



Education Employment Linkages Literature Review

**Jane Higgins, Karen Vaughan
Hazel Phillips and Paul Dalziel**



Details

This PowerPoint presentation was prepared for a research seminar on the Education Employment Linkages programme, hosted by He Pārekereke at the Wharenuī Marae, Victoria University of Wellington (Karori campus) on 8 July 2008. The seminar was for members of the programme's External Reference Group of policy advisors.



The EEL Research Question

- *How can **formal support systems** best help young New Zealanders make good education-employment linkages to benefit themselves, their communities, and the national economy:*
 - In school communities?
 - In regional communities?
 - In Māori and Pasifika communities?
 - In employer-led channels?



Interdisciplinary Conversations

- Each undertook literature search in own discipline.
- Conversations identified 4 key themes.
- Explored themes for language: disciplinary understandings of key concepts (e.g. identity).
- Now writing up an integrated review.



Aim of Literature Review

- To lay the foundations for the project
- To identify key themes in the literature that have emerged in our interdisciplinary conversations
- To consider material that is potentially important, puzzling, and/or contradictory across the disciplines.
- To create a knowledge basket that will be a key resource for the project over the next four years.

1. Identity

- Not just ‘what do I want to do?’ but also ‘who do I want to be?’
- Identity as *relational, multiple, contested, dynamic and developmental*.
- Young people may be ‘strung out between competing definitions of their “identity” emanating from home, from school and from wider society, where in each context particular different expectations, norms and rules may be at stake’ (Valentine 2000).

Post-School Environment

- Post-industrialism, late capitalism
- Labour markets: rapid change/innovation, fragmentation
- Non-linear life course transitions
- Dynamic environment

Making Choices

- Rational choice (independent agency)
- Structural constraint ('vicious/virtuous circles')
- Hybrid models (e.g. 'pragmatic rationality')

Hybrid models emphasise decisions as:

- On-going in the life course
- Concerned with lifestyle choice
- Relational
- Temporal and spatial



2. Discovery & Development of Abilities

- Education – individual discovers abilities/ aptitudes/ interests (cf. a ‘success vs failure’ approach)
- Requires *quality* pedagogy
- Discovery has positive outcomes for good matching and stable career pathways
- Good matching has positive outcomes in terms of labour market returns to education



Conditions for Discovery

- Young people developing identities as *life-long learners*.
- Less about *what* young people have learned than about their learning *capacities*.
- How do young people construct a sense of self as a learner that changes over time and informs their view of work/career?
- This is critical to the construction of goals/aspirations regarding education-employment linkages.



Implications

1. Failure in education need not be a bad outcome.
2. Persistence in failure is not likely to be a good outcome.
3. Obtaining a qualification without genuine ability may not be a good outcome.
4. Matching qualifications to the right job is the best outcome.

Goals and Aspirations

Developing career pathway goals is useful for good matching and a stable career path...

... perhaps because this encourages:

- learning about career pathways
- assessing challenges
- problem-solving in relation to challenges e.g. by identifying/marshalling available resources
- identity work

3. Opportunities & Structures

- Emotional support important (e.g. parents, school, community)
- Family may have a conservative influence
- Financial support important (if moving into post-school education)
- ‘Neighbourhood effects’ in evidence
- The ‘paradox of networks’

Assessing Risk: Example

- Lanier: programmes separated 'at risk'/'dysfunctional' youth and were directed towards behaviour modification in keeping with the norms/values of programme workers.
- Palm Heights: inclusive programmes (by age group) incorporating youth and adult volunteers from diverse neighbourhoods, leading to enhanced networks for participants.
- Palm Heights addressed *safety* and *identity* issues through inclusion and 'bridges to other social networks' with positive outcomes.



4. Linking Education & Employment

1. Are qualifications credible, transparent and flexible?
2. How well integrated are vocational & academic education?

NCEA was designed to address both issues.

- NCEA is 'produced' by students, teachers & schools
- Students do have a sense of pathways with NCEA
- Students' strategies tend to be about assessment not learning
- Importance of good understanding of qualifications by all
- The academic-vocational split continues to be an issue

Links to Policy

What policy issues arise from this discussion?

- In education? (e.g. Schools Plus?)
- In careers and transition services to youth?
- In the Realising Māori Potential Approach?
- In youth work?
- In employment policy?

Two References

Valentine, G. 2000. 'Exploring children and young people's narratives of identity.' *Geoforum*, no. 31: 257-267.

Wright, S. 2005 'Young people's decision-making in 14-19 education and training: a review of the literature.' The Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training, Department of Educational Studies, University of Oxford. Document available at: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk.