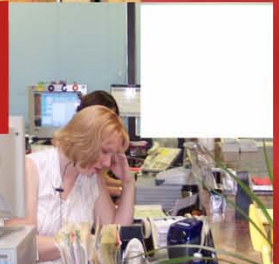


School to work transition:

A study of school-to-work partnerships

Professor Robyn Jorgensen

2012



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Commerce Queensland



Gold Coast City Council



The Riviera Group



SCISCO Career Pathways



Sea World Resort

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
Outcomes.....	5
Recommendations	6
1. Background: Why study transitions between school and work?	8
2. The Consortium	9
3. Background Literature – Setting the Scene.....	10
Changes to Traditional School Pathways	10
School-based New Apprenticeships	11
Interim Summary	13
4. Framing the Project: “Building Capital” through Pathways	14
Individual Capital	14
Social Capital	15
5. Method	18
Phase One: Surveying the Field	18
Phase Two: Case Studies of 10 Sites in SE Queensland	20
Case Study of Rural Victoria and NSW	20
Case Study of Regional Queensland.....	21
Phase Three: Economic Analysis	21
Confidentiality	21
6. Phase One: Surveying the Field	22
Benefits for Students	22
Benefits for Schools and Industry	25
Issues for Stakeholders	27
Support for STW transition programs in schools.....	30
Status of Workplace Learning.....	31
7a. Phase Two: Case Studies.....	32
Absolutely Soft	32
Boss Homes.....	35
Gold Coast City Council	37
Hyatt Regency Sanctuary Cove.....	40
SCISCO Career Pathways	42
Sea World Resort	44
Stoddart Metal Fabricators	47
The Riviera Group	50
Trevor West Hair Works	53
Zupps	55
7b. Case Study of Rural Victoria and New South Wales	58
Programs Offered in Rural Regions.....	58

Programme Set-Up and Monitoring Processes.....	59
Benefits of School-to-work Transition Programs	59
Issues Associated with Transition Programs	61
Recommendations	64
 7c. Regional Case Study Red Rock Region in Central Queensland.....	 66
The Impetus for Partnerships	66
Skills Centres	69
Partnerships within the Red Rock Region.....	70
Learning Opportunities	74
Reshaping School Curriculum to Fit Industry.....	75
Conclusions.....	75
 8. Phase Three: Economic Analysis	 77
Conclusion	79
 9. Pathways as Capital Building Enterprises	 81
Forms of Capital Building.....	81
Cultural Capital – Building dispositions	81
Intellectual Capital	82
Institutional Capital: Gaining Relevant Accreditation.....	84
Economic Capital	86
Social Capital	88
 Conclusion.....	 90
 References	 91



Executive Summary


Australia is faced with two key issues that impact on the social and economic well being of the nation and those people who make up the country. First there is a national skill shortage where employers are having considerable difficulty finding the qualified and technically competent staff they need. Young people are increasingly expected to remain in formal schooling for longer periods due to the decline in the unskilled and semi-skilled labour markets. As such, two competing goals are faced by the nation – providing quality learning in schools for students who do not see themselves bound for university; and meeting the needs of a industry boom where skill shortages are highly problematic. To this end, pathways from school to work that provide opportunities for young people to have quality learning and to gain employment in industries where skills are needed seems to be a positive challenge for education and work.

This study documented a range of transition programs across the eastern states of Australia. Predominantly based in the South-east region of Queensland which has been leading the way nationally in terms of school-based initiatives, the study documented the ways in which practices were enacted at the school and industry level. Using a range of methods, the study undertook an intense examination of the SE Qld region, and supplemented this with a rural case study in Victoria/NSW to compare urban and rural regions, and a small regional case study in Central Queensland to compare regional differences between highly industrial based regions and those with non-traditional industry bases. Collectively the study indicates that there are considerable benefits to all stakeholders who participate in partnerships that support young Australians in the transition from school to work.

Outcomes

The outcomes of this project can be summarised in the following points.

- Successful pathways rely on strong social capital in communities: Successful pathways among schools, industry and the community were dependent on the networks between these stakeholders. Where these were strong, greater options were available to all stakeholders. There was greater trust and rapport between the partners when partnerships were authentic and strong.
- Transition programs, particularly SBAs, enhance the work skills and dispositions of young Australians – making them ‘work ready’: The transition programs added significant capital to young people which enabled them to assume positions in the workplace more readily and with better outcomes for employers. They provided opportunities that could not be provided in formal schooling.
- There are considerable benefits for all stakeholders – students, schools, employers and communities: Aside from creating a more work-ready workforce, there were considerable benefits to all parties involved in placing young people in quality programs that support the transition from school to work. Benefits were social, economic, intellectual and affective.
- Recruiting and training future employees to meet the needs of the company or industry: The programs enabled employers and potential employees to trial an industry or company to ascertain if it was their preference. For employers, this was a very useful process in identifying future employees.
- Flexibility within systems and sites (schools and workplaces) critical to the success of transition programs: Successful programs required considerable




flexibility in both education and workplaces so as to allow all parties to fulfil their primary roles but also support the young person in transition.

- Local conditions impact on the form and success of pathways: Depending on demands in local sites, different opportunities are available for all stakeholders. Programs are both responsive and reactive to local demands. These include:
 - Industry base creates needs for particular skills, some of which are different to national priorities;
 - Drought in rural Australia impacts on communities in unique and significant ways that are different from urban areas;
- Considerable work for schools and industry: While there is considerable work for employers and schools in developing and maintaining links, the benefits outweigh these costs.
- Perceived low status of workplace learning in schools: In almost all sites in all states, there was a common theme reported by school personnel regarding the perceived low status of workplace learning in schools.
- Provide options for addressing skill shortage, nationally but also locally: The programs offered novel and innovative ways to address national skills shortages, some with greater or lesser potential.
- Economic benefits are long term and should be built into the long term planning of companies: When considering the economic costs and benefits, companies need to consider the longer term benefits of undertaking school based apprenticeships and traineeships. They should be an integral part of the strategic plans for sustainability within a company rather than a 'quick money grab'.
- Rural Australia may be particularly disadvantaged in offering options for transitioning young people from school to work: There are often limited options available in some towns for employment. Students may have to travel to larger centres or cities to gain the skills needed for different occupations making access to SBAA's difficult. Drought can compound the difficulties for both employers and schools/students to undertake SBAA's and other work placements due to limitations of work availability and access to financial resources. This has serious implications for the social and economic well being of many rural communities.


Recommendations

- Partnerships are a critical part of the successful transition programs. Provision of resources – human, temporal and economic – is critical to the development and on-going sustainability of partnerships.
- Mentors in the workplace: Programs need to be developed that enable and support mentoring in the workplace. As one supervisor indicated, there is generation in work who was not mentored and now has to mentor young workers. Programs to help develop mentoring skills would be useful.
- High expectations of students who undertake workplace learning. Fostering quality programs and outcomes requires schools to select quality students. Transition programs should not be seen as an alternative for 'problem students'. Industry is increasingly demanding and young people should be considering life after an apprenticeship. Many employers are seeking students with high levels of academic capital so as to build on this. This enables them to be able to deal with the demands of highly technologised industries.

- 
- Flexibility in organisation – for schools and industries: Both schools and industry need to have flexibility within and between their organisations to facilitate transition programs.
 - Increased funding for rural students: Special support needs to be made available to enable students to undertake work placements in areas outside their local communities. Many schools are not able to offer the range of experiences available in the urban areas. Costs for transport and living-away-from-home expenses for families are high.
 - Promotion of Workplace Learning in schools: There is a need to raise the status of workplace learning in schools and to give adequate recognition to staff working in these areas.



1. Background: Why study transitions between school and work?



At the time this study was commenced (2003) Queensland had approximately 50% of the nation's school-based apprenticeships and traineeships (SBAs). This over-representation of the state in this field begs the question of why such transitions are so popular. When this figure is considered in concert with the national skill shortage, the figure becomes even more important, particularly considering the ratio of the population to the SBAs in this state to the others. Interestingly, most of the SBAs are undertaken in the South-East corridor of the state. This research project sought to understand the uptake of the SBAs in the state and the potential areas of weakness. With apprenticeship numbers increasing – for example, there was a 21% increase in commencement of apprenticeships between March 2004 and March 2005 (NCVER, 2005) – the transition from school to work is becoming a pathway for more school leavers. Indeed, the reduction of students seeking to take University places is seen as a consequence of the uptake of skilled trades and workplace arrangements. With approximately 50% of apprentices and trainees completing their original training (NCVER, 2005b Apprentice and trainee completion rates), there is a need to understand the processes, benefits and issues associated with the induction, training and education of young people.

To better understand this phenomenon, the project consisted of a major study undertaken in the Gold Coast region. This was supplemented with further work undertaken in rural Australia (NSW and Victoria) and a major region in Central Queensland. These other sites allowed for comparisons to be undertaken, but more importantly provided insights into the issues confronted by regional and rural Australia in the provision of pathways from school to work.

The Gold Coast represented a unique site for a study of this nature as it does not have the traditional industrial infrastructure of most other major cities in the country. It has new industries which have new demands and orientations. There are many excellent examples of partnerships between industries and schools in this region, with many of the industries winning national awards for their training programs and successes with their apprentices. Rural Australia presented with unique opportunities and constraints due to the range of occupations available in these locations and the geographical and social differences to urban Australia. A small industrial region in Central Queensland provided insights into the differences within a large state such as Queensland where there is considerable diversity. This site was a unique case study of the strong social capital within a region that facilitates particular opportunities for stakeholders in provision of pathways from school to work.



2. The Consortium



In order to develop a comprehensive research program that would best document the transitions, a consortium of stakeholders was formed. The team was lead by Professor Robyn Zevenbergen who has been based predominantly at Griffith University for the duration of the project but for a short while was located at Charles Sturt University. The Industry partners worked collaboratively on the project, each sharing their wisdom, knowledge and interests in the area under investigation, guiding the project in ways that individually could not be achieved. The diversity of the group ensured that the project was successfully implemented. The industry partners were:

- **Gold Coast City Council** – the local government which controls the strategic growth of the region;
- **Queensland Apprenticeship Services** – the peak body in the state of Queensland associated with apprenticeships and training;
- **The Riviera Group** – a large marine industry on the Gold Coast, currently employing over 200 apprentices in a range of industries and recipient of numerous training and apprenticeship awards;
- **Sea World Resort** – a large hospitality industry on the Gold Coast. Similar to Riviera, this company also has won many prizes for training and for its SBAAAs; and
- **SCISCO Career Pathways** – a local non-profit organisation that liaises with schools and industries in the region for the transition of young people into work. This company has also won many national awards for its diverse programs.

Any research project rests significantly on the capacity of the team to guide the project and to provide critical information to ensure the best research. This was a powerful consortium in terms of collective knowledge of pathways, workplaces, training and accreditation. The consortium had strong knowledge of the Gold Coast region and was able to provide the input needed to enable access to information and sites. A highly capable and experienced research assistant undertook the data collection. The consortium has strongly valued the contribution made by the research assistant.



3. Background Literature: Setting the Scene




The successful transition from school to employment is becoming increasingly challenging worldwide, with research showing that students who leave school early far more likely to be long-term unemployed (James & St Leger, 2003; A. Taylor, 2002). These early school leavers are far less likely to find employment with career potential and long-term prospects (Crowson, Wong, & Aypay, 2000) and young people more than any other group, are exposed to falling earnings; casual, part-time or temporary work; and low-skilled job offers (te Riele & Crump, 2002). Crowson and others (2000) reported that employment and underemployment is prominent among people just out of secondary school, and problems of unemployment increase exponentially for those who fail to complete secondary school. With this research, it becomes increasingly important to ensure the nation's youth are provided with appropriate educational experiences that will engage them and prepare them for their lives beyond school.

