

# Mentoring as networking

## - Win – Win?

LeadVET PR3

16.10.2024



Haaga-Helia

# Optimizing knowledge transfer with networking.

## Mentoring as a tool to enhance networking.

- **Goal: A co-operation structure between teacher education and Vocational institutions to smooth the transition from working life and teacher education to Vocational institutions and to bring teachers to fields where there is a shortage of them.**
- Mentoring is networking. Networking can be put into a theoretical framework through the interactivity of leadership, participation, asking and listening, and team play. Network requires interaction skills, active dialogue both within the educational institution and with stakeholders. (Seppälä, M. & Tapani, A. 2018.)
- A functioning network is based on trust and commitment, and its operation can be facilitated or hindered by, for example, communication, a common object of interest, attitudes and the similarity or lack of them among members. (Miettinen et al. 2006, 8; 370.) Järvensivu et al. 2010, 7; Kallio et al. 2016)
- Individual level: Mentoring is often considered to help the mentee develop a sense of professional self, provide problem-solving and a sounding board, giving respect, support, role modeling. (etc. Kram (1985a).

# Reasons for systematic networking

- To lower the theory - practice gap
- The goal of the current education policy is not only that education follows changes in society and working life. We are also change makers. Thus, we can be active in development.
- Education is networking, belonging to expert groups and internal team activities, implementing a personal curriculum and self-direction. (Bergman, Petri; Kolunen, Katri; Pylvänäinen, Seppo). Thus, we are active in building the future.

# Basis for networking

- Networks enable the sharing of information, experiences, support and expertise.
- What kind of information is available through the network depends on the level of the officiality of the network. Official, set and semi-official networks are, as their name suggests, more formal than informal networks.
- Through informal networks, it may be possible to get information that you would not get at all or at least would be difficult to get through more official networks. In this way, being part of several different networks is more of an advantage than a disadvantage. (Koivu 2006, 67.)
- An essential question to ask is, that what kind of information we value?

# Some results

- **Which partners are helpful in meeting the challenges in the HR-process for VET leaders?**
- *Regional networks between middle leaders. (Kasvatus ja koulutusalan johtaminen, 155)*
- **Which partners are helpful in meeting the challenge of recruiting VET leaders?**
- *Other educational institutes and social networks. (Kasvatus- ja koulutusalan johtaminen)*
- **Which partners are helpful in meeting the challenge of orientation of VET leaders?**
- *Colleagues from other institutions, official and unofficial networks of leaders. Mentoring systems organized by own organization. (Meriläinen & Rökköläinen) (Kasvatus- ja koulutusalan johtaminen)*
- **Which partners are helpful in meeting the challenge of in-service-training for VET leaders?**
- *Teachers' and VET leaders' official and unofficial working life networks. In larger organizations (Cities or national level institutions) the cooperation is also coordinated by non-educational leaders. In that case representatives in boards etc. are needed. (Meriläinen & Rökköläinen)*
- **Which partners are helpful in meeting the challenge of retention for VET leaders?**
- *Mentoring systems, colleagues, working life connections (regular working life periods) (Kasvatus- ja koulutusalan johtaminen, 2021)*

# Which networks are most useful for VET leaders?

- Colleagues from other institutions, official and unofficial networks of leaders.
- Mentoring systems organized by own organization. Teachers' and VET leaders' official and unofficial working life networks.
- In larger organizations (Cities or national level institutions) the co-operation is also coordinated by non-educational leaders. In that case representatives in boards etc. are needed.

# Optimizing knowledge transfer with mentoring.

- What separates strategic networking from other co-operation is a commitment to common goals. A network relationship requires the sharing of essential knowledge and know-how, from which all parties benefit. (Valkokari, K., Hyötyläinen, R., Kulmala, H. I., Malinen, P., Möller K., Vesalainen, J. 2008.)
- Through informal networks, it may be possible to get information that you would not get at all or at least would be difficult to get through more official networks.
- Being part of several different networks is an advantage. (Koivu 2006, 67.)
- Mentoring could be described as informal semi-official networking. It may contain formalities, but it is essentially informal.

