by a seminar and planning (to clarify goals and expectations) and followed by feedback from teachers and workers, a synthesis of experiences and dissemination to the broader community.

Teachers reported a wide range of benefits, such as increased familiarity with recent work practices and requirements and the equipment used, easy access to firms for study visits, the contacts necessary to invite people from industry to give lectures at their VET institution, increased confidence, respect from students and motivation. The training period also allowed teachers and workers to discuss issues related to workplace training for students and improve training plans and assessment methods. Participants improved their skills and self esteem, and disseminated knowledge to other colleagues. This exercise by the Economic Information Office in Finland as one of the best ways of developing teachers' professionalism.

Source: Cort, Härkönen and Volmari (2004)

3.2 Developing common tools for the assessment of practical skills

Learning is the point of teaching. Assessment of what has been learnt therefore reveals much about both the learner and the quality of teaching. In general education, most OECD countries therefore have regular tests and exams for school students. These tests are used either formatively, to help students learn, or summatively, to provide an independent test of what they have learnt, and to assess the performance of parts of the education system (institutions, or regions). Such tests at national or international level have sometimes revealed unexpected problems and challenges. In VET, assessment frameworks for practical skills are often weakly defined. This is partly because pencil and paper tests are unsuitable to assess practical skills and partly because some apprenticeship arrangements involve an emphasis on “time served” as a proof in itself of competency. This section looks at ways of strengthening assessment in VET.

A *standardised national assessment framework* needs some explanation. Its purpose is to provide a consistent method to assess the learning outcomes for VET students and thereby to ensure that all those with a qualification have the same mix of competencies and at a similar level. This is particularly crucial in VET systems in which there is substantial variation among individual VET institutions and companies offering apprenticeships. Countries can adopt alternative approaches aiming to ensure consistent national standards. These might include periodical inspections of VET institutions, inspection of examination bodies, random evaluation of student performance, self-evaluation of providers and peer reviews. Regardless of the choice of the tool, countries should make sure that national standards are met by all institutions and companies providing VET.

A standardised national assessment framework can be organised in different ways. An extreme possibility would be a centrally established test undertaken by all students on the same day in similar conditions. More plausibly, there might be examinations developed locally but subject to clear national guidelines allowing for adjustment of a national assessment to local circumstances. The OECD reviews of Australia and Norway (Hoeckel *et al.*, 2008; Kuczera *et al.*, 2008) recommend the creation of frameworks of standardised national assessment in order to underpin quality and consistency in apprenticeship systems. Box 3.4 describes an assessment arrangement used in Saskatchewan, Canada (see also Table 4.5).

Box 3.4 How apprentices are assessed in Saskatchewan (Canada)

All apprentices in any given trade carry out a common set of tasks during an exam, depending on their apprenticeship level. The competencies are developed by the training organisation, with the agreement of the provincial trade board. In all areas the apprentices have written exams to test their knowledge of theory. In practical subjects apprentices have to demonstrate that they have acquired the skills at a given level. For example, apprentice cooks at level one should, among other things:

- Demonstrate how to prepare, bake, serve and store cookie doughs using the creaming method and make up into dropped, bagged, rolled, moulded, ice box, and sheet cookies.
- Demonstrate how to prepare, bake, serve and store quick bread pour batter using the muffin method of mixing and make up into popovers.

The decision as to how much weight is assigned to a particular competency is made by a trainer but in line with the guidelines of the Cook National Occupational Analysis (NOA).

National Occupational Analysis (NOA), set up at the federal level, identifies and groups the tasks performed by skilled workers in particular occupations and in every province. It aims to assure transferability of skills and mobility of employers across the country (*see www.red-seal.ca*).

For more information see: www.saskapprenticeship.ca

Taking advantage of a standardised national assessment framework

A standardised national assessment framework may:

- *Secure the quality of training:* In a system without national assessment, students may learn according to standards that are decided locally, by VET institutions or companies. As a result the level of work competencies among students may differ depending on the local and institutional ability to set up the right objectives for training. Furthermore, training received might be too narrow and firm-specific if its content is defined by individual companies. The evidence confirms that such a risk exists since minimum quality standards are more stable in countries with a national standardised assessment (Wößmann *et al.*, 2007; Backes-Gellner and Veen, 2008). A scale of performance (*e.g.* with six scored levels of performance) could be an additional source of information on the quality of apprenticeship and VET in general.
- *Improve the signalling value of the qualification:* Standardised national assessment ensures that the skills acquired during an apprenticeship are not too firm-specific and have a clear identity in the labour market. This would make it

easier for individuals to move between firms and geographic regions. Employers unable to observe the true capacities of job applicants often rely on signals such as educational attainment. Empirical evidence from Germany shows that a certificate based on performance in a national assessment is a better predictor of actual productivity than a diploma obtained in a local assessment (Büchel, Jürges and Schneider, 2003 cited in Backes-Gellner and Veen, 2008).