With the increased importance placed on post-compulsory education and training, more students are remaining in school (NCVER, 2002). More recently, reforms in Queensland have come in to effect which dictate that students must be either 'earning or learning' (Education Queensland, 2005). The Youth Participation in Education and Training Act 2003 has been passed and will come into action in 2006, and dictates that unless in full-time employment, students must remain in education, either senior schooling or vocational until they are 17 years of age. This is, in part, due to the research suggesting that those who do not are far more likely to become long-term unemployed in the future. Bessant (2002) argued that education institutions are now expected to compensate for the collapse in the labour markets by developing programs aimed at keeping students in school for longer periods of time, particularly those who are at risk of early leaving. These expectations result in a requirement for schools to cater for a wide range of students, some of whom may not necessarily engage with academic learning.

Changes to Traditional School Pathways

Historically, the senior years of school catered for those students who were intending on taking up tertiary study but as this is no longer the case. There is a need for curricula that cater to the needs of a more diverse school population. Simultaneously, school education needs to become more responsive to changes in job markets. Changes in society and work have given rise to the need for schools to develop initiatives that aim not only to keep non-university-bound students in school for longer periods, but to ensure this schooling is meaningful to them. Smith and Wilson (2004) argued that career and training programs are essential for young people not proceeding directly on to university. Through the construction of relationships with local employers, schools would be able to provide their students with better opportunities for employment (Larson, Wilson, & Mortimer, 2002). The national retention rate in schools is around 74% (Taylor, 2002)

Schooling is an important means for securing adult employment as well as developing the increasingly important skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT (Larson et al 2002). However, a new approach is needed to combine the vocational and general areas of schooling, which would include work-related subjects; the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes for social participation; a curriculum structure based on the students' needs; and a stronger relationship between the classroom and the workforce (Te Riele and Crump, 2002).



Australia has typically lacked a strong history of vocational education options in secondary schools, with only one quarter of Australian students participating in vocational education programmes, compared with an average of half in other OECD countries (Velde & Cooper, 2000). The current climate of secondary education does not encourage vocational options (Shanahan, Mortimer, & Kruger, 2002) with the standard curriculum primarily aimed at preparing students for tertiary entrance. Several studies (Rikowski, 2001; Smith, 2004) have reported on employers' perceptions of deficits students have when entering the workforce. Employers reported that students tended to be lacking work ethic, reliability, initiative and commitment; have unrealistic career expectations (Smith, 2004); and had poor social skills (Rikowski, 2001). While employers reported they employed young people due to their low cost; vibrant personalities; the ability to mould them; and a sense of social obligation; they required young people "to possess some level of employability skills" before employing them (Smith, 2004; p.51), suggesting that schools need to prepare students in this manner prior to entry to the workforce.


Vocational training programmes may play a critical role in linking school with employment (Shanahan, T, & Kruger, 2002) as well as providing a successful method for school-to-work transitions (Gibbons-Wood & Lange, 2000). Taylor (2002) reported that a critical factor in student's decisions to leave school prior to completion was their experience of schooling itself; therefore schools need to keep students interested and engaged in their schooling. Vocational programmes offer the potential of re-engaging students with education; providing workplace knowledge; as well as educating students about the personal skills necessary for success in the workplace. Furthermore, Te Riele and Crump (2002) stated that VET in schools can be vital in re-engaging students with education through linking with their interests, thereby offering a potential avenue out of the spiral of disadvantage many find themselves in. With the labour market becoming increasingly knowledge-based, this re-engaging of students in education is more important than ever.

Changes to pathways in schools have increasingly gained in need as more students are compelled to remain in schools for longer periods of time and in a market place that is restricting in terms of employment opportunities. This situation is made more apparent within the reforms requiring all young people to be either "earning or learning". As such, schools need to develop programs that will appeal to young people, provide opportunities that will enhance employability, and will be sustainable.

School-based New Apprenticeships

In 1997, School-based New Apprenticeships¹ (SBNAs) were introduced in schools in Australia (Smith & Wilson, 2002). In these programs, students are employed part-time and undertake a contract of training with a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) whilst remaining in full-time schooling. In some cases, students reduce their secondary school studies to part-time. SBNAs include both apprenticeships and traineeships, where apprenticeships tend to be in trade areas such as construction and hairdressing, while traineeships tend to be in industries such as hospitality, retail, business administration and health care. According to Smith and Wilson (2002), the main industries involved in SBNAs are sales and

¹ In 2007 the Federal Government changed the name to School Based Australian Apprenticeships. Since the literature reviewed refers to the SBNA nomenclature, we have kept this naming procedure for this section of the report.



personal services; tourism and hospitality; IT; business and automotive, with over half of SBNAs undertaken in the hospitality, retail and fast food industries. Furthermore, 90% of secondary schools offering senior schooling also offer Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs (Smith & Wilson, 2002). Many schools also offer students work experience placements and other work education programs. These strategies enable students to remain in school for longer periods while engaging in activities that have a strong, practical, work-oriented focus. Programs such as SBNAs allow students to be incorporated into the workplace whilst being protected from full adult responsibility and exploitation (Shanahan et al, 2002). They also offer students greater flexibility and support as well as opportunities in a variety of industries.

School-based apprenticeships were designed to reduce “youth unemployment, by encouraging young people to complete year 12 and make successful transitions to further training, new apprenticeships or work” (Department of Education, 2001, p.4). When considering the benefits of such programs, where formal qualifications are gained through school traineeships, these are nationally recognised and transferable from state to state. The students are given an opportunity to gain practical experience as well as a head start to employment. Students are able to link theory with practice; gain work experience and personal insight in a professional role; acquire knowledge and attitudes relevant to future learning; and also develop personal maturity (Velde and Cooper, 2000). The qualification generally counts towards the students’ Year 12 certificate, and in some cases for tertiary entrance (Erica Smith & Wilson, 2002). SBNAs appear to be most beneficial for students who are not performing well academically; those who prefer practical work; and those who would rather undertake a trade, as they reportedly prevent some youth from dropping out of school early – leading to increased education and better job prospects, as well as concurrent work experience (Gibbons-Wood & Lange, 2000). Velde and Copper (2000) reported that students tended to have increased self-esteem, confidence, discipline, work attitude and a greater sense of responsibility. In a study conducted by Andrews, Kenman and Smith (2000) in Queensland, they reported that SBNAs had good outcomes in that cancellation rates were considerably lower than for non-school-based apprentices and trainees; they positively influenced retention rates of students in school; they appealed to many employers; and they met the needs of young people interested in practical experience. Andrews and others also reported that SBNA programs were highly valued by stakeholders, with student satisfaction levels at around 90% (p.2). Employers, school coordinators and parents were also reportedly highly satisfied with the program. However, the researchers stated that the program had not yet been well integrated into schools due to resourcing problems and marketing difficulties, as well as “each school’s perception of the appropriate targeting for [SBNAs] and its fit with the school’s own target markets.” (p.3)

While School-based New Apprenticeships are seen to offer considerable potential for young people, UK data suggests that large proportions of their traineeships do not result in full-time employment for the young people involved (Bynner, 1998). Bynner contends that for many young people traineeships were seen as a form of ‘slave labour’ since the position did not involve award pay rates and was therefore seen as exploitative. Similar problems exist in Australia. Fuller and Unwin (2003, p. 7) reported that many students in youth training schemes “were treated as cheap labour, did not achieve any qualifications and were sacked as soon as their traineeships ended”.

Interim Summary


Within the Australian context, there is an increasing trend for young Australians to remain in school if they are not in employment. This has created a novel situation in the history of schooling. Traditionally orientated towards university/professional pathways, the senior years have greater retention rates than any other period in the history of the nation. As such, innovations are needed that meet the needs of the students who are not bound for university. Simultaneously, industry is at a crisis point in terms of skilled labour with the recent decades having seen a decline in the training of apprentices. Within this climate, it would seem timely that programs are implemented to meet the needs of students, schools and employers. To this end, one

innovation has been the development of School-Based New Apprenticeships where students can undertake employment in a range of fields, and which, in many cases lead to employment. While there have been studies exploring the benefits of these programs, there is also evidence to suggest some difficulties with them. Other pathways to work also exist including VET in schools, and structured work experience. Increasingly schools need to adopt innovative pathways to cater for the changing times and for the challenges being posed by such changes. As such, this project seeks to develop a wide perspective across key stakeholders and industry types to develop a coherent analysis of the ways in which school-to-work programs are currently being taken up in considerable proportions by students in South-East Queensland and compare these against other initiatives in other states and regions.





4. Framing the Project: “Building Capital” through Pathways

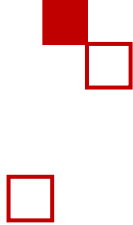


To frame the emerging understandings from the project, it was found that the work of a number of theorists became most appropriate. Of these, the work that draws on notions of capital building were most useful as they enabled a language that could discuss the practices noted across the wide range of contexts and how they contributed to the growth and development of students, schools and industries. There appear to be two key forms of capital to consider. The first, individual capital, is that which resides with the individual and how practices can build the forms of capital needed for individuals to succeed. In some cases this capital may apply to an individual person but equally can be applied to individual companies. However, individuals do not exist in isolation so it became evident that the connections between people and communities are also critical to the success of projects such as transitions to work. We referred to the literature on social capital to frame these understandings.

Individual Capital

In many ways the pathways provided by the schools and industries enabled young people to build new skills, understandings and dispositions towards work and learning. As such, the programs could be seen to add new forms of capital to young Australians. Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, it is argued that schools and work are sites where one of their key roles is to add to capital to students and workers. The changing work conditions of post-industrial societies have resulted in very different labour markets for school leavers. Whereas young workers once could enter into unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled labour markets, the skilled labour market offers best options of employment and employability. As such, the role of education has changed significantly to one where young people need options to increase their intellectual capital in order to be better prepared for the worlds beyond schools – whether they are university bound or aiming for vocational options. Traditionally the senior years of schooling were orientated to the former but now need to offer programs to cater for the latter group of students.

Bourdieu (1983) argued for a range of forms of capital. He identified three forms – social capital which is in the form of networks; institutional capital which is most evident in the forms of rewards and recognition offered by institutions – typically in the form of degrees or certificates; and cultural capital which is in the form of dispositions. If the contemporary workplace is a goal for school leavers, then the role of school (and workplaces) is to create opportunities for young Australians to create the forms of capital they need to make the transition into work more effectively and efficiently. For example, providing opportunities to build a work ethos that resonates with the workplace provides opportunities for building *cultural capital* in the form of dispositions towards work, uniform, attendance, respect for superiors and so on which enable the young student/worker to be better prepared for the world of work. Similarly, by providing opportunities to gain work-related credentials such as Cert 2 or 3 in an area of employment, provides *institutional capital* for the young person as they are able to exchange their Certificate for access into the workplace. For many employers such institutional capital enables them to have work-ready employees who are able to reduce their time in training or apprenticeships. Similarly, by being in the workplace, the young student/worker is able to build networks of contacts who may serve as referees for future employment opportunities either directly in that industry or in another position elsewhere. Building such contacts enhances the employability of the young student/worker. This is the way in which Bourdieu theorises *social capital* – that




is, the networks of people that can have that enhance the opportunities for the young person.