# Mentoring can fill the gaps unfilled by formal networks

1. In our approach, mentoring is understood very loosely. It is not so much a matter of a personal mentor-mentee relationship, but of acting as a contact person between vocational training and vocational teacher training.
2. This does not prevent personal mentoring or official representation in co-operation bodies.
3. According to our research, these emphases depend on national structures and resources as well as personal interests. However, in most cases structures and resources do not prevent these semi structured informal solutions.
4. The openness and freedom to influence the structure and content of the mentoring structure is an essential part of the benefits of an informal network. This makes mentoring in our case as semi-official informal network.

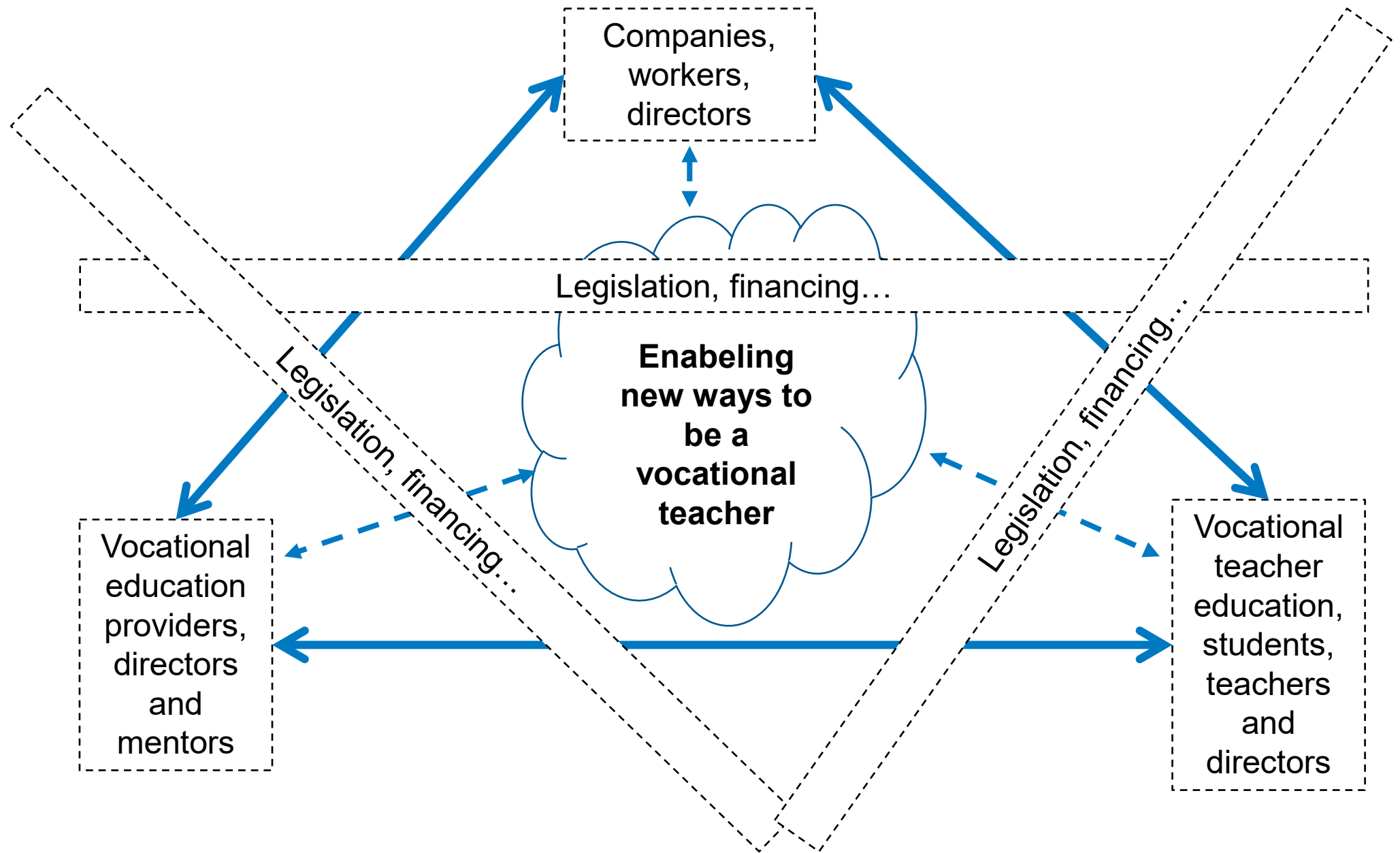


# Which networks are most useful for VET leaders?

- Colleagues from other institutions, official and unofficial networks of leaders.
- Mentoring systems organized by own organization. Teachers' and VET leaders' official and unofficial working life networks.
- In larger organizations (Cities or national level institutions) the co-operation is also coordinated by non-educational leaders. In that case representatives in boards etc. are needed.

# Win – Win in a nutshell

- **Those studying to become teachers find ways to get to know educational institutions and find employment.**
- **We get teachers for fields where there is a shortage of them.**
- **Educational institutions and teachers get to influence the content of teacher education.**
- **Educational institutions get a new recruitment channel.**
- **Mentor teachers get information about the development of pedagogy at the university and get to participate in it.**
- **Mentor teachers gain experience and insights into the development of teaching, counselling and the educational institution's operations.'**



# National variations and state of the art

1. Is a contact person between VTE and VET units and enhances the recruitment of new VET teachers together with VTE and VET administration. **The practices vary from semi –official meetings to formal structures coordinated nationally. Considered possible.**
2. Coordinates teacher students' trainings in mentor's unit. **In use with minor differences**
3. Is involved in developing curriculum of teacher education. **Variation from systematic to occasional participation.**
4. Visits regularly in VTE sessions with planned role ("expert by experience"). **Variation. Might require extra resources**