- *Be more cost-effective than local examinations:* A standardised national assessment should also be more cost-effective than a decentralised assessment system. Decentralised systems will require different assessment procedures to be developed all round the country, duplicating efforts.
- *Facilitate recognition of informal and non-formal learning:* The process of work experience recognition could be accelerated and rationalised as a person could go through a standardised assessment procedure and prove their ability to work in a trade at any time.
- *Promote flexibility and innovation in training:* Standardised national assessment would allow for greater flexibility in the length of apprenticeships and other forms of practical training, since the duration would depend on achieving the required level of competence as defined in the assessment procedure. Swiss research has revealed, unsurprisingly, that the time required to reach a given level of productivity varies, depending on the skills requirements of different occupations (Mühlemann *et al.*, 2007). Fuller reliance on competence rather than on duration would make it possible to adapt individual apprenticeships more flexibly to the needs of specific occupations and give students an incentive to acquire the necessary competencies swiftly rather than to “serve time” to obtain the qualification.

Balancing national assessment and local autonomy

Wößmann *et al.* (2007)⁵ argue that more responsibility over curricular content at local level is advantageous as it injects local knowledge into the learning process. On the other hand local actors may favour their own interest at the expense of the students’ outcomes. The study concludes that external assessment neutralises this negative effect by imposing control mechanisms on local players.

In many types of public service, efficiencies are realised by balancing clear centralised definitions of objectives with local flexibility in the means of realising those objectives. Standardised national assessment is thus an important complement of a decentralised system. Examples of how such arrangements can combine local and national elements are provided below:

⁵ The analysis is based on PISA data measuring performance of 15-year-olds in areas of general education such as mathematics, science and reading. We assume that these findings could also apply to VET courses.

- In **Germany**, an apprentice obtains three certificates: The “employer certificate” is a work reference provided by the employer based on workplace performance measured against occupational and training standards. The “school certificate” reflects continuous assessment of the student by the local education institution. Each state (*Land*) includes local elements in this school certificate. The “final certificate” is based on a uniform national examination (the “journeyman test”), administered to all apprentices, and aims to assess minimum competencies (CEDEFOP, 2008).
- In **Canada**, centralised final exams were introduced to increase the mobility of skilled workers between provinces. The Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program sets standards for trades and professions, unifies final assessments, provides comparable information on apprenticeship training programmes across Canadian provinces and territories, and encourages further harmonisation. The Red Seal diploma allows workers to practise their trade anywhere in Canada where that trade exists, without further examinations (see www.red-seal.ca). As a result, inter-provincial labour mobility has greatly increased, alleviating labour shortages in fast-growing provinces like Alberta (Pereira *et al.*, 2007).

3.3 Effective teachers and trainers: conclusion

Arguments and evidence

- In VET institutions, many countries are facing a shortage of teachers and trainers as the current workforce approaches retirement age.
- Some of the trainers in VET institutions may have limited recent workplace experience.
- Some trainers responsible for the supervision of apprentices and trainees in companies have insufficient training in how to teach.
- Research evidence shows that trainers who have *both* pedagogical skills and workplace experience are more effective.
- Data on the teacher and training workforce are sometimes inadequate.
- A standardised assessment for VET qualifications:
 - Ensures consistency in the *mix* of competencies acquired and in the *level* of competencies necessary to pass the test.
 - Allows competencies to be acquired in diverse ways, and encourages innovation and efficiency in the acquisition of skills.
 - Provides a clear basis for recognition of prior learning.

Teachers and trainers: OECD recommendations

- Deliver sufficient recruitment of teachers and trainers for VET institutions, and ensure this workforce is well-acquainted with the needs of modern industry. To this end:
 - Encourage part-time working, with trainers in VET institutions spending some of their time in industry.
 - Promote flexible pathways of recruitment. Allow those with industry skills to enter the workforce of VET institutions through effective preparation.
 - Take advantage of the current economic slowdown to encourage those leaving industry with good practical skills to enter the workforce of VET institutions.
- Provide appropriate pedagogical and other preparation for trainers (including the supervisors) of trainees and apprentices in workplaces.
- Encourage interchange and partnership between VET institutions and industry, so that vocational teachers and trainers spend time in industry to update their knowledge, and vocational trainers in firms spend some time in VET institutions to enhance their pedagogical skills.
- Adopt standardised national assessment frameworks to underpin quality and consistency in training provision.

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