However, capital must be understood in relation to field. In this case, field is either education or work depending on the focus of the analysis. Taylor and Singh (2005) argue there is considerable contestation within a field as to what constitutes capital at any given point and how that capital can be accrued. In the context of this paper, it is proposed that where students are seeking to gain employment in industry, they need to amass the forms of capital that hold sway within the field if they are to gain entrance into that field. Once they begin to amass capital of one form, it can be exchanged for others. For example, the institutional capital that students build while undertaking work-based experiences such as certificates, can be exchanged for goods such as employment and economic capital (in the form of salary). The more capital the student accrues, the more enabling it is in terms of exchange within the nominated field. Simultaneously, it is critical to consider the field since it is only within the field that goods can be exchanged for rewards. Consider the accumulation of institutional capital where a student achieves considerable success within the field of work and how such capital can be exchanged within the academic field. Such capital may have little worth within the academic field due to the objective structuring practices of that field. Various practices recognise particular forms of capital which may or may not have the same value within the nominated field. The competency certificates offered in the field of work have little exchange value when a student is university bound. Similarly, the conferring of an academic award, such as a Masters degree has little exchange value in the field of work. As such, it is necessary to consider the dialectic of field and capital. Within the field of work, the recognition of the institutional capital of young, potential employees is changing. Completion of Year 12 is seen to be the norm and academic qualifications may not be those desired by future employers. Skills, knowledge and habits of the mind valued by schools may be at loggerheads with employers where the former focuses primarily on academic skills and not vocational skills. Increasingly it becomes critical to build the vocational capital of young people if they intend to enter vocational fields. In this way there is an alignment between the field of work, the dispositions (or habitus) of the potential worker, and the structuring practices of the field.

To gain and/or maintain employment, students need to display the dispositions and skills required by an employer. Often such dispositions and skills are not those which are developed in schools. Young people (and employers) often do not see the relevance of school learning nor as preparation for the world of work. Traditionally the senior years were designed for university-bound students but over the past few decades there has been a significant shift in the role of these years. Higher retention rates have meant that the curriculum needs to change to cater for the changing clientele of schools. The pathways between senior years and the world beyond schools is now more expanded so new pathways into the workplace are needed. Practices such as those identified through school-to-work pathways offer considerable potential to add new forms of capital to young Australians and prepare them for the worlds they are choosing.

Social Capital

In providing a frame for this study, the notion of social capital is useful also. It allows a construct to be applied to the strong (and weak) links that extend across the community. The strength of that community can be explained by its links and networks. From this study, it was very clear that in some communities there is a strong sense of community and partnerships that permeate the practices and thinking of the participants.



The viability and sustainability of organisations and communities has been the focus of considerable research. More recently, studies have begun to deploy the notion of social capital to theorise the success (or not) of entities. Drawing on two major theoretical approaches, social capital is most often conceived as the networks that meld people together that can ultimately result in the exchange of other forms of capital. For Bourdieu (1986), social capital is considered a resource that is generated by individuals or groups of individuals through interactions that can ultimately be exchanged for economic capital. For the individual, social capital can be aligned with the 'old school tie' network where the links brought about through interactions with others from particular social networks enables the individual to trade on such connections and trade these connections for positions, new trade arrangements and which ultimately enhance the economic standing of the individual or group. Drawing on similar ideas Coleman (1988) also contends that the social networks can be exchanged for capital but in his case, he argued that such capital is human capital. As such a useful definition for social capital is one drawn from Tymon and Stumpf (2002, p.12) as being 'the stock of accumulated resources that one can access based on the relationships that can aid or be leveraged in accomplishing an end or furthering a pursuit' (Tymon & Stumpf, 2002, p. 12).

In theorising the growth of communities, and their long term sustainability, the concept of social capital has been employed to come to understand the factors that support or hinder such growth (Woodhouse, 2006). It is suggested that the level of social capital correlates positively with the level of economic capital. The notion of social capital can be broken down into two main forms of capital. Putman (2000) identifies two useful notions that relate to the viability of communities. The first, *bonding capital*, focuses on how people unite with each other to form networks. It can be seen as the intra-group strength. For example, in the study of regional Queensland, it was found that the state high school principals formed a strong alliance so as to present a coherent and united front to industry and the wider community despite much of the rhetoric in contemporary education pushing for competition among schools. This is an excellent example of bonding capital. Similarly, the bonding capital among the employees of a number of companies in the study present a coherent voice on issues around community responsibilities or pathways to work provides a further example of strong bonding capital. The second form of social capital is that of *bridging capital*. This form of capital is one where there is a network or link that extends beyond the immediate group so as to form links or relationships with others outside a particular group. In this study, an excellent example of bridging capital has been the links between schools and industries.

In considering partnerships and community, these constructs allow for conversations around the current state of play in the area of transitions into work but also for areas in which the relationships can be built even stronger, particularly when considering building strengths in both economic and human capital. In considering the Diagram 4.1 below, the ideal position is in the upper right quadrant where there are strengths in both bonding capital and bridging capital.

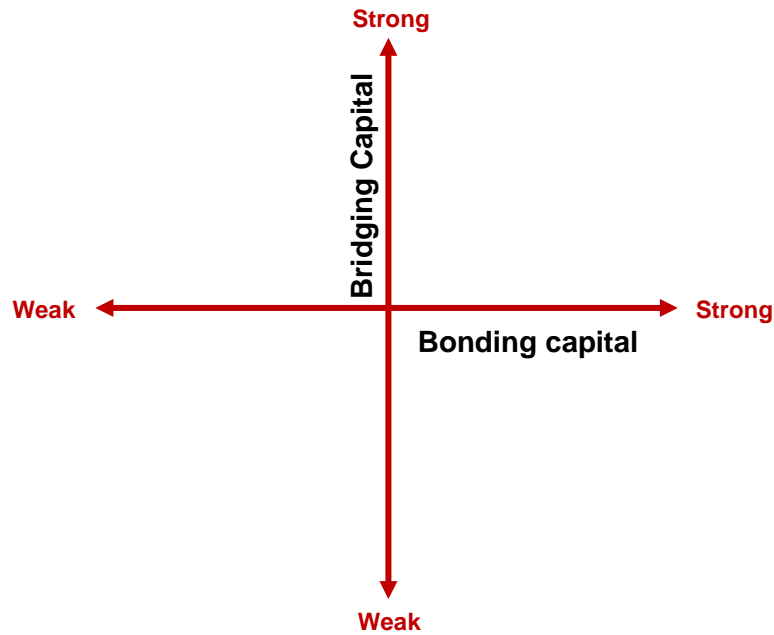


Diagram 4.1: Bonding and Bridging Capital Nexus

Using this framework, it becomes possible to understand the relationships between the various stakeholders in the provision of pathways. It enables a discussion around the strengths of partnerships but also a way for identifying areas of improvement. For example, a company may have strong bonding capital so it is united in its thinking and approaches but if it is not connected to the wider communities (i.e. weak bridging capital), then it may not recognise changes or shifts in the community which could impact on its growth/stability. In the context of this study, it could be that an industry has a strong approach to training young people that is widely supported within the company (strong bonding capital) but only links in with one school (weak bridging capital). In some cases, if the link with that school is severed for some reason or another, the company becomes vulnerable in terms of its potential pathways to work. As such, it becomes critical for stakeholders to have strengths in both bonding and bridging capital.

Issues of sustainability of practice can be better understood by using this model to consider the forms of capital that exist within communities, that is, schools, industries and the links between these sites. With a goal to having strong bonding and bridging capital, sustainability is likely to increase. Identifying where there may be weaknesses in the forms of social capital, participants can become aware of ways to move their practices forward and enhance sustainability.

5. Method

The main aim of the research to date has been to explore and document the ways in which various pathways to work are taken up by students, schools and employers; and the implications of these processes in the success (or not) of the programs. This was undertaken across a number of contexts so as to identify various factors that impact on the development, implementation and take up of various programs. A further (and final) dimension to the project will be undertaken in 2006 where the economic aspects of SBAA's were explored. In this way, the project will have data from all participants as well as the dollar costs (and benefits) of the programs. This 'big picture' of SBAA's allows for considerable insights to be gained about the programs. The overall project can be represented in the following diagram where the various phases can be identified in the years in which the research was conducted.


	2004	2005	2006	2007
SE Qld Large scale				
SE Qld –Case studies				
Rural NSW Vic				
Regional Qld				
Economic Analysis				

Table 5.1: Overview of the project across the years of the study

Phase One: Surveying the Field

Participants: Phase One

The first phase of the study was conducted in South East Queensland. Drawing on local schools and industries, a wide sample of the region was included in the research. In summary, a total of 118 students; 33 employers and 25 schools participated in the study. This represents a considerable cross section of the region. The range of industries in which the participants worked and the number of participants in each industry can be seen in Table 5.2 below. The students in this table came from 25 schools across the region thus representing a reasonable distribution of schools.



Industry	Total	Students	Employers
Boatbuilding	22	22	-
Construction	11	6	5
Retail	9	5	4
Hospitality	43	39	4
Health Care	5	2	3
IT	6	5	1
Sports and Recreation	8	6	2
Automotive	11	7	4
Office Admin	12	10	2
Horticulture	2	2	-
Education	1	1	-
Library	3	2	1
Electrical	4	4	-
Engineering	2	2	-
Printery	1	-	1
Hair and Beauty	2	-	2
News	1	-	1
Recruitment	1	-	1
Baker	1	1	-
Childcare	1	-	1
Chef	4	4	-
Jewellery	1	-	1
TOTAL	149	118	33

Table 5.2: Range and distribution of interviews with participants

Method: Phase One

Semi structured interviews were conducted across a wide cross section of the community – students, teachers, and employers – who were either participating in or had been involved with structured workplace experiences. Predominantly, these experiences were with SBAs. In total, 118 students, 24 school personnel and 33 industry representatives were interviewed. In most cases these were face-to-face interviews but due to a range of factors, some interviews were conducted by phone. Phone interviews were with either school personnel or industry representatives.

The interviews were centred on questions relating to the ways in which students were selected for training, the experiences of being involved in such workplaces and the benefits/costs of being involved in such programs. The questions were open so that participants were able to provide information related to their experiences.

Phase Two: Case Studies of 10 Sites in SE Queensland

Phase Two of the study consisted of ten case studies of various industries. A cross section of industries was selected in terms of industry type and size. These can be seen in *Figure 5.1*.

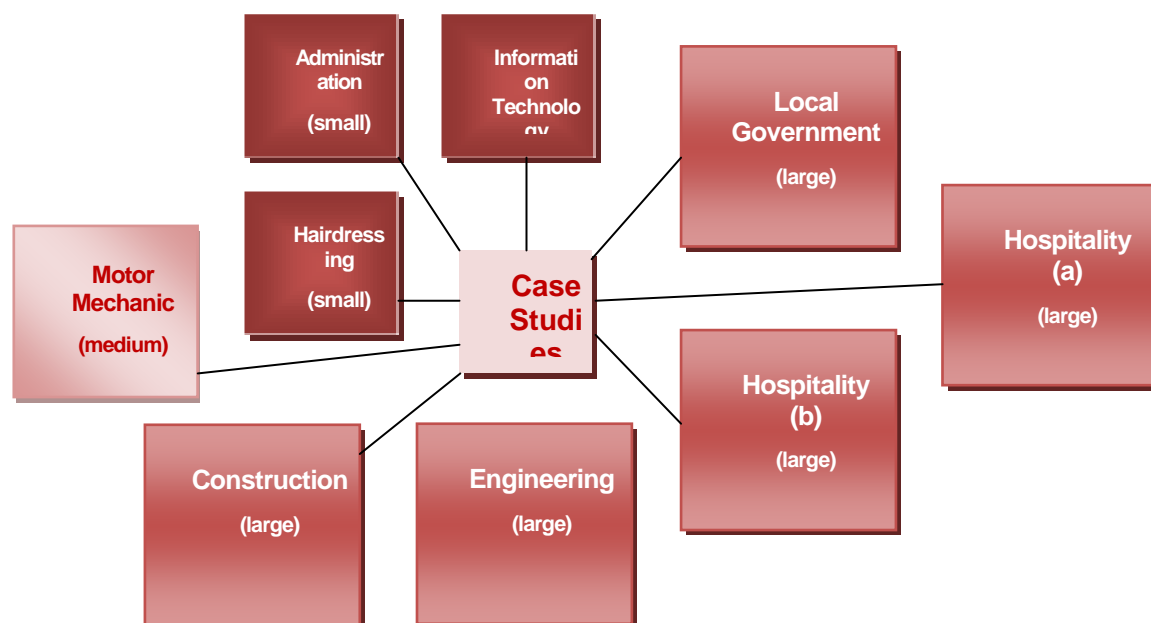


Figure 5.1: Distribution of Case Studies


Participants from these sites were followed as they went about their work and interviewed in the sites. This phase of the study allowed for a more in-depth investigation of particular sites. Video data were collected from a number of sites. This included work practices and interviews with young people in work and their employers.

