

Raising the quality and image of TVET: Lower-level training or motor for inclusive and sustainable growth?

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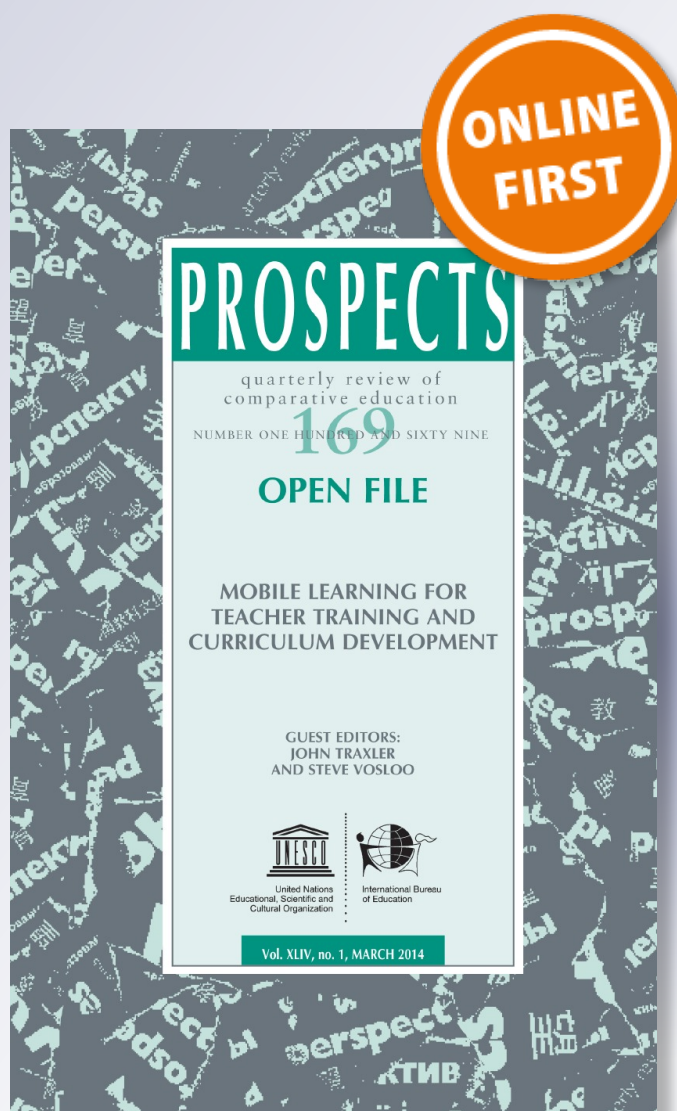
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Raising the quality and image of TVET: Lower-level training or motor for inclusive and sustainable growth?

Paul Brennan

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Abstract Though viewed as second-class until fairly recently, Canada's system for providing technical and vocational education and training (TVET) now provides relevant post-secondary education that meets the needs of highly skilled professionals in all job categories. As the system evolved, it changed the public view of skills education. This article analyses four lessons from that experience: on the importance of decentralised authority, close partnership with employers, attention to the needs of learners, and innovative leadership and language. It also reflects on the interests and needs of international partners with respect to the decentralized Canadian TVET system.

Keywords TVET · Skills · Training · Employment · Quality of education · Inclusive and sustainable growth · Canada

Not long ago in Canada, the provision of advanced skills and education for employment, or technical and vocational education and training (TVET), was viewed as a second-class system created to train people who were not bright enough to make it into university and who worked with their hands in menial jobs. Now, however, Canadians speak of a system that provides advanced skills for employment and applied education, meeting the needs of highly skilled professionals in all job categories. This article describes how the Canadian system evolved to provide the majority of its citizens with access to relevant post-secondary education and, in the process, changed the public view of TVET, or skills education.

In this article, which is based on presentations to the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) International Fora on Skills for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in Developing Asia-Pacific over the past three years, I draw on the current work of Colleges and Institutes Canada (formerly the Association of Canadian Community Colleges) (ACCC) in 34

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countries, including seven in Asia that are often funded by the ADB, and upon evaluations of that work with overseas partners. I offer a reflective analysis of the points of most interest to international partners within the decentralized Canadian TVET system and those that have proven to be most relevant to partners' needs over the past decade.

Why do we maintain an antiquated class and colonial view of TVET?

At the 2013 Annual Conference of the ACCC in British Columbia, two inspiring keynote speakers challenged the assembled presidents and staff from Canada's 130 colleges, institutes of technology, and polytechnics, as well as from sixteen visiting country delegations including those from India, Bangladesh, and China, to be more affirmative about the critical role that our system plays in providing Canadians with a dynamic and inclusive training system that can keep up with the incredible pace of change globally.

Gwyn Morgan (2013), Founding CEO of EnCana Corporation, one of the largest and most successful oil and gas corporations in Canada, explained that he relied heavily on the graduates of colleges, institutes, and polytechnics to develop and maintain his globally competitive corporation, and that, in his opinion, the college system was much more flexible and reflective of the modern world than the university one at this point in time.

John Ralston Saul, an award-winning essayist and novelist and one of Canada's pre-eminent intellectuals, congratulated us for our work in making post-secondary education accessible to more and more Canadians. At the same time, he challenged us to elevate our discourse and proclaim that our approach to skills education is an alternate and very successful pathway to personal and societal development that matches the current needs of our world (Saul 2013).

To return to my opening comment, not long ago Canadians saw the TVET system as second-class, for those not bright enough to make it into university, for those who would work with their hands in menial and dirty jobs. I remember the poster in the guidance counselor's office at my secondary school. It read "Work Smart, not Hard." A white-shirted office worker stood in front of a computer on the left, and a blue-collared assembly line worker stood on the right. The advice from the counselor was that university was the only route to advancement and a fulfilled life.

I did follow that route, attended three universities (Concordia, McGill, and Beijing) and have had an exciting and fulfilling professional life. However, I take issue with the fact that this was presented as the only route, and moreover, the superior one. As a historian, well educated by those universities, I would argue that this view of the world, in which theoretical and hands-off education thrived, was well-adapted to the needs of the medieval and industrial ages that required an educated elite, but that it is no longer sufficient to meet the needs of a knowledge society in a globalized age.

Moreover, most parents and policy makers around the world today still maintain the belief that university education is the only pathway to success, and hence that it deserves the largest portion of government attention and investment. I would argue that this fact is a remnant of a previous class structure and elitist society, and, dare I say, of a transplanted colonial world view which wanted to prepare the local elite to take over after independence.

In the current age, we need the vast majority of our citizens and professionals to have access to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes or approaches that will allow them to understand complex processes, and globalized organizations and sectors, and to be

innovative and effective in this context. We need the vast majority of our people to have the knowledge, applied skills, and attitudes that will allow them to find work, to keep their employment, and to create new ideas and enterprises that can adapt and prosper.

This can only occur if our secondary school systems provide strong fundamental skills that will form the basis for successful employment, and if a growing majority of graduates also have access to relevant post-secondary education of some form, at a time of their choosing. This must be supported by a culture of lifelong learning and sufficient funding to make this a reality; UNESCO (2010–2013) and UNEVOC (1994–2014) have developed policies in this area. It must also be supported by a culture that views all avenues of study as equally valid, different but equal, depending on the interests of the learner and informed by an evidence-based career orientation system.

In Canada, respected research groups agree that 70% to 75% of our citizens must have some post-secondary education by the end of this decade if we are to remain competitive globally (ESDC 2011). We currently have surpassed the 50% mark, and stand as the best in this field among OECD countries, and yet it is still not enough (OECD 2013). In summary, we need strong universities that become more relevant, and we need strong formal and non-formal skill acquisition systems, be they called colleges, institutes, polytechnics, university colleges, or training centres. And we need them to collaborate to meet this challenge.

In this article I outline how Canada was able to provide a majority of its citizens with access to relevant post-secondary education and, by doing so, to change the public view of TVET or skills education. I offer four lessons emanating from the specific Canadian context that may inspire the dynamic countries of Asia to be even more creative than we have been.

This article is also informed by 35 years of international cooperation which the Colleges and Institutes Canada and its 130 member institutions have undertaken with partners in over 100 countries, including in most countries of Asia. The first history of these partnerships, focusing on lessons learned and our current Education for Employment (EFE) approach to international cooperation, has recently been published (ACCC 2012).