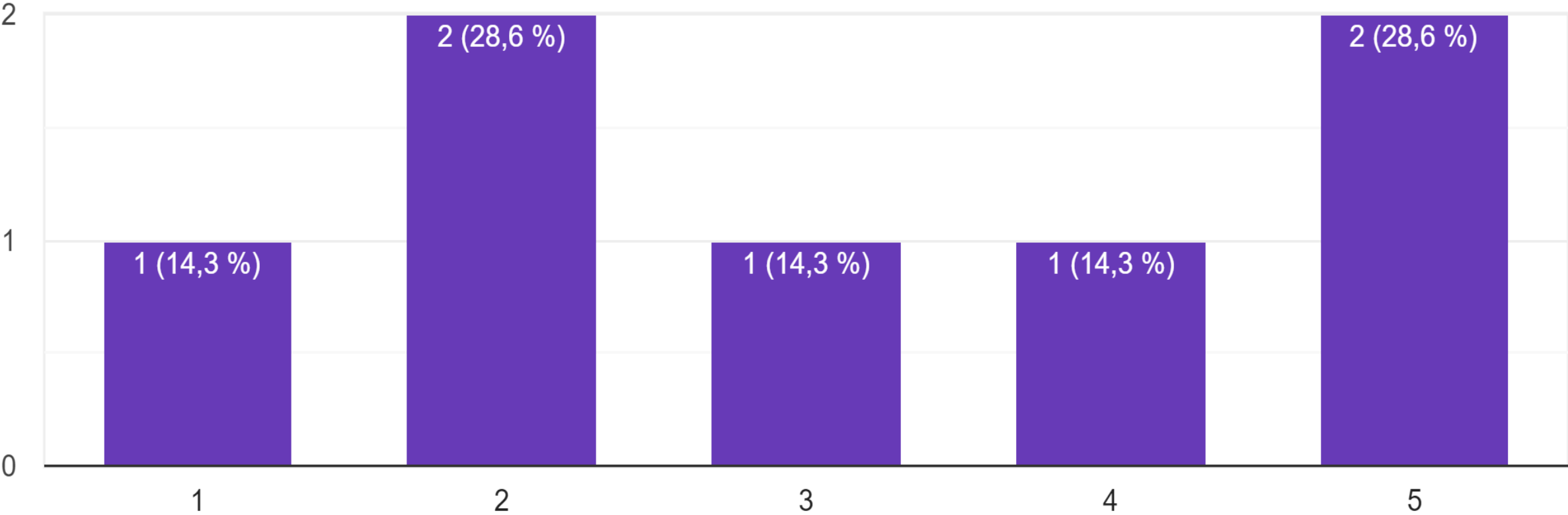
# National variations

**More important than mentorin itself is to recognize the tasks and benefits. There are other solutions**

- 5. Organizes study visits to VTE students regarding topics of VTE curriculum. **Not in systematic use but possible. Might require extra resources**
- 6. Has a special role in bringing insights on wellbeing at work (teacher's perspective). **Considered as natural part of mentor's role. Depending on resources not mandatory.**