Case Study of Rural Victoria and NSW

The case study of rural Australia was undertaken in the Murray/Darling region. It was contained to the teachers across schools in two education regions – one in Victoria and one in New South Wales. Almost all schools in these regions participated. These two states offer very different curricula for senior students due to, in part, the organisation of the senior curriculum in these states. Only teachers were interviewed. Most of these were phone interviews due to the considerable distances in these regions which made face-to-face interviews too costly. A total of 27 teachers were interviewed from NSW schools and 17 teachers in Victorian schools. These numbers fairly represent the number of schools in those regions. Teachers were those who assumed responsibility for the pathways programs within the schools.



Method: Phone Interviews



Phone interviews were conducted with the teachers and tape recorded. A set of questions was sent to teachers prior to the interviews and these were progressively worked through as the interviews progressed. All questions were similar to those posed to the Queensland teachers so as to gain a sense of how programs were organised, students were selected and the gains/costs of participating in these programs.

Case Study of Regional Queensland

A case study of a regional area of Queensland was undertaken. This case study was ethnographic in its approach and sought the views of key stakeholders across the community. It was a single town in Central Queensland and had considerable assets due to its proximity to mines and refineries. Similar questions were posed to all stakeholders who included local principals, teachers, industry representatives, RTOs, education officials, parents and students. Questions were sent to participants prior to interview; all interviews were audio taped and transcribed for subsequent analysis.

Phase Three: Economic Analysis

Over the year of 2006, an economic analysis was conducted in the SE Qld region drawing on a sample of 10 industries. These ranged in size and industry type. The goal of this phase was to identify the bottom line in terms of real costs and benefits to industry. A private consultant was employed for this aspect of the project.

Confidentiality

As part of the research process, preserving the identities of participants was a critical element of the research. As such, all names of companies, schools and participants have been changed in order to protect their identity. This is a protocol adopted in research and is not meant to discredit or take credit away from any person or individual. Where a person or site has been named, this will have been done with the permission of that person/site. However, we have cleared with all individual companies which participated in the 10 individual case studies (Phase Two) that they could be named. In part this was to promote the successes of these companies in fostering partnerships and pathways. Photographs used in these case studies have been approved for release by the participating companies.



6. Phase One: Surveying the Field



Benefits for Students

In analysing the large data set in Phase One, the data were broken down by the benefits to students, schools and industry as seen by each of the cohorts.

In collating the data and codes, the categories of student responses can be seen in Table 6.1. In this table, the total numbers against each code can be seen. It should be noted that the total is more than the number of students as individuals were able to offer more than one response.

As the question was open, students were not prompted for any particular responses. While many of the same categories were offered by teachers and employers, their spread was often different from the students. However, this table shows the types of responses that were offered by the students as to what the benefits were for them in participating in the program.


As can be seen in Table 6.1, there were many common experiences among teachers, students and employers. While there were some areas of common agreements, the amount of agreement was most evident in four areas – industry-relevant experience; offering a tangible pathway from school to work; providing qualifications, and retaining students in school. The key benefits for students as identified in this phase and supported in subsequent phases were:

- Gaining industry-relevant experience
- Offering a career path
- Providing qualifications
- Retention
- Time off apprenticeship
- Offer other pathways
- Giving students an edge over their peers when applying for positions

For many students participating in the programs, what became very clear was that the programs offered considerable potential to enhance various forms of capital among young workers. This ranged from the industry-specific skills that were developed on site (vocational capital); dispositions that were highly amenable to workplaces (work ethic, punctuality, respect for supervisors, eagerness to learn) which can be seen to be cultural capital; through to formal schooling where students re-engaged with learning.

Student responses		Employer responses		Teacher responses	
	n		n		n
Gain experience in working	50	Experience	19	Gives them work experiences	16
Offers a career path	40	Offered a career path	21	Provides a job pathway	10
Provides qualifications	40	Provides a qualification	7	Provides a qualification	13
Assists with content of some school subjects	26				
Get a head start in the position	21				
Time off apprenticeship	19	Time off apprenticeship	4	Time off apprenticeship	3
Helps you to stay in school	13	Keeps in school	2	Stay in school	5
Good way to try the industry	11	Trial industry	14	Allows trial of industry	7
Get paid	10	Money-related	2	Provides money	4
Easier to get employment while travelling post-year 12	8				
Something to fall back on	8				
Ahead of the pack (peers)	7				
Get a day off school	7	Day off school	2		
Offers an alternative path	7				
Enjoyable	6				
Learn a lot	6				
Assists with OP and rankings	5			Better OP/rank	1
Helps develop personal skills	4				
Leads to further study	3	Pathway to university	4	Access to further education	4
Helps with time management	2				
Finish Year 12	2			Motivated to stay at school	12
Other	13	Other	7	Other	6
		Introduction into work force	12	Provides career goals	9
		Gives confidence	2	Develops personal skills	9
		Elevated social status	2	Improvement in student attitude	9
		An extra pair of hands	19	Gives them confidence	7
		Trial future employees	13	Taste of real world	3
		Students get to know the job	3	Provides out-of-school successes	3
		Train to suit the company	19	Protected by the school	2
		Helping young people	9	Industry contacts	2

Table 6.1 Benefits for Students in undertaking a SBAA



To supplement Table 6.1, a few examples are provided from the interviews that highlight the results in this table.

Students' views on benefits for themselves

For some students, the benefits were directly related to employability and employment

You earn a bit of money on the side, you get a year taken off your apprenticeship and you get your Year 12 certificate which I want for later on.

I suppose you get paid more having had that experience. You'll find it easier to get jobs. People want people to have experience and it is hard to accept just anybody that's just come out of school.

I think it is good because you get to know what it's like to be in a resort and how it work. I reckon you have a better chance of getting a job in places if you have had like experience.

For others, the benefits were not as tangibly related to gaining employment but development of themselves and the knowledge they gain about the industry

It has helped with my communication skills, being able to talk to people, being able to understand what they need. It has made me more confident.

It is interesting to note that some students did not see the work placement as the preferred career pathway but useful for other purposes that would build towards their employment goals. This could be as an overall development and employability within an industry as in the first comment, or as enhancing access to a nominated field of study as per the second comment

The course is great for me as I get hands-on experience in the hotel which will help me when I go to Uni to do hotel management. I will know about the industry and that helps. I will also be able to get a job in the industry while I am at uni as I have experience. That will help me more with my studies while I am in uni coz I'll be able to link what I am learning at uni with what I do when I am at work. I am sure that that will help me get a good job at the end of my studies.


Well actually I have got direct entry into TAFE next year. I am doing a double diploma of hospitality and even management and that will go into a Bachelor of Hotel Management at Griffith.

Teachers' views on benefits for students

Teachers (and employers) noted the considerable turnaround in some students in their attitudes towards schooling, authority, uniforms as a consequence of participating in the transition programs.

Bringing examples of work into school to make the learning more authentic:

I've had a few that had real difficulty in the classroom. They were getting LA's that ended up getting SA pluses after the traineeship. They then ended up being the person that the teacher asked to talk about what happened in the workplace - can you bring those examples back into your maths class so that we can understand that what were doing here on the blackboard is real. That was very beneficial. That's especially in the construction industry.



Providing increased and authentic learning experiences:

I think the benefits are basically just to get them out there so that they're experiencing more than just school life. I think it's very important for not only the kids who want to head down that way of work, but also the kids doing even OP subjects. They still need that experience of getting out there to find out what it's like out there in the real world and the workforce. A lot of great skills that they just don't get at school.

Gaining maturity about learning and life:

"Some of the students who have been wasting time here at school start to learn the relevance of what they're learning at school. Often they can see once they start doing their TAFE and whatever, they mature. A good proportion of the students, I feel, mature, because we sort of stress that they are in the real world now, and they have to take responsibility for their own learning, but we're not going to be chasing them up."

Changing dispositions to learning and success:

I have had students who were not engaged in school, sat at the back and mucked around. Once they're in work, they can see why they need to learn things, they move to the front of the class, try harder and move up in their grades. One boy once told his mates to shut up as he needed to learn this maths so he could pass the subject or he would not get his apprenticeship. There is a huge turnaround in most of the students.

Employers' view of benefits for students

Employers had similar views to the teachers and could recount similar stories in terms of success, re-engaging with school and learning, feeling good about themselves and so on.

Relevance: Being able to link school work and work place examples and learning.


[One of the advantages is that] "They can relate their school work to being in the work force, especially things like maths. They think why do I have to learn that, and they can relate it. I think Garry says more often than not, their school marks improve when they can see the relevance to what they do at school to work" (Marine Industry)

Developing Career Pathways

We can't get plumbers and we can't get carpenters, so if we can train up younger people to go into these trades, then it's going to benefit the business in the long run. What we then do, is we've just kept on two of our carpentry apprentices that turned full-time and they have now gone into permanent carpentry positions. There is a chance in this company, if you knuckle down and you get through your apprenticeship and prove to be a good worker that you can actually lead to full-time employment.
(Construction Industry)

Benefits for Schools and Industry

While there are considerable benefits to students, participants were also asked what they saw as the benefits to other stakeholders. Of most importance and having some validity is the reports of people who are based in their sites. Teachers were able to offer first-hand accounts of benefits to the schools while



industry representatives were similarly able to identify particular benefits to their organisations. These are discussed.



Benefits for Schools

Teachers were able to provide accounts of how the transition programs offered benefits to the schools. The provision of funding enabled schools to undertake the transition programs but it was not seen to be adequate for the amount of work generated.

Benefits	n
Improvement in student attitude	9
Links with the community	5
Good PR	3
Keeps students engaged	2
Funding	8
Provides opportunities for students	3
Better retention rates	3
Other	2

Table 6.2: Teachers views about benefits to schools

What was commonly heard in this phase and subsequent phases of the research was the changes in student behaviour as they undertook the transition programs.


We've found that as a result of doing them, their schoolwork often improves as far as their reliability and they seem a lot keener to be at school. I don't know whether it's because they've dropped one day out in a lot of cases, That leaves only four days in the week, but it's had a really positive effect on their schooling. It's been useful for us for students that are struggling with school to find them some alternative avenue. We've found that very helpful, and the parents are very supportive of it.

Besides the accreditation side of it, I think the social aspect of work is a big one, it sort of leans a lot towards maturity. We find that kids that are involved with traineeships, while they're in their processes here at school, they're much more focussed. They seem to be a little bit more mature because they're working with not actually peers but people older than them which tends to turn their thoughts around a little bit.

From my perspective the benefits are is it provides that link between the college and industry and workplaces outside and it gives a good opportunity for there to be communication between the two. From a promotional point of view, it's an excellent exercise both ways.



Benefits to Employers



Employers' views on the benefits to industry can be summarised in the Table 6.3 below:

Benefit	n	Benefit	n
An extra pair of hands	19	Train to suit the company	19
Trial future employees	13	Helping young people	9
None	7	Money-related	5
Know the job	3	Not a long-term commitment	3
Loyalty	2	Fresh Attitude	2
Good for other staff	2	Have to train staff	2
Good PR for company	1	Other	4

Table 6.3: Employers' views on benefits to industry

Comments offered by employers illustrate aspects of this table.

Training for industry needs

When we're looking at using them as employees, we can mould them to the way that we want them, so there are no bad habits. The habits that we are teaching them are the ones that we want them to have. (IT Industry)

Having extra workers that supported workplace activity.