LESSON 1: Decentralizing authority to local governments, communities, and more independent institutional boards of directors contributes to ongoing relevance and higher status

The Canadian college and institute system was created in the 1960s: a time when immigration from postwar Europe was diminishing and the need for increasing numbers of highly skilled professionals to work in Canada's growing industrial sector was becoming evident. Thus, the system was created to provide much greater access to relevant post-secondary education for all Canadians to meet our growing economy's needs. How was it set up to do this?

A key initial step was decentralizing authority from the centre to the provinces (our states), to the communities, and to the institutions in question. Canada was already quite a decentralized federation, in which our 13 provinces and territorial governments have jurisdiction over education. Therefore the large federal government investment to help create the college system was transferred to the provinces to create systems that would adapt to their specific realities, yet maintain some national coherence. The provinces in turn created new institutions, or transformed existing ones, into community colleges or institutes of technology closely linked to and serving their surrounding communities.

In the vast majority of cases, semi-autonomous boards of governors were created to oversee these new institutions, with board members coming from local employers, local community groups, and local governments, along with some representation from the administrators, faculty, and students of the institution.

I use the term semi-autonomous because all boards must follow government policies and directives and are accountable for defined results, but they are free to implement these policies in a manner adapted to their community's specific realities. These boards hire the president of the college, who is their only employee, and who must report back to the board on a regular basis, usually monthly.

Colleges and institutes were also encouraged to be creative and entrepreneurial in serving their communities, to develop cost-recovery education and training for firms, and continuing education programmes for adults. In most cases they were encouraged not to be dependent on government. This has served colleges well in recent times, given cutbacks and the new restrictions on public funding.

As we have seen time and time again, large government systems cannot adapt rapidly enough to the ever-changing needs of our current economies and societies. Equipping our populations with the skills they require for employment means that local institutions must have the authority to respond rapidly to their communities' needs, to adapt and create programmes supporting their local learners and employers, be they big or small, private or not-for-profit.

Ministries that attempt to exert total control need to shift their focus, so they primarily control the key results or outcomes of education and training systems. Recently in Canada, ministries of education in some jurisdictions have held the boards of institutions accountable not only for sound financial and academic management results, but increasingly for outcomes such as graduate employment rates and satisfaction rates: are employers satisfied with the graduates and are the graduates satisfied with the education they received?

Ministries do the follow-up surveys themselves and have even started publishing the results online for each programme and each institution. Some are now tying 3% to 5% of the subsequent year's funding to how well each institution does on these independently-verified indicators, which are called KPIs, key performance indicators (MTCU 2014). The better an institution does, the more funding it receives, and ultimately, the more students apply there. Those that find themselves lower on the list move very quickly to correct whatever is lacking in their programmes and services.

Many countries are now heading in the same direction, but they need to have more full discussions before one country emulates the KPIs of another. KPIs do not necessarily tell the entire story of an institution. An institution serving a very needy community may not be able to achieve a 90% placement rate. But, if it places 60% of its graduates instead of its earlier 10%, or if it gives confidence to learners who had given up all hope, it is also succeeding in very real and relevant ways. Centrally planned societies may need other indicators when all graduates are assigned a job automatically upon graduation.

Chinese and Canadian colleges and institutes have been collaborating since 1984. Therefore it was gratifying to hear of progress from our latest group of presidents and vice-presidents of Chinese colleges and institutes, who were in Canada for their one month of leadership development experience under the China Vocational Education Leadership Training (VELT) Programme which Colleges and Institutes Canada administers. They said that the preceding VELT groups had convinced them that KPIs were an excellent measure, that it was being put into place in China, and that they wanted to learn more about how to implement this measure effectively.

To create its list of seven KPIs, China adapted the best from elsewhere and added some very relevant domestic ones, such as each institution's degree of service to the community, and the degree of internationalization it has undertaken in this globalized knowledge society. The quality of their system can only improve as these indicators are measured, analyzed, and made known.

They also informed us that some Chinese institutes were experimenting with various forms of board governance adapted to the Chinese context. This will be very interesting to follow as we continue our two-way exchanges with them on such issues.

Decentralizing some authority to boards and institutions does not mean loss of control; rather, it means exerting control and accountability via independently measured outcomes rather than only on inputs and processes. This is a major transformation in governance and accountability and will often be resisted by civil servants and politicians who like the old systems and may even benefit from them. But more and more governments, often pressured by popular demand and social change, will want more accountability and will turn to such outcome indicators at some point.