- 7. Has a special role in ensuring that all the elements of everyday work in VET are considered in VTE and especially in training sessions in VET institutions. **Is taken seriously but mentor teachers' potential not utilized.**
- 8. Is a valued member of organized mentoring structure coordinated by VTE institution. **Still semi structured activity**

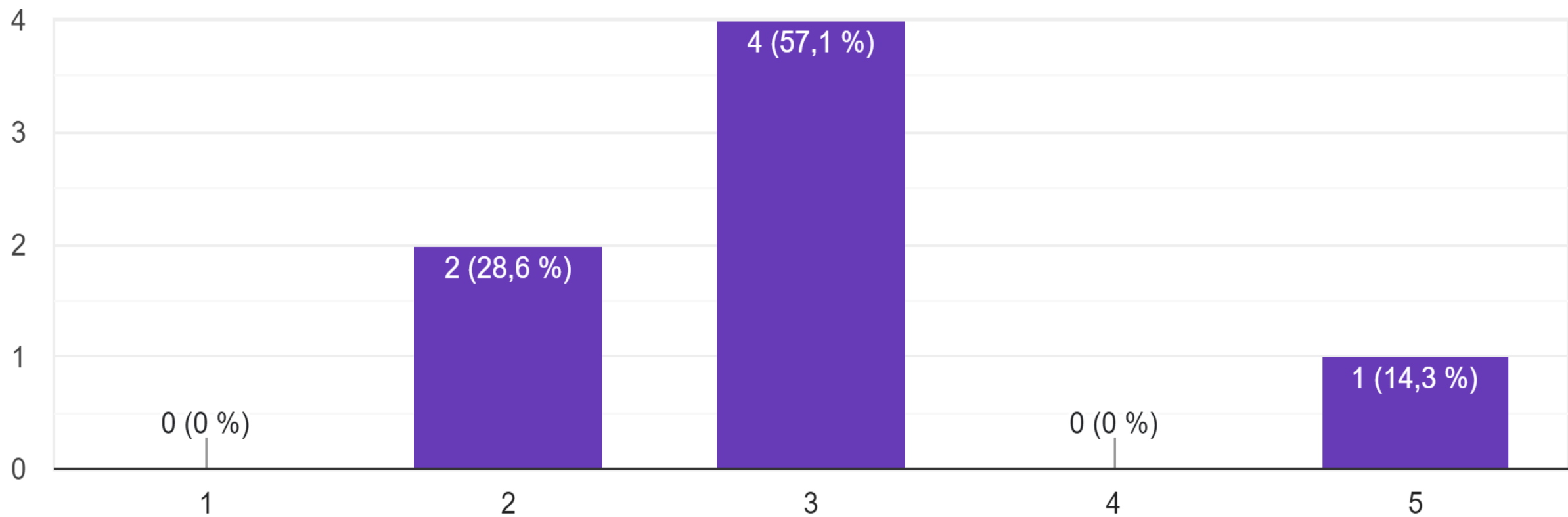
Vocational teachers have peer networks outside your institute for developing their work.