Apart from the fact that I actually get a bit out of the fact that helping young kids, which I'm pretty happy about doing,, the pure business side of things means that we get an extra hand. I mean obviously for the first few weeks we need to train them before they're any kind of use for us, but once they get reasonably efficient at their job, you know, we have an extra helping hand.(Automotive Industry)

Being able to pick the best students for the workplace:

You get the best kids; you get the pick of the bunch really. We get a head start, to pick the kids, that's the advantage to us. At the end of year 12, our retention's good, because they stay on. That means we have to recruit more, we don't have to go through the lottery again of taking someone on and then sacking them, or losing them after three months or whatever. They're already here and ready to go. (Marine Industry)

Issues for Stakeholders

In presenting this aspect of the research, it is noted that students reported issues around work transitions but most frequently in the context of the third person rather than reporting any personal difficulties. As can be seen in Table 6.4 that follows, the student data has a considerable number of 'no problem' responses. This is a reflection of this finding.

I haven't found it difficult because I've, I think, I'm not sure because, I think it depends on what OP you're going for. If you're going for an OP 1, then it

would be extremely difficult. But anything between probably an 8 and I don't know, a 12 or something, it's not that hard, especially if you start young, and especially if you just keep working at it. Like you kind of put your work and your school first before you socialise and that normally works out all right.

For Students

For students, there was a strong reporting of potential workload issues. As this was the category where students did not so much report their experiences but hypothetically or in the third person, it would appear that there is a perception that workloads may increase but this is not the experience of many of the participants.

There was a sense of frustration at the organization around work experiences – both at the school level and industry levels.

For Employers

For employers, there was a sense of frustration having to work with the systems imposed by education systems. Some companies dealt with a range of schools and expressed a sense of frustration with the different rules and expectations of schools. This often made it difficult to work with a large number of schools.

For Schools

The key issue for schools seemed to cluster around issues related to the management of the programs within schools. This included issues related to timetabling, monitoring student progress, liaising with industry, seeking placements and managing staff within the school. This was further exacerbated by the perception of the low status of vocational education in schools.



Students		Employers		Teachers	
	n		n		n
Workplace	19	Schools see only school perspective	2	With employers	18
School is disorganised	2			With RTOs/Training	7
Teachers	6				
Transport	11	Transport	2	Transport	8
Workload	58	Students not interested in work	16	Students catching up on content missed	6
Modules	16	No work ethic/unreliable	12	Helping students catch up	4
Training	12	Don't stay on after completion	3	Monitoring attendance	3
		Not focussed on job	6	Status in schools 2 nd rate	6
Don't learn enough	9	Presentation	4	School timetables	6
RTOs	7	Youth Issues	4	Students missing classes	11
Working hours	6	Lack motivation	4	Getting results in time for senior certificate	2
Not enough work	5	Don't listen	2	Teacher resistance	4
Exploitation by employer	2			Finding employers	4
Do "crap" jobs	2	Time involved in SBAAs	13		
		Training issues	4	Exploitation of students	5
Lack of communication	2	Lack of communication	2	Entices students away from school	2
Time management	6	Money-related	2	One day not enough for employers	2
Personal	5			Time management for students	3
Injuries	2				
Pushed into it	2				
Other	2	Other	10	Other	7
None	43	None	13	No problems	1

Table 6.4: Issues for Stakeholders



Support for STW transition programs in schools

Across the Queensland schools, various innovations have been adopted to enable the implementation of work placements. These varied considerably across the schools. Innovations included:

- Commencing school day early and finishing at 1 so students can undertake 'after school' work
- Implementing a 4-day week so that one day is free for work placements (or study)
- Conducting extra classes in nominated areas (usually English and Mathematics) for students who will miss classes while out on work placements. These are conducted early in the mornings.
- Development of Centres of Excellence that specialised in a particular skill set (engineering and IT are currently established with construction planned for the future). These provide structured workplace learning which is conducted on site to provide authenticity in learning,
- Changes to teacher workloads and timetables to enable the teachers to work very flexible hours to cater for these changes.

It is noted that when the rural case study was undertaken, Victorian schools had adopted a range of flexible schooling hours similar to those in Queensland to enable students to take one day in work placements. However, NSW teachers were considerable constraints on their timetables that did not enable them the flexibility of their interstate peers.

While schools varied in how they organised timetables and other structures within their schools, it was important also to ascertain what support was offered to students. This information was sought through the question "What kind of support does the school offer for students in traineeships and apprenticeships?" The responses to this question can be broken into *Table 6.5* (below):

School support	n	School support	n
Monitoring students	18	Flexible with Timetable	16
Ancillary staff	15	Liaison officer	15
Resources	8	Teachers	5
Set up SBAA	5	Release time	3
Administrative help	3	Other	5

Table 6.5: Support offered in schools to support SBAA's



Status of Workplace Learning

Overall, there was a strong commitment to transition programs among some sectors of schooling. However, it was a consistent finding throughout all phases and sites in the study that there is a low perception held among some sectors of the education community towards vocational education. While those who participated in the study were actively involved in working with students and industry, they reported that their status in the schools was often secondary to the academic streams. Many of the participants reported that the area was under-resourced, and not afforded status within the school community, seen to be a site for dealing with 'non academic' or "problem students".

There was considerable goodwill generated by those teachers involved in the placement of young people in workplaces. Often they were involved in activities in out-of-school hours to ensure linking with industry. However, they reported that they felt the hours and commitment needed and given to working in this area was not recognised by most of their peers.





7a. Phase Two: Case Studies



To better understand the ways in which companies enacted the SBAAs, detailed case studies were undertaken across 10 sites. The sites were selected to represent a range of industry types and the size of those industries. Depending on the size of the company, the number of people interviewed varied. In small companies (3+), all staff were included in the data collection. In contrast, large organizations (>100) involved interviews with key staff – students, supervising staff, HR staff, training staff, and management.

In presenting the following short synopsis of each case study, we have focused on the benefits to the particular company. Participants were asked a range of questions as to the benefits, costs, structure of the workplace transition. It is not possible to do justice to the depth of each case study in this report. Each case is designed to provide a sense of the company, the ways in which selection and training were undertaken, and what benefits the company gained from participating in these schemes. The main target in this section is to provide exemplars of quality practice for other companies to see the possibilities of organising workplaces to cater for transitions between school and work.

In presenting these case studies, we are pleased to note that each company has agreed to have their name associated with the report. The companies were selected on the basis of being quality providers of work experiences for school students. This selection was intentional so that the study could identify those aspects of selection and training that supported the transition from school to work. The data collected across all sites supported the initial selection assumption.

Absolutely Soft

Absolutely Soft was established in 1999 with the inspiration to see more women in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry. The company is an owner-operated business and has



absolutely soft.

since expanded to three companies. Absolutely Soft focuses on the administrative, bookkeeping and information technology needs of businesses, providing managed information systems. The company aims to help businesses grow by providing well managed information systems.

The owner is an avid supporter of encouraging women to enter the ICT industry and has been involved in numerous initiatives to introduce young women to this industry. She co-founded eWomen, an organisation which promotes the expansion of women in the industry. This brought about “The Journey”, a program designed to introduce female high school students to the ICT Industry.



The company began employing school-based trainees in 2002, and has employed three trainees since then, one in Information Technology, the other two in Business Administration. Two of these employees went on to permanent employment, while the third remains in a school-based traineeship. Their first school-based trainee won the regional (Gold Coast) "School-based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year" award in 2004. All staff undergo regular training sessions,

both on and off the job, due to the rapid changes occurring in the ICT industry. Weekly meetings are also held to ensure all staff members are up-to-date on advances in the industry.

Four interviews were conducted at Absolutely Soft, with both of the owners, the current school-based trainee (Business Administration) and one of the graduates of the school-based program (Information Technology).



Recruitment Process

Absolutely Soft advertises for school-based trainees when a position arises within the company, which is usually every year due to the rapid expansion of the company. The owner also maintains relationships with teachers in order to ensure positions are promoted at schools. Students are required to apply as with any position by sending their resume into the company. Applicants are short-listed for interview, with the best applicant appointed. The director specifically looks for students with initiative, as she sees this as an essential quality for success in both the ICT industry and a school-based Australian apprenticeship.

On commencing, students undergo an informal induction process, where they are shown around the workplace, instructed in telephone use and given a computer log-in. They also discuss the formalities of both the position and the school-based Australian apprenticeship, including the probation period, and the formal documents are signed. Students are assigned a mentor, usually the office manager, who assists in all aspects of their training.

Training Process

The training received by school-based trainees at Absolutely Soft depends on the type traineeship undertaken. Students completing traineeships in Information Technology are trained specifically in computers - everything from building computers and software support, to dealing with customers. Students who undertake a traineeship in Business Administration are taught how to use programs on the computer, such as Microsoft excel and word, as well as the daily requirements of running a business.

Off-the-job training is relatively flexible for students at Absolutely Soft. Students are able to dictate the regularity of their training depending on how quickly they wish to progress through the traineeship, and how much spare time they have to work on the modules. Students can also change the frequency of delivery as required, for example, if they have more time available, they can increase the frequency in which their trainer visits, and then decrease it if their workload becomes too onerous.



Benefits of the Program for Employers

Respondents were asked to discuss the benefits they saw for the company as a result of employing students in school-based Australian apprenticeships. As Absolutely Soft is a small company, only four interviews were conducted at Absolutely Soft, however this represented the entire company at the time.

All staff at Absolutely Soft felt that training employees to suit the company ethics and values, as well as having an extra pair of hands to get the job done were the main benefits for the company in taking on a school-based trainee. Below are examples of comments indicating these rewards

Director: *It's good for the company as well because you can always use or often use an extra set of hands to [you know] give some responsibilities to.*

Former SBAA: *Pretty much we have no skills when we walk in. Well we have skills, but she can mould us to whatever fits this business, whereas you know someone else comes in, they've already got a set of skills. They're not prepared to learn anything else. So they're coming in with the skills that they want, they have to adapt but they just don't want to. When it's someone that comes straight off the first job, they can just mould, and they can understand and be taught new things easily.*

The founder indicated her intention to keep school-based trainees as permanent employees after they graduate from their schooling and grow them to suit the company, as well as grow the company to suit the individual's skills and abilities. This shows the founder sees the program as an excellent method of recruiting employees and growing her business. Other benefits for the company also included the 'feel good' side of employing a young person and giving them a chance at a career and success.

Founder: *We get personal benefit of being proud of them, enjoying their company and all that kind of stuff, but I see it as especially like, not so much for small business, but for big business, I see it as a way of keeping a trained workforce, definitely.*

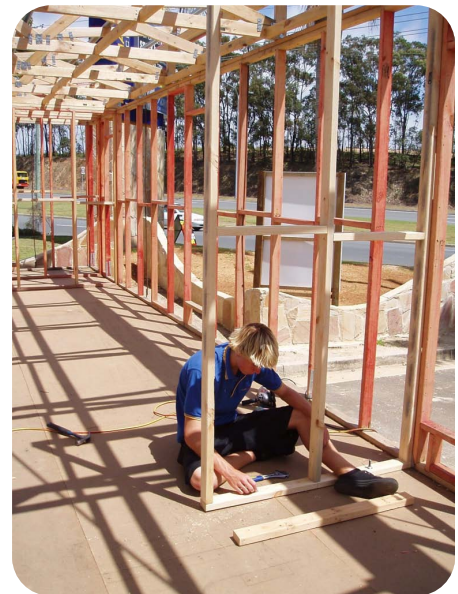
The founder of the company sees SBAA's not only as a way of keeping her business supplied with adequately skilled workers, but also as a way of addressing the current skill shortage across Australia and maintaining a skilled workforce. It is this attitude towards the program that enables it to be a successful pathway for young people into the workforce.