Another important advantage of decentralizing authority is that it encourages institutions to become more financially self-reliant. In Canada, colleges that got 80% to 85% of their funding from government at their inception are now raising from 30% to 50% of their total revenues from non-government sources. This includes an increasing proportion of funding from employers, who are deeply engaged—serving on governing boards and helping determine curriculum—having realized that helping their local college or institute ultimately benefits their own enterprise and community.

In India, where the public technical education system has been neglected for years and does not produce very many employment-ready graduates, the private sector has taken up the mandate with the support of the National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC 2009). Even there, private colleges will find that being responsive to their communities will be critical to their ultimate success.

When the community and all its various groups, including its learners, are truly involved in the overall governance of colleges or institutes, benefitting from its services in a variety of ways, the institutions become *theirs*. It is this connection and commitment to the local institutions and their role in the community that raises the reputation of advanced skills provision/TVET. Communities, and learners, appreciate the tangible results they experience.

LESSON 2: A dynamic skills development system that is expected to contribute to employability and entrepreneurship must work in close partnership with the eventual employers of the graduates

In addition to being present on our boards of governors, every single programme in a college or institute must have an employer programme advisory committee that meets regularly to review the programme and tell our deans and faculty how to improve the content, what to cut out, what to add, and what makes the right mix of soft/employability skills and technical skills. They will also recommend when to drop an outdated programme (never easy for faculty to do) and when to create a new one that prepares graduates for the jobs of tomorrow instead of the jobs of yesterday.

This effective involvement in governance and programming leads to the broad partnership that lies at the core of our success: a close, dynamic partnership between a college or institute and its local employer community has many mutual advantages.

Figure 1 illustrates all the areas in which the member institutions of Colleges and Institutes Canada collaborates closely with employers, including associations of small businesses and entrepreneurs.

True collaboration in all these areas takes time, ongoing effort, and much mutual understanding and respect. Employers do not have time for empty words and unnecessary meetings, so their involvement must be strategic. When a private sector partnership is vibrant and productive, it helps to solve many of the challenges facing our institutions around the world these days.

If students are to acquire the dynamic skills they need for employment, they need internships with employers—and faculty who are up to date on current workplace realities. When all institutions have strong relationships with employers, the employers will compete to host students, knowing they have been well trained to their standards—and doing so will let them assess who they might want to employ after graduation. Today's learners want such opportunities so they can gain the work experience that employers are now demanding.

A growing number of our graduates will create their own businesses and jobs rather than be hired into existing employment. The new virtual knowledge economy makes this easier and more likely than ever before, and institutions must prepare their students to do so. Institutions have to include entrepreneurship concepts and development in all their programmes, offer incubators and other support services on site or with associations of entrepreneurs, and ultimately illustrate the value of entrepreneurship by being an entrepreneurial and innovative institution.

Other countries have also recognised the critical nature of internships. In a programme called Science without Borders (SWB 2013), Colleges and Institutes Canada has just signed two contracts with the Brazilian government to host 1,500 Brazilian students and 1,000 Brazilian faculty in our colleges over the coming two years. What have they requested from us? That we provide the students with two semesters of applied education and one semester of internships in a Canadian organization, and provide their faculty with three months of practice teaching for applied education, and initiation to applied research for businesses in the community.

A constant issue for institutions providing advanced skills around the world is the lack of up-to-date equipment that is essential to an applied education. Again, a close relationship with employers helps to minimize this deficit. Industry often donates older equipment to the institute, allowing students to practice on it. Eventually, they even buy and donate additional new equipment, and ultimately they may donate significant equipment or funding to build new laboratories, workshops and even small campuses. Examples of this process include Shell Canada funding a new learning centre for the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT), and Siemens donating an MRI machine to the Michener Institute of Applied Health Sciences.

Senior delegations from India and Bangladesh that recently visited Canadian colleges marvelled at the amount of donated equipment they had. Entire workshops were equipped by Toyota, Ford, CISCO, and many other employers. These donations were clearly indicated at the entrance of each workshop to express gratitude to the donors and recognize their good corporate citizenship.