7 vastausta



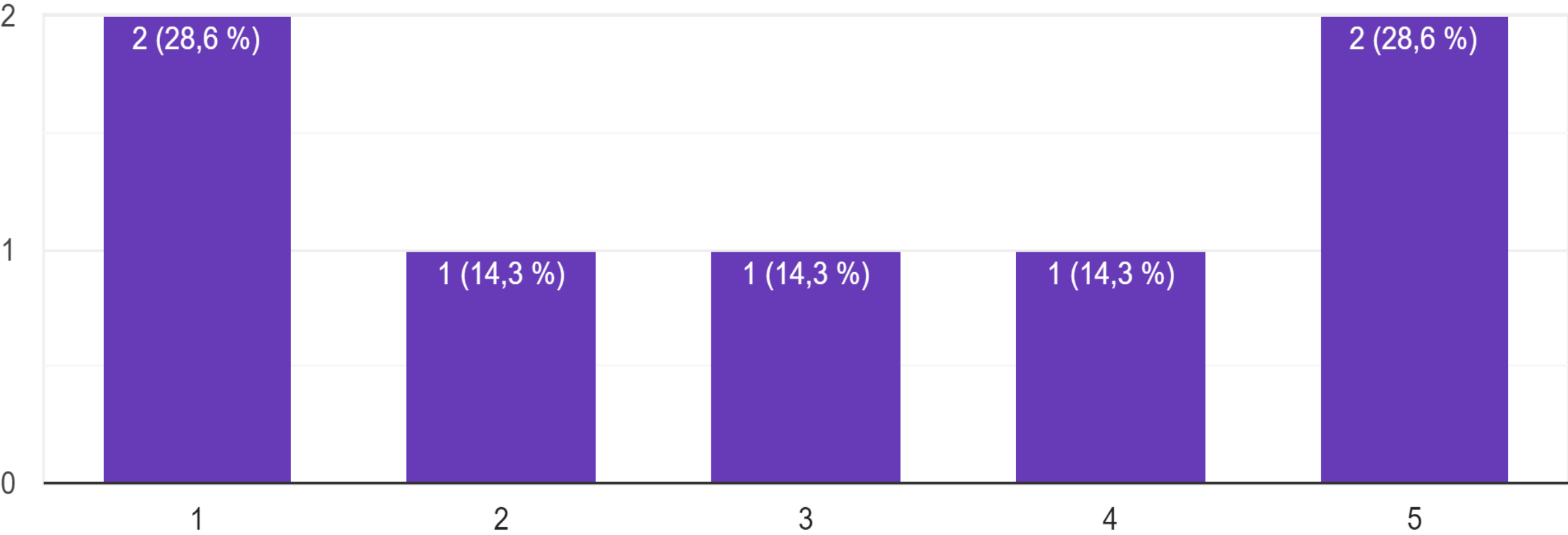
## Vocational teachers are systematically taking part to in-service trainings.