Boss Homes

Boss Homes is part of a conglomerate of companies, including Edge Homes, Boss Institute of Advanced Technology, and Boss Homes; all governed by Boss Developments. The company also manages the Home Display Centre at Burleigh Heads on the Gold Coast, and is currently developing RenoBoss a specialist home renovation division. The owner/director of the company is a qualified builder as well as a teacher. The company aims to build environmentally sustainable homes, utilising natural heating and cooling, with a contemporary style. In conjunction with the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE, the Boss Institute currently trains around 25 apprentices per year, with aspirations to train 80.

The Boss Institute has a unique relationship with 2 local state high schools, where a select group of year 11 and 12 students remain enrolled in school, but attend full-time at the Boss Institute. The aim of the program is to provide pathways for young people directly into full-time apprenticeships. This number will increase in both number of schools involved and the number of students. Boss Homes won the Queensland Training Awards Medium Employer of the year in 2004 and Gold Coast employer of the year in 2005. They have also received numerous awards for home designs since 2003.

Five interviews were conducted at The Boss Institute with the owner of the company, a supervisor/trainer, one school-based apprentice (construction) and one school-based trainee (business administration) as well as a graduate of the program (construction).



Recruitment Process

There are two types of SBAA's undertaken at Boss Homes; apprenticeships in the construction trades and traineeships in business administration. These two types have different recruitment processes. Construction SBAA's are recruited through the Boss Challenge, an annual event where year 11 students compete to build a designated item to specific design plans, such as a table, in a set time. The item is judged by a panel, with the top scoring student offered a school-based apprenticeship at Boss Homes.

For students wishing to undertake a school-based Australian apprenticeship in Business Administration, the selection process is done through partnerships with local schools. Boss Homes are attached to a number of local schools who supply them with work experience students and potential SBAA's. Boss makes local schools aware of positions available for an SBAA, and schools recommend suitable students for the position. To ensure all parties will be satisfied with the arrangement, the student completes two weeks of work experience prior to commencing the SBAA.

During the two weeks full-time work experience, the company ensures that incumbents are well-inducted into the company, and provide students with a uniform designed by the surf label 'Billabong'.

Training Process

There are two forms of training offered during school-based Australian apprenticeships at Boss; on-the job and off-the-job training. Students undertaking an SBAA in a trade area are assigned a tradesman to shadow during their day on-the-job. The qualified tradesmen will instruct them on how to do certain tasks, and then supervise while they carry out the set task. Apprentices are constantly assessed to ensure they are at the appropriate skill level and progressing at a suitable rate. The Boss Institute prides itself on ensuring apprentices get adequate training in all aspects of building houses.



Students undertaking an SBAA in Business Administration learn as they go on-the-job. They are initially shown how to do a task, and then left to do their tasks. If they require help as they go, then more senior staff will assist them. They put into practice the skills learnt during their off-the-job training at a local Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

At the time of interviews, Boss Homes were in the process of establishing themselves as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). Some apprentices currently use this system however many SBAAAs do their certificate training through the local TAFE college. SBAAAs in the trade areas attend the TAFE College once a fortnight, while an RTO conducts the training for Business Administration SBAAAs onsite at Boss Homes. As with many sites, the regularity of training depends on the student, and how much time they are able to commit to the modules. For students who wish to get through them faster, the RTO representative comes more frequently, whereas if the student had a higher load elsewhere, the trainer comes less often.

Benefits of the Program for Employers

While the sample of respondents at Boss was relatively small, the benefits reported were numerous, and similar to those reported in larger companies, such as Sea World Resort and The Riviera Group.

The most commonly reported benefits for the company in taking on school-based Australian apprentices were the ability to train them to suit the needs and ethics of the company; that the students were considered good workers; and that having SBAAAs assists in the creation of a learning environment within the company.

The program was seen as a method of recruiting suitable staff for the future who knew their job when they progressed to full-time permanent employment. Other benefits identified included the vibrancy brought to the workplace by young people; the good PR in the community for the company; and that it was a good for the future of the company. The company also benefited in terms of financial incentive from the government reducing the burden of training costs.

Director: *I think there's probably three things, one's just very a simple thing in life, the vitality of young people being around, I think it's too easy, too many people criticise young people and forget we were all young once, I think they're fantastic.*

Director: *Of course the final one is the future of the company. We've graduated our first carpenter now as a junior foreman, he will graduate at the end of this year to junior supervisor, and so we're saying that tomorrow's supervisors will be our carpenters that are establishing themselves now.*

This case study of Boss Homes has shown the excellence that can be achieved when employers use the school-based Australian apprenticeship programs to recruit permanent, full-time employees. Boss Homes has established a learning and training culture within the company that aids in fostering the development and success of school-based Australian apprenticeships. The recruitment processes ensure that students entering the industry are keen to be involved in the building trade and lessens the likelihood of dropouts. Boss Homes is an excellent model for other companies to use in the development and implementation of a school-based Australian apprenticeship program.

Gold Coast City Council

The Gold Coast has been one of the fastest growing cities in the country for more than four decades. It is the sixth largest city in Australia, with the Gold Coast City Council (GCCC) is the second largest local government based on resident population. Its boundaries extend from Beenleigh in the north to Tallebudgera Valley and Coolangatta in the south. The council also governs Moreton Bay and South Stradbroke Island. The Gold Coast comprises 1402 square kilometres, with 70 kilometres of coastline. The GCCC aims to create a city that is recognised for its diversity, lifestyle, economy and unique environment.

Lifelong learning is a core objective of the economic development goals of the GCCC, as they see this as a key determinant of success in the region. The educational priorities for the city include creating strong linkages between industry and education; to provide a wide range of lifelong learning opportunities; focus on the transition from school-to-work; and develop training to promote youth employment. The education industry on the Gold Coast is one of the fastest growing, and has grown at around 8% per annum, compared with 2% pa across Queensland. Education and Training is one of the eight key target industries on the Gold Coast, which also includes Creative Industries; Environment; Food and Beverage; Health and Medical; Information & Communication Technology (ICT), Marine Industry; and Sport.

Eight interviews were conducted at various sites with the Gold Coast City Council. Two members of the Human Resources department as well as a graduate trainee (business admin) were interviewed at Council Chambers, a supervisor and trainee were interviewed at a local library (library



services), as well as a supervisor, graduate and school-based apprentice at a local depot (diesel fitters/mechanics).

Recruitment Process

Due to changes in funding processes whereby the amount of trainees the council is entitled to is determined by the amount of school-based trainees or apprentices they take on, the council has concentrated efforts on the promotion and recruitment of school-based new apprenticeships. The Human Resource department actively promotes the program to all the various departments, branches, supervisors and managers within the council in order to obtain increased interest in the program.

The recruitment process used at GCCC for school-based Australian apprentices varies depending on the position and department requiring an SBAA. Supervisors are required to place an advertisement with HR if they wish to take on an SBAA within their department. Positions are advertised to local high schools through employment agencies and interested students are then required to submit an application. The application process requires students to address selection criteria, as this is council policy across the board; however, this process was under review at the time of interviews due to the complexity of the process for inexperienced young applicants.

Young people who apply for a position as a school-based apprentice, such as diesel fitting, are required to complete a period of work experience prior to being offered the SBAA. Often, the employer will trial a few young people for work experience then sign the best applicant on to a school-based Australian apprenticeship contract. This process not only enables the council to ensure they are getting the right person for the job, but also ensures the young person enjoys the position, as the Council intend to continue the SBAA on to full-time employment and completion of the apprenticeship following completion of year 12.



Training Process

As with all school-based Australian apprenticeships, GCCC provides both off and on-the-job training. These training processes vary depending on the position occupied and type of SBAA being undertaken, for example, the training process of an apprentice Diesel Fitter is somewhat different to those of a trainee in Library Services.

On-the-job training in any position at GCCC involves learning as you go, as directed by the student's supervisor/s. In some cases, students are shown how to do the tasks, then expected to complete them, while in other cases they observe tasks being completed, and are then assisted in completing the various tasks as they progress through their SBAA. GCCC ensures that supervisors are aware of the lower skill level of SBAAs, and try to provide a sympathetic, understanding and

nurturing environment, where students can learn new skills as well as make a contribution to the workplace.

The off-the-job training component at Gold Coast City Council involves completion of modules through the nominated RTO. Depending on the position, students either attend the RTO, or alternatively the RTO visited the student either in their workplace or at their school. In the case of students completing a SBAA in Diesel Fitting, their supervisor has to sign off on their modules and assess them as either competent or not yet competent in the required skill areas.

Students completing traditional apprenticeships are required to attend two days a week – one day with their RTO once a week, and one day at the workplace. When the student goes full-time they then attend the RTO in 6-week block periods. Students completing a traineeship in Library Services are provided with the modules to complete at home in their own time, and are able to discuss any problems with their supervisor or contact the RTO via telephone or email.

Benefits of the Program for Employers

Respondents reported many benefits for employers in employing students in the workforce. As with many of the case studies conducted, most respondents felt that school-based Australian apprenticeships provided the council with an effective method for recruiting future staff members. This was seen as a benefit in that it enabled the applicants to be trialled before offering them a permanent position as well as instilling the values of council in potential recruits.

Members of Human Resources indicated they felt SBAA's were not only good PR for the Gold Coast City Council, but also that the council was obliged to be involved. School-based Australian apprenticeships were seen to lift the profile of the council within the community and enabled young people to see the variety of career options available to them through the council.

HR Officer: *I guess it's a prestige interaction as a good corporate citizen which we should be, that goes a long way, I mean teachers, parents, and the school kids themselves and I know throughout careers day kids look at local government and just keep walking they want to go and look at some other business, yet this is one way of starting to chip away at some of those perceptions as to what local government's about and usually when they actually do come in the door and they're doing a school-based traineeship they start to see all different side to it, and that's invaluable.*

HR Officer: *We're a local government provider, we have an obligation to the community, we're a service provider to the community we have a wide ranging corporate responsibility to ensure that the community looks to council to provide all the corporate ranges of services, and one of those is encouraging young people and providing opportunities for young people to*



learn different sorts of skills and to be part of an active community of people that do have one, a common purpose, and that common purpose is to provide services to the community.

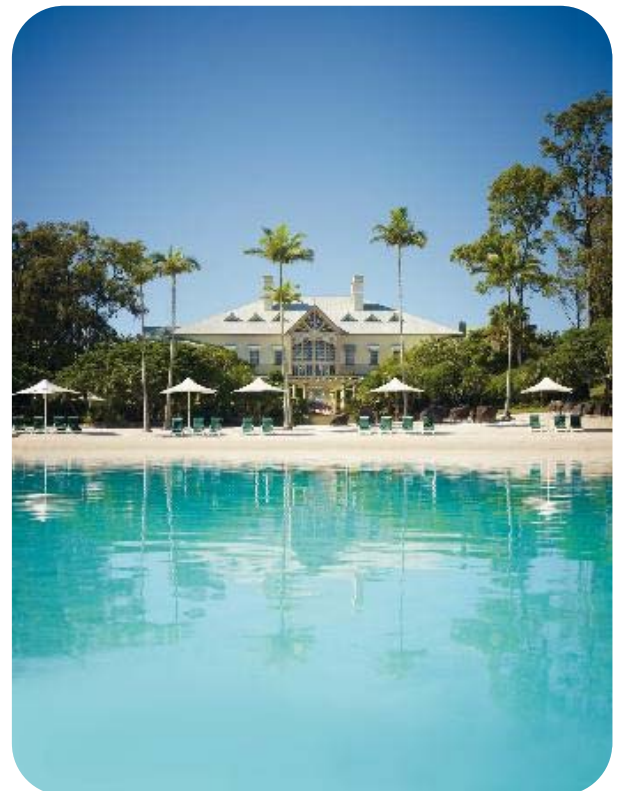
Other benefits of the program for the council included the pleasure of having young people in the workplace; young people were seen to bring a different atmosphere to the workplace that was enjoyed by many staff members. The programs were also seen to be good for the future direction of the council as well as enabling the workplace to have an extra pair of hands on the job. All these benefits made school-based Australian apprenticeships an attractive option to GCCC as an employer. Furthermore, the ability for students to roll over into full-time employment makes the program a success within Council.