In addition to these local partnerships with employers, provincial and national sectoral human resource councils were created to bring together employers, employee associations or unions, educational institutions, and governments on a sector-by-sector basis. These councils, led by the employers, help set national standards, gather relevant labour market intelligence, and promote careers in their own sector; for example, see the Canadian

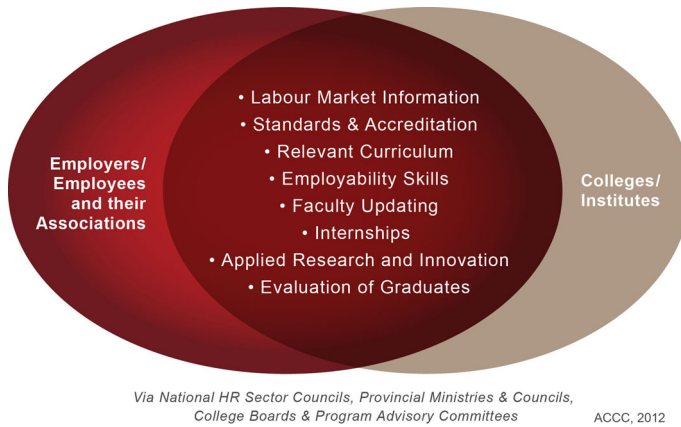


Fig. 1 Areas of employer-college collaboration

Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC 2014). They play a critical role in steering all of their constituents, whether individual employers or large institutions, towards the evolving requirements of each sector to ensure that learners are being prepared for the jobs of tomorrow.

I clearly remember the national meeting that the Informatics and Communications Technology Sector Council of Canada (ICTC) and Colleges and Institutes Canada organized with IT industry leaders and all colleges providing IT programmes, held at the Microsoft Canadian Headquarters in Toronto several years ago. Industry leaders challenged Canadian colleges to get rid of their specialized IT departments and instead integrate IT into every other department. For example, the Health Informatics Professional Association complained that no programmes were preparing professionals for their emerging industry. The meeting led to much soul-searching, a restructuring of many IT programmes, and four new health informatics programmes across the country two years later.

India has recently started to set up similar national sector councils as it embarks on reforming its entire skills provision sector (NSDC 2009). This is a smart decision: effective, dynamic skills upgrading systems and institutions must have access to evidence-based labour market information if they are to meet the evolving needs of each sector. In every country where we work, we encourage sector skill associations or councils to develop what we call “good enough, just-in-time labour market intelligence” from their own industry, rather than relying on ministries that can take years to collect and publish data that is no longer accurate.

Such partnerships must be constantly nurtured and facilitated by governments and institutions if they are to succeed. This is an ongoing task, much easier to describe than to carry out, and it usually requires some coaching. It takes commitment to bridge the gap between the two very different cultures of public education and private enterprise, which must come to understand and trust each other. This is essential to a dynamic and sustainable system of skills provision.

The most salient result of this close and regular connection to employers is that, on average, 90% of Canadian college graduates find employment within six months of graduation, and many others go on to further studies. And an average of 95% of independently-surveyed employers are very satisfied with the graduates they employ.

Of course, these percentages vary by region of the country and in tandem with the state of the economy or the sector at any particular time, but such averages are a tremendous achievement in a rapidly changing globalized economy. They are some of the best new indicators of quality as they measure the quality of the outcomes and not only, as most traditional quality and accreditation systems do, the quality of the inputs and processes. They also form a strong basis for the changing perception amongst Canadians regarding what colleges and institutes can accomplish, and thus the rising prestige of the college system.

And, most importantly, these statistics mean that the vast majority of Canadian youth and adults are on their way to productive lives as professionals and engaged citizens.

LESSON 3: We must be accessible to all kinds of learners and remain focused on their career and learning needs, adapting the system to them instead of the reverse

Positive economic development in a highly skilled, highly competitive global context creates a sub-class of people who do not have access to even the first step of the fast-moving escalator of skills acquisition. How do we meet this challenge?

We must learn how to open the doors of our institutions to the vast majority of our people who want to learn and to obtain or create employment. These individuals often have not met the traditional entry requirements and for decades, they have been excluded from our systems.

Taking up this challenge will require several responses: having the flexibility to recognize learning acquired through life experience, developing different types of modular programmes and new modes of learning that suit different learners, making our institutional services and culture relevant to such learners, and increasing our capacity to provide essential employability skills along with technical or career training.