7 vastausta



# Vocational teachers coordinate teacher students' training sessions in educational institutions.

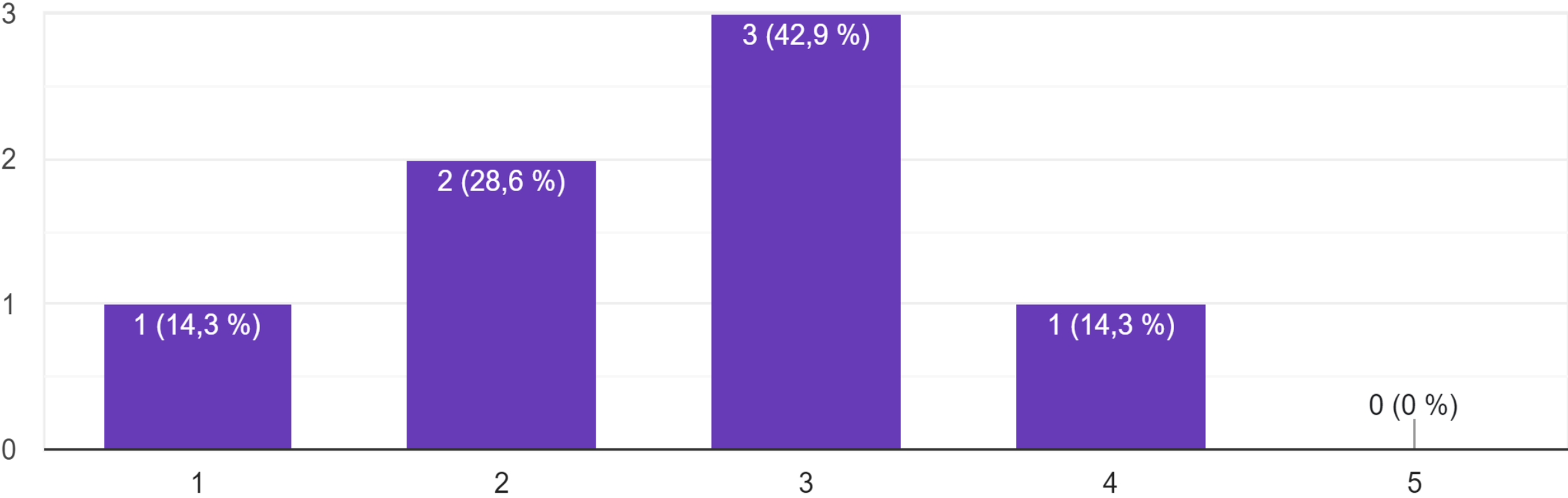
7 vastausta





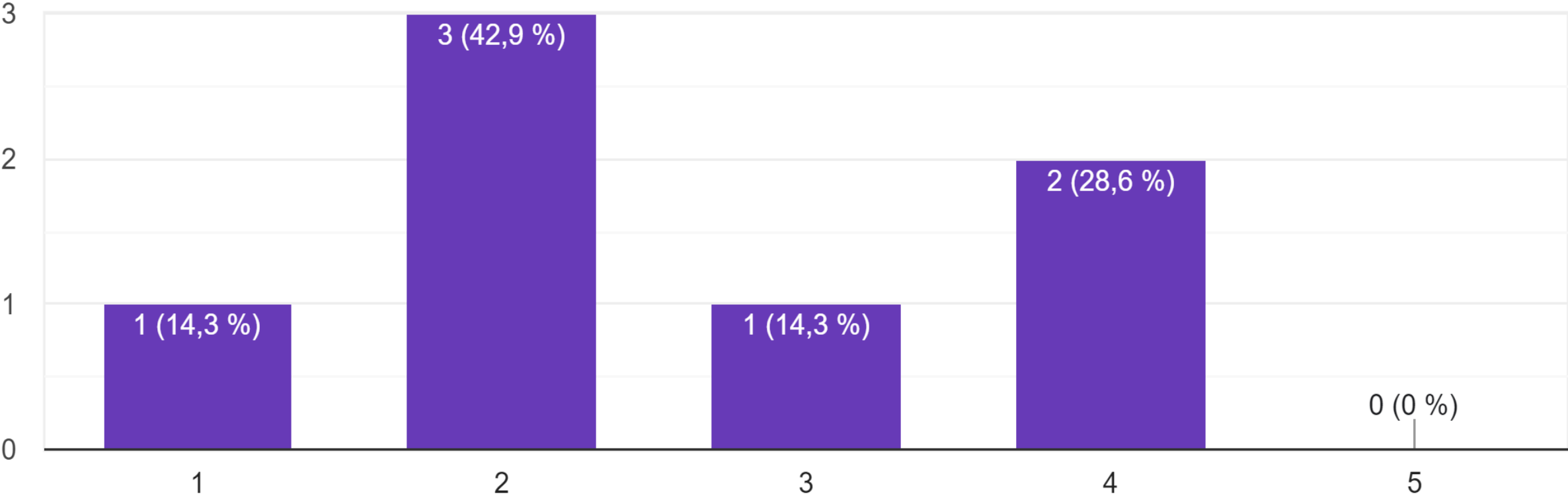
There are joint trainings/events for representatives of vocational teachers, vocational teacher training and working life.

