

doing
learning
earning

Enhanced Apprenticeship

Key to solving
Canada's skills crisis



Canadians for a
Modern Industrial Strategy



Canadians for a **Modern Industrial Strategy**

Canadians for a Modern Industrial Strategy (CMIS) brings together people from labour, business and the community who believe our economic success and social well-being depend on adopting a proactive industrial strategy that:

- Recognizes governments have an essential co-ordinating and enabling role to play in the economy.
- Is a true partnership involving government, labour, business, community, academic institutions and other stakeholders.
- Reduces inequality by creating good jobs and putting people and nature at the heart of the economy.
- Goes beyond the sterile debate between “high tech” and “smokestack” industries and provides the tools different sectors need to be a vibrant part of a modern economy.
- Puts long-term needs ahead of short-term considerations.

Our activities include:

- Providing a forum for discussion of what should be part of a modern industrial strategy.
- Conducting research and analysis of public policy issues related to a modern industrial strategy.
- Providing access to research and information.
- Advocacy with government and in public forums for adoption of a modern industrial strategy.

Enhanced Apprenticeship

Key to solving Canada's skills crisis

Canadians for a Modern Industrial Strategy

March 2013

ENHANCED APPRENTICESHIP

KEY TO SOLVING CANADA'S SKILLS CRISIS

FOR CENTURIES, apprenticeship has provided a means for developing the critical skills that economies need to flourish. In ancient times, training craftsmen through apprenticeship was regulated by society. The 18th century BC Code of Hammurabi obliged Babylonian craftsmen to pass on their skills to the next generation. As late as the 19th Century, virtually all occupations used an apprenticeship model.

Over time, apprenticeship waned as universities and other forms of post-secondary education grew, and eventually apprenticeship became confined to a relatively small number of occupations. This is unfortunate, since learning from a dedicated, experienced professional on the job is one of the most rewarding and effective ways of learning almost any skill.

The barriers and challenges for employers and apprentices are well known. They have been presented in numerous reports by groups like the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum¹, the Canadian Council on Learning², and regional groups such as the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario³ for at least the last 10 years. What's

needed is action! What's needed is a national skills strategy that includes apprenticeship as one of the three legs of the post-secondary system.

This paper expresses the issues in concrete terms and cites possible solutions. It describes the contradiction between high levels of youth unemployment and the national debate on immigration in addressing current and future skills shortages. It presents practical policy solutions based on existing Canadian and international models from the industrial and building trades.

Future strategies must address the immediate (immigration), intermediate (skills upgrading) and longer term economic demands. The hope is that the paper generates a much-needed dialogue around solving Canada's skills issues – a dialogue we feel is well overdue.

James Clancy

Board Member

Canadians for a

Modern Industrial Strategy

Fact #1

Canada has a skills shortage

We've been hearing for quite a number of years now about a looming skills shortage in Canada. Well, the evidence suggests that the skills shortage isn't looming anymore. It's here.

Despite the fact that well over 1 million Canadians are unemployed, and overall jobless rates are still above prerecession levels, many employers are unable to fill vacancies for skilled workers. A Canadian Chamber of Commerce report in February 2012 predicted shortfalls of 163,000 workers in construction, 130,000 in oil and gas, 60,000 in nursing, 37,000 in trucking, 22,000 in the hotel industry, and 10,000 in the steel trades.

PREMISE

Skills shortages limit economic growth

According to a recent study by the Chamber of Commerce, the lack of skilled workers is the top barrier for business growth in this country.⁴

Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney has said that structural shifts in the labour market mean "workers in declining industries may not have the skills or experience to match immediately the needs of employers in expanding industries"⁵. And it doesn't seem to matter what industry, or what region of the country: high-tech hubs like Waterloo in southern Ontario are finding it difficult to staff scientific and technical positions in their industry, while trucking firms are unable to fill driver shortages in northern BC or northern Alberta. How is that possible? How can there be such a disconnection between the skills that the economy needs to flourish and the labour supply?