Hyatt Regency Sanctuary Cove

The Hyatt has been operating since 1957, when the first hotel was opened in Los Angeles. In 1969, the company became international after opening the Hyatt Regency Hong Kong. There are currently 215 Hyatt hotels and resorts in 43 countries around the world, specialising in deluxe and luxury facilities for both business and leisure. The Hyatt claims to have made a significant contribution in revitalising cities through spurring business as well as population growth. Their plans to build more hotels worldwide are estimated to create 20,000 jobs worldwide.


The Hyatt believes their staff makes the Hyatt experience exceptional, and therefore the company strives to provide staff with career pathways rather than simply employment. The goal of the company is to attract and retain a workforce motivated to provide excellent customer service. Because of their commitment to creating a long-term career path, the Hyatt has invested in training school-based trainees in the hospitality area. The Hyatt Regency at Sanctuary Cove is set on one of the Gold Coast's most exclusive resorts. It is located within a few minutes walk from Sanctuary Cove's Marine Village and marina.

Twelve interviews were conducted at the Hyatt Regency. This included one member of Human Resources, 8 trainers/supervisors and 3 school-based trainees (2 in business administration, 1 in hospitality operations).



Recruitment Process

The Hyatt recruits School-based Australian Apprentices in Business Administration and Hospitality Operations as well as apprentice chefs. They commence the process through SCISCO, who advertise positions to local high schools. Interested students, teachers and parents are able to gain more information by



attending an information night held prior to closing of applications. Students who wish to apply for an SBAA at the Hyatt are required to submit a resume and attend an interview with Human Resources. All applicants are offered an interview; those who are short-listed are required to attend a second interview. Students who appear to be suitable have their references checked before being offered a position.

After students are offered a position with the Hyatt they are given a full-day induction into the hotel, including the company background, occupational health and safety and information relevant to SBAA's. Students are also given inductions in each department they work in prior to commencing in that department.

Training Process

As with these programs, The Hyatt provides both on- and off-the-job training to school-based employees. The on-the-job training component involves learning as you go, commencing with observations, then instruction on how to carry out certain tasks. Students are then expected to perform the tasks, in a supported environment. Students who work in food and beverage are 'buddied' with a more senior team member who assists in the learning on the job. Students are able to gain valuable experience in a variety of areas across the hotel, the various restaurants and departments. Often, SBAA's will be given a task list to complete during the day in the workplace, depending on their role in the hotel. For students undertaking a chef apprenticeship, they commence with knife skills, in order to be competent and confident with a knife, then progress from stocks, soups to build a knowledge base of the profession.


Supervisors keep a record of the training SBAA's have received to ensure all the competencies are achieved. Students attend one day per week, except over the school holidays when they are required to come in for a full week to ensure the time requirements are fulfilled.

Off-the-job training is generally conducted through Bremer Institute of TAFE. A trainer/TAFE representative comes in on a regular basis to go through modules, and assignments with students as well as conduct exams. Generally students undertake the off-the-job component of their traineeship once a month. The department heads will usually run through the modules with trainees to ensure that students are doing all the off-the-job training components on-the-job as well to assure continuity in their training.

Benefits of the Program for Employers

Interviews with representatives of the company including school-based new apprentices, trainers, supervisors, and Human Resources revealed that the major benefits for the Hyatt were the ability of the SBAA to ease the workload of other staff members, as well as the potential to use the program as a recruitment method for future staff. The following comments indicate how staff saw these benefits affecting the company.

HR Officer: *Well I see mainly benefits for the departments actually, especially if they're sort of busy departments. Just having that extra bit of help on hand. I mean once you get over the initial stage of doing all the training and everything else, and they know what to do, then you just let them go with minimal supervision.*



Supervisor: *It's just that extra staff basically, so if there's anything that were behind on, they can just come in and pick up, cause you know, they learn pretty much everything in the office, so they can fill in whatever's needed ... if there's a placement, that can be filled after the twelve months you know, we can consider them to fill that role.*

Supervisor: *Basically just you know, realise that they're not just you know an extra pair of hands, but they are the future as well. Because you are bringing them in, you want to mould them, to train them up. I mean the potential's there for them to move in higher down the ranks.*

Another major benefit considered for the company was the ability to train young people to suit the company's standards, values and work ethics. This in turn led to a career path for students who were suited to the hospitality industry, and therefore provided a recruitment tool for the company.

Altruism was also considered a benefit in taking on school-based Australian apprentices, in so far as providing students with opportunities they may not have otherwise had, as well as the pleasure gained from watching young people grow and develop.

SCISCO Career Pathways

Since 1996, SCISCO Career Pathways has been operation as a non-profit organisation on the Gold Coast to enhance the employment, education and training outcomes for young people aged 13 to 19 years. SCISCO was established as a one-man operation by local independent schools on the Gold Coast to coordinate their VET in Schools programs. They are now funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), and employ a team of 24 staff with the goal of providing support to young people in schools to assist them to achieve their career goals.

SCISCO Career Pathways is committed to offering programs designed to provide support and guidance for young people, including school-based Australian apprenticeships and workplace learning across all industry areas. Other programs offered by SCISCO include Youth Pathways, Career and Transition Support Program, PLAN-IT Youth Mentoring, Adopt-a-School as well as a recruitment service for employers. Some of these programs are designed specifically for at-risk youth and those experiencing numerous obstacles, while others are designed for the entire school population. SCISCO provides advice for youth, their parents, careers advisors in schools and employers. Their programs are provided at low to no cost due to the demographic SCISCO caters for. The company has strong links with 30 high schools as well as numerous employers across various industries on the Gold Coast. SCISCO has assisted over 7000 young people to prepare for their careers.

Five interviews were conducted at SCISCO with the manager, three supervisors/trainers and two graduates of the school-based Australian apprenticeship programme (both in Business Administration).





Recruitment Process



SCISCO Career Pathways commence their recruitment process by advertising the available position to local schools on the Gold Coast. Applicants are then required to send in their resume, from which SCISCO produces a shortlist to be interviewed. The company usually aims to interview a minimum of three applicants, of which two come in for a day of paid work experience as a trial. This not only allows the company to screen the applicants, but allows the young person to determine their interest in and suitability for the position. Reference checks are conducted, and the most suitable applicant is then offered the school-based traineeship. Management, staff and former school-based employees all reported that these processes were highly effective in getting the most suitable person for the position.

Training Process

SCISCO Career Pathways only take on trainees in Business Administration; therefore all training is relevant to that field. As with all school-based traineeships, there are both on and off-the-job training components.

The on-the-job training component involves training conducted in the workplace, mostly supported by a buddy system. School-based trainees are buddied up with the receptionist at SCISCO, who provides instruction in the administration and reception side of the business, while the trainee provides assistance to the receptionist. Once they become familiar with the company, the trainees are often given tasks in other areas of the office. Other staff support the trainee to ensure the student is coping well with their modules and workload.

Off-the-job involves the training is provided by the selected RTO, which varies depending on the individual training contract. The choice of RTO often depends on whether the desired RTO has any user choice funding available to take on another trainee. A representative from the RTO comes on-site approximately once a month. The frequency of visits can be changed on request of the trainees, depending on how they are progressing through the modules. In some cases the trainer goes through the modules, in other cases the student completes the modules independently and can contact the RTO for queries or problems.

Benefits of the Program for Employers

While the sample of respondents at SCISCO was relatively small when compared with the sample at larger companies, the benefits reported align with those reported in larger companies, such as Sea World Resort and The Riviera Group.

As was frequently reported throughout the case studies of employers, the ability to screen potential future staff members was seen as a large benefit for employers taking on an SBAA.

Manager: *The other benefit is that when they leave school we can have them as a full-time employee. So it's good for long-term employment.*

Supervisor: *They're being able to train them the way they want them trained, so they fit in with their business, and so that they, if they're wanting to have you know, the longevity, or take them on, or transition them in to full time, they've had a really good grounding, when they finally do take them on, say in the full-time capacity.*

Another commonly reported benefit was in having young people present in the office. This was seen to be beneficial in a variety of ways; firstly as SCISCO primary clientele is young people, school-based trainees were valuable in keeping older staff members in touch with that age group and ensuring good relationships with clients. Secondly, young people were seen to bring a 'breath of fresh air' into the office in terms of vibrancy and youthful spirit.

Having an extra pair of hands around the office; the ability to train youth to suit the company's ethics and methods; and to show schools and other employers they are willing to take on the exact thing they are promoting were seen as added benefits for the company in employing students through this scheme.

While SCISCO could not guarantee employment to students after completion of their school-based component due to the nature of their funding, in every case they have been able to provide some form of on-going employment should the student want it.

Sea World Resort

Sea World Resort (SWR) is an international hotel with its own training school. The resort has been a leading international hotel on the Gold Coast since it opened in 1988. For 12 of its 18 years, Sea World Resort has consistently delivered the highest hotel occupancy figures on the Gold Coast. The resort comprises 405 luxury rooms in a low-rise, tropical garden setting, with private beach access, and is a short walk to Surfers Paradise beaches. The resort houses four restaurants and offers conference and wedding packages. The resort currently has a team of 350 staff, including 100 apprentices and trainees.



SWR has been a Registered Training Organisation since 1998 and offers school-based traineeships (both Certificate II and III) in Hospitality (Operations) as well as a Certificate III in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery). They also run the HOTEL school, a three day-two night program providing out-of-town students with an

experience in all facets of an international resort. The program includes overnight accommodation, meals, evening entertainment and training. Participants complete level one on their first trip, and can complete level two on a return trip if desired. Teachers are able to participate in a four-day residential professional development program designed to provide teachers with experience and accredited training



as well as a two-day industry placement program to enable experience in the contemporary hospitality industry. Students who complete an SBAA at Sea World Resort are also given other incentives such as passes to the associated theme parks, an overnight accommodation package, and discounts in the affiliated restaurants. The resort encourages Indigenous students to participate in the training options on offer, and employ an Indigenous SBAA coordinator to manage such programs.

Sea World Resort is the first hotel in Queensland to have been awarded a place in the Queensland Hotel Associations Hall of Fame, in the category of best training initiative. In order to achieve this, the hotel must win the same award for three consecutive years. Sea World has won this award five out of the last six years.

In total, 24 interviews were conducted at Sea World Resort with twelve students (two apprentice chefs; ten hospitality operations trainees), four graduates (two apprentice chefs; two hospitality operations trainees), six trainer/supervisors and two members of Human Resources/Management.

Recruitment Process

Sea World Resort advertises positions for school-based trainees in hospitality operations and commercial cookery annually to local high schools on the Gold Coast as well as selected schools in Brisbane. The resort also offers an information evening where parents, students and teachers attend to obtain more information about the program at Sea World Resort. Students then apply for positions through their school or SCISCO by sending in the application form along with their resume.

Sea World Resort then individually interview all applicants and select students for SBAAAs using set criteria including presentation and their responses to interview questions. In some cases students are required to attend a second interview.


Training Process

For students who are involved in the Hospitality (Operations) traineeships, training at SWR is done as a four-part rotation. During each term, students will rotate between four different departments – concierge; food and beverage; housekeeping; and back of house. When students start in each department they get a full-day orientation where they are introduced to staff and supervisors in the specific department, given a tour and shown how the department works.



Students who undertake a traineeship in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery) remain in the kitchen throughout their traineeship, and are taught the skills of the chef trade by the qualified chefs employed at Sea World Resort.

Sea World Resort is an RTO, and also runs the training of SBAAAs in hospitality for a number of other hotels/resorts on the Gold Coast. As with on-the-job training, students rotate to a new department each term. In each department they have a training weekend, which comprises two eight-



hour days over the weekend where the theory side of the department is conducted. This involves instruction in the skills required and practice in an environment separate from resort guests. Students learn how to make coffees; set tables; carry plates; make beds; clean rooms and other such skills as required by the particular department.