7 vastausta



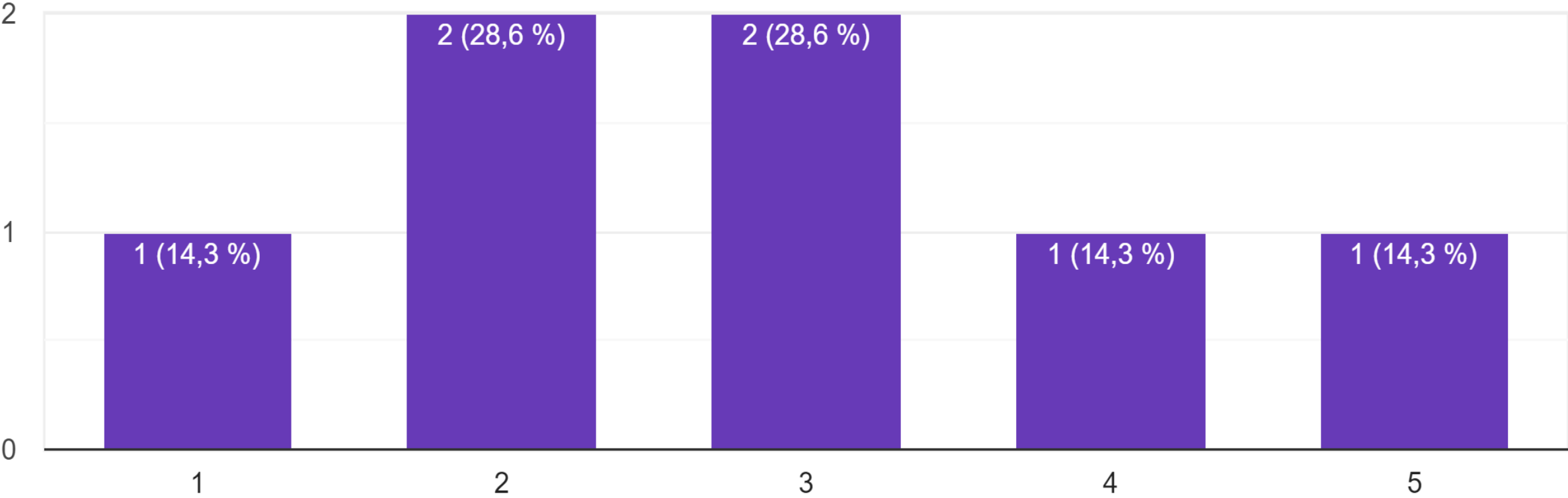
There are organized opportunities for informal interaction between vocational education teachers, vocational teacher training teachers and representatives of working life.

7 vastausta



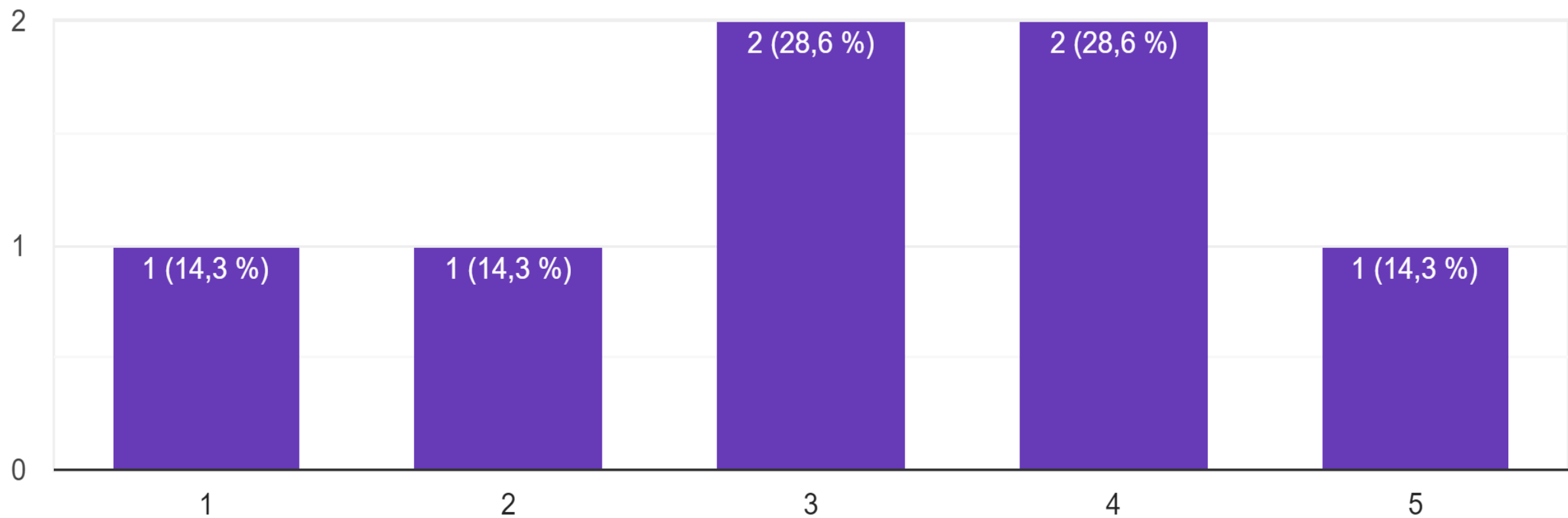
Vocational institutes have a possibility to take part in the development of teacher education curriculum.