A few years ago, the Brazilian Ministry of Education and its Federal Institutes of Technology asked Colleges and Institutes Canada to help them open their institute doors to uneducated women of the poorer northern and northeastern parts of Brazil. With support from both the Canadian and Brazilian governments, Colleges and Institutes Canada partnered 13 of their institutions with 13 of ours over a four-year period to help them recruit, admit, and support the first group of 1,000 women, offer them short training courses, and help them find employment. The project was called *Mulheres Mil*, or A Thousand Strong Women, a wonderful play on words: in Portuguese, *mil* can mean both strong and a thousand. A moving video (ACCC 2014b) was produced by our Brazilian partners.

The project was so successful that then newly-elected Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff lauded it and announced that it would be expanded to the entire system and country and was now to be called the 100,000 Women Project. Institutes of technology would increase their quotas for disadvantaged learners and a new Centre of Research was set up to evaluate and draw lessons from *Mulheres Mil* to inform the expansion now underway.

In Canada, we also struggle to engage our marginalized indigenous populations (ACCC 2014c), both on reserve communities and in our larger cities, as high school dropouts and youth with any number of difficulties gradually lose ground and any hope of a rewarding career.

With this in mind, colleges and institutes have developed a vast array of student services to attract, support, retain, and graduate a variety of learners. For example, colleges are experimenting quite successfully with offering college-level applied courses within

secondary schools and/or opening their doors to secondary school students. This provides unengaged youth with practical programmes and outlets, giving them a taste of the options they have in post-secondary education. It also provides them with advanced credits that they can transfer if they go on to the college, which most then do.

Most colleges also have programmes where one can gain the knowledge and skills required to undertake a course of study, often called “pre-technology” programmes to make them more welcoming. Afterwards, students find a vast array of certificates and diplomas available to them. And colleges are way ahead of universities in recognizing prior learning wherever it has occurred; they ask candidates to demonstrate the skills they already possess, and thus help them avoid having to take courses over again simply because they have moved to a different institution.

Students are able to take classes to help them improve their language, communication, study, mathematical, and science skills as they relate to their choice of career. A recent Colleges and Institutes Canada national study (Tetarenko and Adler 2012) of how to best equip student populations with the “essential employability skills”—meaning those in language, mathematics, communication, teamwork, informatics, learning, problem-solving and entrepreneurship—concluded that one of the best predictors is that the students are learning them not in remedial classes, but in the context of their career and studies.

Our students also have access to learning and career support services for any kind of disability, and for issues related to finances, health, and housing. Colleges even provide day care, to allow young mothers to study. When international delegations visit Canadian colleges, this aspect of our integrated student services is usually one of the three that most interest them.

In a large country like Canada, being accessible means putting additional measures in place. Colleges have set up many campuses or learning centres in the various communities of the region they are meant to serve, including in the far north. As a result, the 130 public colleges and institutes of Canada run campuses in over 1,000 Canadian communities. In addition, our colleges support distance education services of all kinds, from flatbed trucks that bring workshops to remote regions, to online anytime learning for regular students and those for whom travelling to a campus is still a challenge.

Ensuring that an education system is focused on the learners requires a variety of programs that attend to all the life stages and circumstances a potential learner may face. Thus we offer full-time, part-time, evening, and distance study as well as short- and longer-term programmes adapted to the different needs of learners, and of their communities and employers. This is another core competency of the Canadian system.

Figure 2 illustrates the variety of programming offered by colleges and institutes in Canada, as well as the status of this system. Notice that it is at the same level as university studies and not below. Nor is it a transition phase to university studies.

As the figure shows, most colleges will offer the following broad range of study options and programmes:

- Upgrading or pre-technology programmes for those without high school certificates
- Academic programmes for those who have taken the apprenticeship route
- 1-year certificates that allow basic entry into the workforce
- 2-year diplomas to train technicians in a wide variety of areas
- 3-year diplomas to train technologists in a wide variety of areas
- 2-year university transfer programmes
- 4-year bachelor’s programmes, with an applied focus
- 1-year post-graduate certificates in specialized studies

Moreover, in a number of provinces, ministries have approved having colleges and institutes provide full four-year bachelor's degrees, often by adding an additional year to the existing three-year diploma programmes. These programmes maintain their applied nature and all-important work internships. The number of these bachelor's programmes is growing and employers are very happy with the higher level of applied skills that these graduates offer.

Similarly, employers are demanding applied skills and evidence of capacity to work effectively. Many traditional university graduates with a general bachelor's degree were no longer able to find work in this environment. In response, Canadian colleges started to offer one-year postgraduate certificates to graduates who wanted more specialized training, perhaps after working for a few years. For example, a graduate in a general business or commerce programme could earn such a certificate in e-commerce or international business, with a mandatory internship. Most people earning these certificates find work rapidly, often with the employer where they did their internship.