When you combine the skills shortage with an aging workforce, where up to 50% of existing workers may be retired within the next 10 years⁶, the threat to the economic well-being of this country is very real and very profound.

How will we grow the talent that our economy needs to grow and prosper?

PREMISE

Immigration is part of the solution; temporary workers aren't

Historically, Canada has always relied on immigration to fill skills needs, and the federal government has announced changes to the immigration point system that will increase the number of skilled tradespersons who qualify for entry into Canada. But immigration is only part of the answer.

Federal Immigration Minister Jason Kenney has also announced changes to the temporary foreign worker program. Temporary workers are not a long-term solution. The program needs to be seen for what it is: a band-aid until a national skills development program can pick up the slack.

CONCLUSION

Canada needs a skills strategy to develop talent here

We need a cohesive national strategy for skills. A major part of that strategy needs to be a reaffirmed and improved approach to apprenticeship – an approach for developing skills in new workers (school to work approach) and upskilling/reskilling the existing workers (skills deficit approach) that Bank of Canada governor Carney identified. The answer is a proven workforce development process that's been around for centuries.

That means federal leadership and provincial cooperation. The usual way to get that is by waving money at the provinces. History tells us this. Constitutional issues and division of powers aside, we don't need a dozen different strategies.

Fact #2

Canada has high youth unemployment and underemployment

And it isn't that there aren't Canadians who could fill available jobs. Canada's youth unemployment rate is about twice that of the greater labour force, hovering in the 14 to 15% range.

While this number is distressing, it only tells part of the story. It considers only those youth who are not working. It doesn't take into account the large number of college and university graduates who are working in lower skilled, lower paying jobs. The number may be as high as 25% percent of graduates from university and college programs who are underemployed.

That places Canada among the worst of the OECD countries.⁷ Many of these unemployed and underemployed young people are carrying crippling debt loads from student loans, and may be entering the world of work at a considerable disadvantage.

PREMISE

Countries with higher rates of apprenticeship have lower rates of youth unemployment

Compared to other OECD countries, Canada has relatively few apprenticeships. Almost twice as many young Canadians attend university as serve an apprenticeship. It is telling that the OECD countries with the lowest youth unemployment rates are also the ones with the highest apprenticeship participation rates among 16 to 24-year-olds. Coincidence? Broadening and improving apprenticeship may hold the key to solving Canada's youth employment problem.

CONCLUSION

More apprentices and apprenticeships needed

Apprentices make up about 2% of the Canadian labour force. In Australia, Germany and Switzerland, it is close

to 4%. These countries are managing to retain industrial jobs despite low-cost competition from abroad, and without punitive restrictions on international trade. They grow the skills their economies need through comprehensive strategies that have remained consistent for many years.

Another characteristic of apprenticeship abroad is the application of apprenticeship models to a much broader range of occupations than in Canada. Depending on the province, anywhere from a low of around 50 to a high of around 150 occupations may be designated under the apprenticeship system. In the UK, there are over 190 different apprenticeships available. In addition to the expected construction and industrial trades, apprenticeships are also available in customer service, business administration, child care and early childhood education, hospitality and catering, health and social care, and retail. In fact, these 'other' sectors represent a significant portion of apprentices – as much as one third.⁸

Other OECD countries also offer apprenticeships beyond the traditional trades. In Australia, about 60% of apprentices are in these non-traditional occupations. In Austria, Germany and Switzerland, the number of apprenticeships is even higher – upwards of 250 occupations in Austria, and over 350 in Germany.

This considerable broadening of the number and nature of apprenticeship occupations points to a fundamental fact. Apprenticeship is recognized worldwide as a very efficient and cost effective way to develop skills.

So why not here? Why not use the apprenticeship model in Canada to train a much larger number of occupations on the job?

Fact #3

Canada has relatively fewer apprentices compared to other OECD countries

We can see that overall apprenticeships are lower in Canada than in comparable OECD countries. It can't just be because of fewer apprenticeable occupations, can it?