7 vastausta



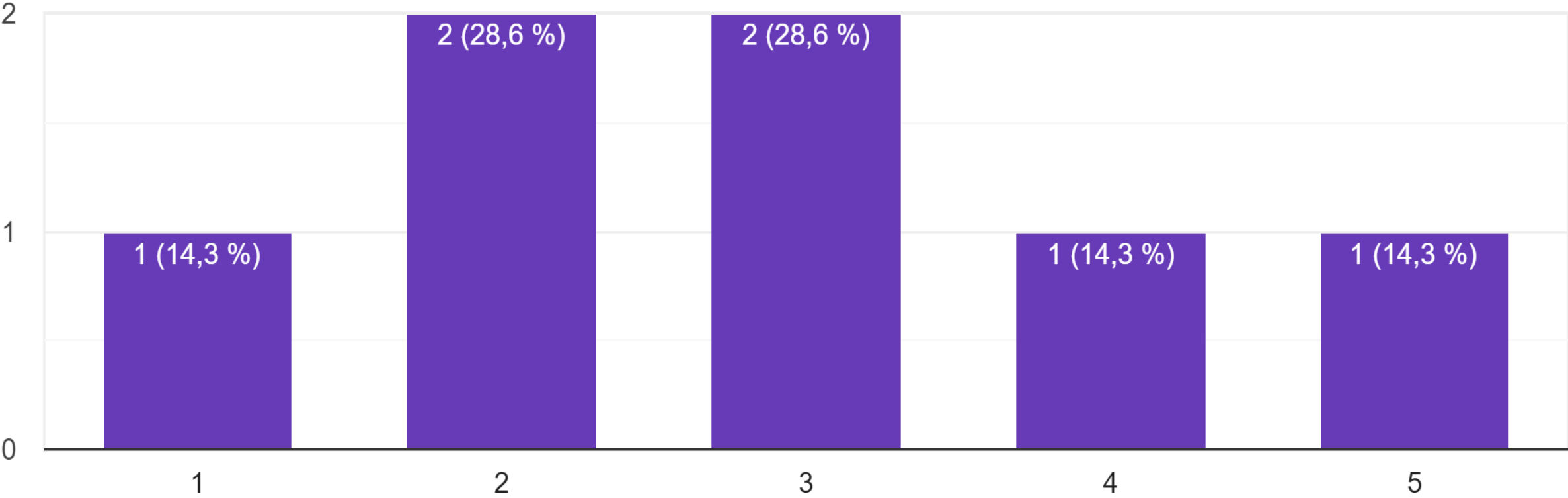
## In-service trainings for vocational teachers are fulfilling the present needs.

7 vastausta



Vocational teachers are represented in groups or networks aimed at developing vocational education and vocational teachers' work.

7 vastausta



There is regular leadership co-operation between vocational institutes and and vocational teacher training.

7 vastausta