It is interesting to note that Canadian colleges and institutes are also hosting an increasing number of international students in these programmes, indicating that the programmes are meeting a need in many countries. The number of students from India in Canadian colleges and institutes has grown from 1,500 to 8,000 per year in the past four years and over half of these students have a general bachelor's degree but were not able to find meaningful employment in India. They come for these postgraduate certificates and return home to work. Some even stay on in Canada to continue their studies or work.

In summary, creating a dynamic and innovative skills development system that contributes to employment and sustainable development requires institutions that adapt to the changing needs of the society and focus on the needs of their learners above all. It also requires ministries that allow institutions to innovate. With this system in place, the reputation of the institutions will rise accordingly. A recent front-page headline from the daily *Ottawa Citizen* read, "Colleges becoming the finishing school for university graduates". They earn this status based on the reputations of their graduates.

LESSON 4: Improving the quality and status of skill provision systems requires innovative leadership and new language

Creating a dynamic, relevant, and accessible system for upgrading skills, one that contributes directly to greater sustainable employment and self-employment, is not a change, but a major transformation. Change implies making adjustments to a system that one feels is basically aligned, whereas transformation implies that the current system is not doing its job and needs to be overhauled from top to bottom.

For sustainable transformation to happen, inspirational and transformational leadership is required. Those who work in traditional systems are accustomed to training managers in existing processes and rules. A responsive, dynamic institution requires leaders (and not just one leader) who are out in the communities they serve, listening for changes in local needs, creating strategic partnerships, and changing the perception of the institution in the media, in political circles, and amongst parents and learners.

Chinese, Vietnamese, and Bangladeshi ministry and institutional leaders who have visited Canada have often been surprised to see how much time the president and CEO of a college spends in the community, leaving the day-to-day internal management to a COO or vice president of operations. Leading a dynamic college means just that: creating dynamic

partnerships with the community, with business, with governments, as well as with one's own learners.

Such leaders must also inspire their own personnel with a vision of a dynamic college that is connected to the community and is at the service of the learners. Making this happen is natural for a few people, but usually requires additional inspirational learning, coaching, and a network of supportive colleagues.

That is why the Colleges and Institutes Canada offers yearly leadership academies or institutes for its existing presidents, for vice presidents, for deans, and for those seeking a promotion into a leadership role. As mentioned earlier, it now offers similar programmes to Chinese leaders of institutions, and has also done this in Vietnam and for countries in Africa and the Americas.

These days leadership must also exhibit itself on the global stage. ACCC serves as the UNESCO UNEVOC Coordinating Centre for North America, stimulating exchanges of knowledge and best practices. It also helped to create the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics (WFCP 2014). The federation brings together institutions and associations from over fifty countries, including China, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Chile, Mexico, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, and welcomes new members, adding them to its world map.

WFCP held its most recent world congress in Canada in 2012; it featured a world institute on leadership with representatives from twelve countries. A second such institute will be held before the next world congress in Beijing in late October of 2014, and another in Brazil in 2016.

As we have provided international leadership through this role, we have also promoted the transformation of our language. In Canada, TVET was synonymous with a vision of antiquated, run-down vocational schools for second-class citizens. Over the past few years, along with the measures and results outlined above, we have encouraged the use of new language. We no longer talk of TVET, vocational training, or blue-collar workers, to name but a few examples.

Instead we talk of a system that provides advanced skills for employment, and applied education, and applied research to the community, a system that meets the needs of highly skilled professionals in all job categories.

Our own governments no longer use the term TVET; instead, they have adopted the term advanced skills for employment, referring to us as the college and institute system. Our funding for applied research and innovation services to industry has increased dramatically in the same period, in part because of how we have branded ourselves.

We are no longer second-class institutions dealing with the underachievers in our society. Instead we are an equally important part of the post-secondary system, a part that allows many more citizens to access high-level knowledge and skills, supporting them as they obtain or create sustainable jobs, and assisting employers and community groups as they increase their productivity and remain competitive in this global world.

We are high-quality institutions of the new globalized age of knowledge—which demands inclusion for all, relevancy, accountability, quality, and measurable results.

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