PREMISE

Attitudes toward apprenticeship limit number of candidates

While that is certainly part of the equation (fewer occupations generally equates to fewer apprentices) there are other factors at work. Perceptions play a large part in determining the number of individuals who seek apprenticeships. As Canadians, we've been conditioned for many years to the notion that apprenticeship in a skilled trade is a consolation prize for those who can't get into university or college. This notion is misplaced.

Industrial apprentices need high-level math, reading, and problem solving skills; they need to be able to process and interpret complex technical information, and they need to be able to work as effective team members in a dynamic environment. The time of "strong backs and weak minds" is long past – but it still limits the number of candidates to those who self-select out of other avenues of post secondary education.

PREMISE

Perceptions of career path limit number of candidates

One perception that does have some merit is the notion that career broadening and advancement is limited in those occupations where apprenticeship is practiced. Opportunities to leverage the high degree of learning and technical skills acquired through apprenticeship and working as a journeyman to higher academic learning are indeed limited. Few linkages exist to higher credentials, and those that do exist are the result of individual

initiatives by institutions rather than part of a structured, integrated system.

The recent “Trades to Degrees” initiative at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology⁹ is a good example of what is possible – and would be more common – if we had comprehensive laddering built into all aspects of the post-secondary system.

CONCLUSION

Full “laddering” across post-secondary education should be introduced

In 2005, the Government of Ontario commissioned former Premier Bob Rae to look at the challenges faced by post-secondary education. The result was “Ontario: A Leader in Learning” (aka ‘The Rae Report’), which identified a number of reforms which have relevance for all provinces, not just Ontario. Among them was a call to integrate all three legs of the post-secondary system – particularly between apprenticeship and college diploma programs, and between college diplomas and university degrees – to allow bridging laterally and vertically – no more dead ends. As the Rae Report stated:

“Students need clear pathways. Not everyone wakes up at the age of 12, decides to become a dentist, and then proceeds in an orderly way through the system. It is important to let qualified students move between institutions.”

To this, we can add “or between occupations as interests, abilities and economic needs intersect”. Anything less is shortchanging the country, but there is no cohesive pan-Canadian strategy for creating linkages between the various parts of the post-secondary system.

Fact #4

Canada's Apprenticeship Systems don't respond quickly to changing workplace requirements

Canada's apprenticeship system (or, more correctly "systems" – since every province is somewhat different) is historically very slow to respond to new/emerging occupations – or even to re-think the required skill sets of existing occupations.

PREMISE

A more responsive system will lead to increased employer participation

A good example of how the current systems aren't responding to the realities of the workplace is in relation to the emerging industrial occupation of "mechatronics technician" – a highly skilled plant maintenance occupation that combines mechanical, electrical, electronics, instrumentation, control systems, system engineering, robotics, etc. Recognized in many jurisdictions, particularly in Europe, there is no formal recognition in this country. If an employer wanted to train individuals for this occupation using an apprenticeship approach, they would:

- a) be unable to grant any credential to individuals who completed the program (since it isn't recognized as a trade in any province) and
- b) they (and their apprentices) would be ineligible for any funding, either federally or provincially.

This is in spite of the fact that in advanced manufacturing, the need for skills in this area has been recognized for at least the last 10 years. Currently, an employer can apprentice Industrial Electricians and/or Industrial Mechanics (millwrights), but neither of these occupations encompass the full range of skills necessary in mechatronics. Ok, so why not just register an apprentice in both trades simultaneously?

Generally this isn't allowed. The only way to get both trade certifications under current systems is to complete an apprenticeship in one of the occupations, and then register as an apprentice in the other. That's a significant length of time spent in an apprenticeship – depending on whether or not a provincial apprenticeship authority will recognize skills earned in one trade as applicable to another, training for a “dual ticket” could take 8 years or more. That's ridiculous. Employers who don't need the full range of skills of a millwright or an industrial electrician aren't particularly interested in investing the time or resources to train an individual completely in both occupations. Instead, they hire one or the other occupation as journeypersons and attempt to fill in the gaps in their skills to create a company-specific mechatronics technician – or else hire one already trained from another employer.

