Training - a stepping stone towards workplace competency, but not the full journey

By Michael Hartman, CEO
Sometimes when the obvious is staring us in the face, we can’t see the problem
Another example...
Vocational Education and Training

A system based around competency

Learners are on a journey from incompetence to competency
VET students, by training type

2017 NCVER 2018, National VET Provider Collection (accessed via VOCSTATS)

- Short courses: 51%
- Institutional VET qualifications: 35%
- Apprentices and Trainees: 8%
- VET in Schools: 5%
- Australian School-based Apprentices: <1%
What does it mean to be competent?

It means different things to different people.

As competent as you can make someone after one day/week/month/year?

Definition from ASQA’s website

The consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.
I'M STILL "NOT YET COMPETENT"?

BUT I HAVE A VERY SPECIFIC SKILL SET!
How is competency developed?

You need knowledge and practice

• Knowledge development
• High quality practice

How to get quality practice?

The system needs to be redesigned:

• RTOs do what they do best
• Enterprises do what they do best

70% Experiential learning
Informal, on-the-job learning

20% Social learning
Coaching, mentoring, and interactions with others

10% Formal education
VET and higher education
Enterprises do what they do best
- Create $2,000 billion in economic value (Aust GDP predicted 2019)
- Ensure staff carry out their work functions properly

RTOs do what they do best
- Create training/learning programs
- Attract 3 million students and government funding of $6 billion

The gap
- How to work together to manage, capture and recognised the learning/competency being developed in industry enterprises?
There is a journey to competency
It is a continuum that requires time in the world of work, but...
But, it is oversimplified by the current system
There is a journey to competency

We think it can be broken down into the following milestones:

1. Safe and Knowledgeable to Practice
2. Workplace Competent – need access to a workplace
3. Mastery Professional Development
A Journey, but with checkpoints
To support what each player does best
Sometimes when the obvious is staring us in the face, we can’t see the problem.
Competency is an ongoing journey and not a destination

Best recognised by the Checkpoint Approach:

- Learning and practice propels you forward
- Change in context can send you backwards
- Time matters – Use it or lose it
IF USE IT, YOU WILL
NOT
THEN LOSE IT, YOU WILL
Industry and RTOs both have an important role to play in training and assessment, based on working to their strengths.

Definition of Assessment from ASQA’s website

The process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as specified in a training package or a VET accredited course.
Expectation
Framework for industry and training providers to work together supporting people on their competency journey

Reality
Only a few examples of RTOs and industry successfully doing this
RTOs deliver formal training and assessment.
Focus on knowledge and basic skills/safety.

**Best positioned to assess knowhow**

Employers provide real life practice and feedback.
Focus on can do.

**Best positioned to assess competence**

Holders of competency based qualifications

**Qualification is recognised, but context and currency are not**
In Summary, some obvious truths:

• Competency is a journey, not a training outcome

• Requires practice in the world of work and enterprise involvement

• Enrolment in a learning program is a stepping stone to competency

• The system seems oblivious to the competency journey

• RTOs try to do it all, but can they really?

• Competency and workplaces go hand in hand, but this is not recognised
In Summary, some obvious truths:

• The VET sector scope needs to be redefined:
  1. Training and learning completely managed by an RTO (without claiming workplace competency), or
  2. Training and learning supported by an RTO, with recognised practice in a enterprise (to develop true competency)

• At the moment VET sector reflects 1, but expectations are for 2
• Enterprises need to be part of the delivery and assessment system
• We need a ‘Competency Checkpoint’ approach
How?

• Enterprises and industry involved at the start and at competency checkpoints, to be seen as part of the delivery system
• Enterprises incentivised to participate
• Workplace trainers seen as masters of their practice
• Competency defined as a work life journey, not a destination
• Allowing RTOs do what they do best
• Allowing enterprises and industry to do what they do best