A more flexible and responsive system has benefits for the construction and services sector, too. Building trades have jurisdiction on unionized job sites that are entrenched in long-standing conventions. These need to be respected while recognizing that technology and construction methods are evolving. Failing to adjust the scope of trades to incorporate new techniques and materials will inevitably result in training skills that are irrelevant for the workplace. No one needs that.

Many of these employers might be willing to run an apprenticeship for the skills they need, but the system has been painfully unresponsive in designating a new occupation that meets the needs of employers and the economy. The result is lost opportunities.

The same could be said for service occupations, many of which are not currently covered by apprenticeship. Many OECD countries are using the apprenticeship system to go far beyond the traditional skilled trades.

The UK recently announced an apprenticeship scheme for lawyers, pilots, accountants and engineers¹⁰. Another UK program is aimed at apprenticeships for the public service sector¹¹. These initiatives are fine examples of the ‘outside the box’ thinking that we need to solve our skills issues – without burdening the next generation of workers with crippling debt and low employment prospects.

PREMISE

Lack of standards for “undocumented” occupations precludes apprenticeship

One reason that has been cited for this is a lack of occupational standards or the notion that the skills required to fulfill the job-related requirements of these occupations are not documented in the same manner as those of traditional skilled trades.

The Sector Council Program, funded by the federal government since the 1990s, has created dozens of industry-recognized national occupational standards for previously undocumented occupations. This rich bank of standards could be leveraged for the purpose of increasing the scope and the reach of apprenticeship almost immediately.

CONCLUSION

Apprenticeship boards need to move quickly to respond to the changing requirements of the workplace

The process of designating a new occupation is almost universally cumbersome and long. Checks and balances are important, but it is imperative that the system be more responsive and adaptable to changing conditions.

Part of the reason for this is that governments have become the arbiters for what has traditionally been an industry-driven training scheme. Many people point to the German/Austrian/Swiss system of dual education (Of note: a similar model has been in place in China for a number of years, and they are rapidly turning out legions of skilled workers) as a best practice. The government is involved in the system,

but for the most part it doesn't run the system – that responsibility falls to those with the most invested in the system – employers and labour¹². This makes the system potentially more responsive and efficient.

The College of Trades initiative in Ontario is an intriguing concept. One of the often cited barriers to encouraging young people into the trades is that they are seen as occupations of last resort or a consolation prize for those who can't get into university. The Trades College concept elevates the trades to the same sort of self-regulating professional status as doctors, engineers and architects – and that can only help to enhance the status of the trades. Ontario's College of Trades initiative is a bold step aimed at addressing an apprenticeship system that many believe is not in tune with the needs of employers or the trades themselves. The idea of an independent body governing skilled trades certainly merits close scrutiny as an innovative approach.

Fact #5

Apprenticeship numbers are linked to employer demand

While the supply side of the apprenticeship equation (apprenticeship applicants) is one aspect, the demand side must also be considered. Canadian employers haven't been committing en masse to apprenticeship. A 2005 study conducted by the Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS) tracked apprenticeship starts with general unemployment trends, and offered a significant insight: the number of apprenticeships is primarily a function of demand from employers, not supply of applicants.¹³

PREMISE

Perceptions of cost risk limit employer participation

So why don't more employers invest in apprenticeship? The single largest factor appears to be the costs of apprenticeship training.¹⁴ While employers recognize the value of apprenticeship in creating and sustaining a skilled workforce, they are reluctant to invest in generic skills training that can be "poached" by another employer who isn't investing in training. While the apprenticeship system partially shields the employer from this eventuality by allowing them to pay reduced wages to apprentices, it is still a significant issue.

PREMISE

Improving incentives to employers removes cost risk

The Canadian government, and some provincial governments, offer tax incentives to employers for apprenticeship. The federal Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit (AJCTC) is a good first step, offering a 10% subsidy to apprentice wages up to \$2000 a year, but it only applies to the Red Seal trades, and is at best a token effort. The AJCTC needs to be expanded to encompass all apprenticeable occupations, and should be increased to cover a higher percentage of wages in the early years of apprenticeship, when the cost risk to the employer is highest. Provincial governments are also offering credits to help soften the cost implications to employers: Ontario is leading the way, with a generous

wage subsidy of up to \$40,000 over the first 4 years of apprenticeship.

PREMISE

Incentives need to be tied to outcomes

Unfortunately the Ontario program (like most) is linked to apprenticeship registrations. To really be effective, employer incentives need to be tied to outcomes, or they merely offer employers an incentive to exploit lower wages without ensuring that apprentices progress through the system.

PREMISE

Taxing employers that don't provide training may level the playing field

Quebec has taken a different approach, mirroring the principle of the payroll tax employed in France. Firms with over a certain level of payroll must either pay a 1% tax to support workforce development or be able to show that they have spent at least that amount on training. The idea is that it penalizes only those companies who want a “free ride” on other companies’ workforce development efforts.

CONCLUSION

“Training taxes” can increase investment in training

The 1% tax isn't specifically targeted on apprenticeship though, so virtually any training conducted by the company can be included. While the tax has increased the amount of training conducted by Quebec-based firms, there is no indication of an impact on overall apprenticeship starts or completions – but any initiative that results in increased investment in training is a positive step.

Fact #6

The on-the-job portion of most apprenticeships is ad hoc at best

For many apprentices, the only structured part of their learning occurs in school. On-the-job training, which can account for as much as 90% of the time spent in an apprenticeship, is largely *ad hoc*.

PREMISE

Improving the structure and focusing on learning outcomes throughout the apprenticeship makes for better training

Overarching all of these improvements to apprenticeship is the notion of improving the structure and learning processes within apprenticeship. Evidence from other jurisdictions (Germany, Australia, and Apprenticeship 2000 in North Carolina) suggests that an approach that specifies specific learning outcomes for on the job training, coupled with proper training and preparation of those journeypersons responsible for mentoring apprentices, results in better training, faster.

PREMISE

Modularization and competency-based approaches can improve structure and outcomes

The Canadian Council for Directors of Apprenticeship's (CCDA) "Strengthening the Red Seal" initiative¹⁵ is an excellent example of how this can be accomplished. A key feature of the initiative is developing Occupational Performance Standards (OPS) to be used for both skills development and skills assessment. It also features an innovation called Multiple Assessment Pathways (MAP), which allow individuals to demonstrate their skills through a variety of methods – regardless of where or how they were learned. The reforms point to a modularized, competency-based system that eliminates duplication of training; a building block approach that should make both initial training and later cross-training and retraining more streamlined and accessible to individual workers and employers alike. It is

a fantastic initiative, the first real national reform to the apprenticeship system in years! One caveat: any modularization of apprenticeship must ensure there are enough incentives to ensure full completion in a timely manner, or else there is a real risk of fragmenting occupations into numerous specialized, partly trained individuals.

CONCLUSION

Adoption of the CCDA initiatives could be a net benefit for the system

Unfortunately, even though the research and pilot project received support from the provinces, the division of powers between the federal and provincial governments and the jurisdiction of the provinces over education and training means there is no guarantee that provincial apprenticeship programs will adopt this improved process. Full implementation may be years away, if it happens at all. Canada can't afford to wait.

Fact #7

Smaller and more specialized employers are disinclined to engage in apprenticeship

Small or highly specialized employers are often reluctant to engage in apprenticeship because they don't have sufficient variety of work to train the entire scope of the trade. For these employers, pooling or sharing apprentices offers advantages.

PREMISE

Pooling apprentices lowers risk and assures complete training

Examples from the UK, where major employers facilitate sharing of apprentices across their supply chain to ensure broad skills, point to the efficacy of the approach. Closer to home, the Canadian Steel Trade and Employment Congress was involved in an innovative program where the Congress, and not the companies, was the "employer of record" for apprentices, and facilitated placing them with different employers, and in and out of the participating College (Mohawk College in Hamilton, ON) to ensure they were receiving the training they needed. Employers were thus relieved of the burden of administering the program. Sadly, that pilot is no longer running.

PREMISE

Administrative issues need to be addressed for sharing to work

There are a number of issues that need to be addressed with apprenticeship sharing. Chief among these is determining employer of record for OH&S purposes, payroll taxes, etc.

Using a third party to coordinate the apprentices, conduct administrative duties on behalf of the firms, and act as the employer of record streamlines this process, and is a viable role for sector-based organizations. Especially where industrial clusters exist, the possibility of deep cooperation on a sector-wide basis to ensure a constant supply of highly

skilled workers, collaborative arrangements with training institutions, and other efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness, are laudable.

Use of a third party as employer of record also eliminates the problem of apprentices being laid off due to low seniority – they aren't on the headcount of any particular company until after they achieve journeyperson status. This improves continuity in the apprenticeship and increases completion rates.

Another excellent example of the kind of collaborative approach that is possible is the Apprenticeship 2000 program in North Carolina¹⁶. This collaboration between several employers in the Charlotte North Carolina area and Central Piedmont Community College has resulted in the creation of highly skilled workers who graduate from the apprenticeship with practical skills, a journeyperson's credential AND an associate's degree in manufacturing. The vast majority of the graduates are still with their original on-the-job work placement companies, and many have moved up the ranks to supervisory and management positions. It is a sterling example of what is possible – and what we need to be doing in Canada.

CONCLUSION

We need to take a serious look at the pooling of apprentices

All employers who employ individuals in apprenticeable occupations should be encouraged to participate in developing the next generation of skills for Canada. Industry clusters, supply chains, and regional consortia all need to be considered when streamlining the administrative burden and creating pools of skilled workers for the industry.

Fact #8

National/International Learning Frameworks encourage linkages

Europe has a robust system of stackable modular qualifications known as the European Qualification Framework, or EQF. The EQF covers learning outcomes over 8 levels, from basic (Level 1) to Advanced (Level 8) aimed at recognizing increased capability in a lifelong learning model. It covers all forms of learning: academic, vocational and professional, and provides a mechanism for recognizing knowledge and ability regardless of where or how it is acquired. Learning in apprenticeship fits into the EQF and can be recognized for advanced credit in higher education.

PREMISE

Laddering is difficult in Canada due to a lack of comprehensive learning frameworks

Nothing like this exists in Canada. The three legs of the post-secondary system (apprenticeship, college and university) exist for the most part as islands. The Rae Report was quite clear in recommending these artificial barriers to learning be removed. Doing so would give apprenticeable occupations equal standing as an entry point for lifelong learning.

CONCLUSION

Workforce development requires recognition of learning from all sources

Part of the national skills strategy must address the urgent need to recognize learning wherever it occurs, and to create linkages vertically and laterally throughout the post-secondary system to eliminate dead ends. This will attract more people into apprenticeships, increase skills, and may also lead to the recognition of apprenticeship as an alternative pathway to higher credentials. At its root, apprenticeship is simply a mechanism for acquiring relevant skills and knowledge from a more experienced individual, primarily in an on-the-job setting.

There are many occupations that can be learned in this manner – going to college or university may be one way of acquiring requisite skills, but it isn't the only way. A fully integrated post-secondary qualification framework would open the door to a great deal of innovation and increased learning opportunities for all.

Fact #9

Canada has 13 different (albeit similar) apprenticeship systems

The division of powers in the Constitution placed education as a uniquely provincial responsibility, and as a result we have 13 different apprenticeship systems across the country.

PREMISE

Provincial differences create inefficiencies

The variability between the systems may be one of the biggest issues in apprenticeship. Each province has its own twist on the ‘right’ way to do things, and this has resulted in inefficiencies and needless complexity. Employers who operate in multiple jurisdictions must deal with multiple reporting formats, competency criteria, time requirements for apprentices, school release policies, lack of consensus on compulsory versus voluntary trades, and a host of other differences.

PREMISE

Harmonization shouldn’t be that hard

While it is probably impractical to expect complete harmonization of the 13 different apprenticeship systems, provincial governments need to be pressured to standardize reporting requirements, curricula requirements, time requirements, competency requirements, etc. so they are as similar as they can be. Approaches to apprenticeship needn’t be different just for the sake of being different – it just makes no sense – the skill requirements for a particular occupation in Newfoundland aren’t that different from the requirements of the same occupation in British Columbia. Provinces can’t even agree on consistent names for the occupations (is it an industrial mechanic, or a millwright?). It should be noted that Australia has a similar federal structure to Canada, with education in the purview of the provinces, yet they have found a way to agree on consistent national standards for apprenticable occupations.

CONCLUSION

The interests of the country demand greater harmonization on skills development

Let's stop making this more complex than it needs to be. Harmonization of apprenticeship standards, and the broadening of the Red Seal, as part of a comprehensive pan-Canadian skills development strategy is the right thing for labour mobility, increased opportunity and ultimately increased prosperity for us all.

Recommendations

The skills deficit in Canada can only be addressed through a comprehensive national skills development strategy that encompasses both school-to-work and reskilling/upskilling of existing workers – and apprenticeship needs to play a major role.

“Laddering” between apprenticeship and other aspects of post secondary education will increase the attractiveness of apprenticeships and provide improved career paths for individuals.

Increasing the number of apprenticeships is dependent on employer demand more than apprentice supply. Incentives for engaging apprentices must be tied to outcomes.

Improvements to the structure of apprenticeships will result in better trained apprentices, faster, in a more flexible system that focuses on outcomes.

The Red Seal program and harmonization of provincial systems need to be maximized to reduce complexity and streamline processes and portability.

Overall conclusion

Canada has a skills shortage. Apprenticeship can help fill it, but there are problems to address. The answers are all around us, in examples and best practices here and across the world. We’ve been talking about this for 10 years.

It is time to stop talking. It is time to take action before there’s no time left.

Endnotes

- 1 Accessing and Completing Apprenticeship in Canada. Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, Ottawa, 2004
- 2 Lessons in Learning: Apprenticeship. Canadian Council on Learning, Ottawa, 2006
- 3 Stewart , G. and Kerr, A. A Backgrounder on Apprenticeship Training in Canada. Higher Education Quality Council, Toronto, 2010
- 4 Tavia Grant and Richard Blackwell, The Widening Gap in Canada's Labour Market. Toronto, Globe and Mail, Report on Business, Apr 9 2012. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/jobs/the-widening-gap-in-canadas-labour-market/article2396450/>
- 5 Ibid
- 6 Statistics Canada. Early Retirement Trends. Perspective on Labour and Income, Winter 2001 Vol 13 no. 4, cited in R.A. Malatest and Assoc. The Aging Workforce and Human Resources Development Implications for Sector Councils. Feb 2003
- 7 Tavia Grant. The real youth job crisis: underemployment. Globe and Mail, Report on Business, Oct 30 2012. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/economy-lab/the-real-youth-jobs-crisis-underemployment/article4753447/>
- 8 Hillary Steedman, The State of Apprenticeship in 2010. Report prepared for the Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network (UK), London School of Economics and Political Science, Centre for Economic Performance, p14
- 9 Trades to Degrees: <http://www.nait.ca/89409.htm>
- 10 BBC News, 21 Jun 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-18535397>
- 11 The Guardian, Monday 7 Jan 2013. http://www.guardian.co.uk/2013/jan/07/school-leavers-civil-service-apprentices?goback=%Egde_3576328_member_202468612
- 12 German Mission to the United States, The German Vocational Training System: An Overview. http://www.germany.info/Vertretung/usa/en/06_Foreign_Policy_State/02_Foreign_Policy/05_KeyPoints/Vocational_Training.html
- 13 A. Sharpe and J. Gibson, The Apprenticeship System in Canada. Ottawa, CSLS, 2005 p10
- 14 Canadian Council on Learning, Lessons in Learning: Apprenticeship Training in Canada. Ottawa, CCL, 2006
- 15 CCDA, Strengthening the Red Seal. Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 2010
- 16 More details on the Apprenticeship 2000 program can be found at www.apprenticeship2000.com