All students are also required to sit exams as part of their off-the-job training, and must pass in order to receive their Certificate level Training.

Benefits of Program for Employers

Interviews with representatives of the resort indicated that having an extra pair of hands to get the job done was seen as a major benefit to the company in employing school-based trainees. Due to the seasonal nature of the hospitality industry, having a pool of trained employees to call on during busy periods is an essential requirement, and the school-based Australian Apprenticeship scheme provided this pool to the resort. This was by far the most commonly reported benefit for the company.

2IC: *The main benefit really was extra pairs of arms and legs so that if housekeeping is busy, they can assist housekeeping. If banqueting is busy, they can go there, so they're an extra pool of people. That's one thing, to cope with the peaks and troughs of the business.*

The other commonly reported benefits included using the program as a method of recruitment of staff; the resultant learning environment created through having a large proportion of trainees within the company; and monetary benefits, including incentives received through training and employing an SBAA.

HR Officer: *It's a recruitment thing. Because we were struggling to find the staff, the qualified staff, so now at the end of the year we've just got 70 to choose from who are skilled and we know how they work, so it's really for a recruitment thing.*

2IC: *Probably the main focus is it helps to bring in a learning culture to the organisation, so that even when you're training people you're learning from them as well. So there's really no one in this organisation that wouldn't be touched by the school-based trainees.*

Trainer: *I think it keeps all the staff on their toes, because you're there as a demonstrator, it's made me take this job seriously, it's always been a bit of a joke job, it's more of a lifestyle thing, you don't earn a lot of money doing it, so you've got to love it... They allow a lot of our staff to be teachers and demonstrators, and it keeps reminding us what's the right way to do it, and it makes us question what we're doing and are we doing it right.*

Other reported benefits included that the students were good workers, having youth in the resort was seen positively by both guests and staff, and that it enabled other staff to maintain standards of excellence.




Stoddart Metal Fabricators

Stoddart has been operating since 1959, and is Australia's premier metal fabricator and engineers. They manufacture a large range of metal products in their factory in Brisbane, with offices in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. Stoddart employs 360 staff across seven major product divisions. Stoddart has worked on major commercial kitchens including international hotels, resorts and sports stadiums. Along with the commercial kitchen division, there is also food service equipment; plumbing products; store fixtures; and refrigeration. Stoddart also manufactures kitchen exhaust systems, bathroom and sanitary products and external street furniture. They have supplied and installed products for Virgin Megastores, Meridian Hotels, DFS Duty Free Stores and The Sheraton to name a few.

Stoddart is passionate about training and offer various career paths to their employees. They are committed to apprentice training, employing approximately 25 new apprentices every year, including a number of school-based apprentices. Apprenticeships at Stoddart tend to be in Sheet Metal Fabrication.



In total, seven interviews were conducted at Stoddart, with two current SBAA's, human resources, supervisors and the Managing Director. Some of these interviews were conducted in person, while others were conducted by telephone.

Recruitment Process

The recruitment process for school-based apprentices at Stoddart is similar to the processes used at both The Riviera Group and Zupps. Stoddart advises Commerce Queensland of upcoming school-based new apprenticeship who promotes the positions to schools in Brisbane. Schools then encourage students to apply for the positions. The


company holds an information evening in their showroom, which enables students, parents and teachers to have a look at the factory, and for Stoddart to promote apprenticeships within the metal trades areas. This evening also enables students and their parents to discover what is involved in an SBAA at Stoddart.

Applicants are interviewed by senior staff members and human resources, to gauge their interest in the trade area. Their school mathematics results and shop skills are taken into account as well. Successful applicants are required to undertake a full-day induction on-site where they are given background information on the company, a health and safety induction, basic tool handling skills and any other relevant information for the school-based apprenticeship.

Stoddart has adopted many of the principles used by The Riviera Group including information evenings and that school-based apprentices have a slightly different uniform to full-time employees in order for them to be easily identified and monitored in the workplace.



Training Process



This section will examine the processes used by Stoddart to train their school-based apprentices in the skills required for their trade. This section will look at both the on and off-the-job training provided to school-based apprentices.

Off-the-Job Training

Students undertaking an SBAA at Stoddart are required to undertake 6 months of off-the-job training prior to commencing on the factory floor. They attend the local TAFE College for one day a week as school-based apprentice.

On-the-Job Training

Leading hands instruct school-based apprentices in the skills of the trade and assign tasks for them to undertake during their time on the job as they would with a full-time apprentice. Initially, the SBAA is treated as an off-sider for the day, where they will observe tasks being undertaken, then attempt to undertake them. All apprentices build up competencies before being allowed to undertake tasks independently. Once the student is deemed competent in a task, they are able to undertake those tasks independently. Usually the student will commence with basic tasks such as cutting steel and progress from there. The leading hands/tradesmen are required to sign up for responsibility of the student's safety, and are required to check the SBAA's work after completion to ensure it meets standards.

Benefits of the School-based New Apprenticeship Program


In this section, the reported benefits of the School-based New Apprenticeship program at Stoddart will be discussed. Respondents were asked to discuss the benefits they saw for students and the company, and to speculate on any resulting benefits for high schools through provision of such programs. While the sample of respondents at Stoddart is relatively small, the benefits reported are similar to those reported in companies offering apprenticeships, such as Zupps and The Riviera Group.

For the Company

Interviews with representatives of the company including current school-based new apprentices, supervisors, human resources and the managing director revealed the following benefits for the company:

Benefits for the Company	n
Good workers	4
Recruitment method	2
Monetary Reasons	2
Unsure	2
Employees know job	1
Extra pair of hands	1
Other	2

Table 7.1: Benefits reported for the company



School-based new apprenticeships were seen by my respondents to provide Stoddart with a pool of good workers to recruit full-time apprentices from. The following comments are indicative of this

HR Officer: *It's good because they guys get to choose, they get to sort of try before they buy, you know, that's a really good thing both for us and for them. So that's probably the main thing.*

Supervisor: *He's here, you know, he's probably only here one day a week, but like at least he's sort of learning and you know down the track he's sort of got an idea of what's going on.*

Supervisor: *It's just giving us you know a wider number in what tradesmen we want to pick at the end of the four years. So we do get apprentices on volume, and then we can pick them at the end of the four years.*

School-based apprentices were also seen to be an extra pair of hands to aid in getting the job done, as well as providing employees who know how to do the job, thereby saving time in training.

Supervisor: *Well we getting apprentices keen all the way through, which is one good thing, but after the two years, the last two years of their last two years of college, of school, they actually go into the second years apprentice, so when they actually come here, they're a fair way into their apprenticeship.*

Supervisor: *While they're still in their learning period, he's still not, well his still only doing a bit, but he's not going to be non-productive all the time. He's going to know stuff, and he can actually keep going, and have him here just sort of as a big run, and not waste our time and teach them.*

Furthermore, the Managing Director felt that the school-based apprenticeship program would allow the company to have better educated applicants who will therefore be able to do their job better and be more successful within the company

Managing Director: *We're anticipating that you're taking a grade 12 graduate who benefits with better maths, English standards than a grade 10 applicant, and he has the benefits of having some work experience. We find grade 12, we have tended, because of the difficulty in finding applicants in recent years of going back and trying to attract sheet metal workers out of a Grade 10 graduate rather than waiting until Grade 12. But I think the standard of maths is such that the better applicants are out of grade 12, but wage rates comes into it too. You know, so, there's a lot of issues, so school-based we think is a benefit because we're getting the essential learning to a grade 12 level in the applicant, but also the benefit of a couple of years work experience. So they're coming into their second year at age 17 completing their first year and also having an educational standard higher than what they would have had if we'd taken them full-time as a grade 10 graduate, so that's a benefit I see myself, I'm yet to prove it with the facts.*

Other benefits cited for the company included the government incentives for hiring school-based apprentices.

The approach taken by Stoddart is particularly powerful given the difficulties faced by this industry in the recruitment of young people. As noted in this case study, the process of the SBAA allows the company to access young employees to encourage them into the industry. Further, by remaining in school, they are educated to higher standards in key areas that are needed by the industry. In this way, the SBAA approach is ideal for creating educated people to cater for the demands of a difficult-to-staff industry.

The Riviera Group

Riviera commenced operations on the Gold Coast in 1980. The company started with only 350 employees at their current site, and have grown to over 1300 employees, 200 of which are apprentices. Riviera currently produces 450 luxury boats every year, and exports to over 35 countries worldwide. The growth of the company sees it now as the largest boat building facility in the Southern Hemisphere. Based in the marine precinct at Coomera, Riviera is well located for the marine industry.

In conjunction with a local high school, school-based apprenticeships were established at Riviera in 1996 with four students. Beginning as a trial, the company's training manager recognised the need for school students to have opportunities to sample work in the industry while providing the company with a potential apprenticeship market. The arrangement has been progressively modified as both the numbers and interest have grown. The success of the model means that the company now recruits almost all apprentices through the school-based apprenticeship program. Since commencing the program, Riviera has employed over 200 students in school-based apprenticeships in areas such as boatbuilding, electrical and engineering. Students travel to Coomera from southern parts of Brisbane through to northern NSW, to undertake their apprenticeships, and this has required negotiation with Queensland Rail to allow Riviera employees special privileges such as taking their bikes on trains during

non-bike time so as to be able to travel to work. Students also travel from the Beaudesert shire, approximately 70 kilometres west of the Gold Coast. In 2006, Riviera had 40 students participating in school-based apprenticeships, from 24 schools. To support their induction into the company, Riviera has developed a unique uniform (printed T-Shirts) for school-based apprentices allowing staff to easily identify and support them in their new role. It has also enabled school-based employees to develop identity and pride as a Riviera employee.

Traditionally the marine industry has been a male-dominated field. In recent years, Riviera has been proactive in seeking young women to undertake SBAAAs and move them into full apprenticeships. Similarly, they have been working towards increasing the involvement of young Indigenous students in the SBAAAs.

Due to the number of apprentices on site, Riviera has its own state-of-the-art training facilities, and is in a partnership with an RTO. The model used by Riviera has been adopted by numerous other companies nationally, with the training team manager being an invited speaker at many forums.



Many graduates from the apprenticeship program also move into tertiary studies in areas such as engineering and education.

The case study conducted at Riviera involved interviews with 42 staff including 12 school-based apprentices (2 electrical; 1 engineering; 9 boatbuilding), 18 graduates of the program over a variety of skill levels, 10 trainers/supervisors, 1 member of HR and the CEO.

Recruitment Process


Riviera advertises positions for school-based apprentices annually around June to schools on the Gold Coast and Brisbane by sending out information packs as well as going to schools to promote their program. Riviera also holds a series of information evenings (two to three) on site, for students, parents and teachers to attend to provide information about the school-based program at Riviera. Any students interested in applying are required to send in their resumes and Semester One school reports to be considered for a position. Students are expected to have reasonable marks in both mathematics and English, as well as good attitude/behaviour comments in all subject areas. An interest in manual arts, though desirable, is not essential.

Students who meet all the requirements undergo a four-day induction over their September school holidays. This induction covers everything from occupational health and safety to tool use. Tests to gain insights into the students' literacy and numeracy levels have been implemented and provide the trainers with a sense of how much support may be needed by a potential employee. Students then complete work experience one day a week for the duration of Term Four. At some point during their work experience phase, students are informally interviewed to gauge their interest in and enjoyment of the position. Following successful completion of work experience, students are signed on for the one day per week SBAA in year 12. Students frequently commence their SBAA over the Christmas holidays between year 11 and 12 in order to start accruing up the required hours.



Training Process

The Riviera Group has its own on-site training facility, where an authorised trainer from the local TAFE College is employed to train Riviera apprentices in marine craftsmanship. Apprentices in other areas such as engineering and electrical are required to attend TAFE colleges elsewhere due to their smaller numbers. Riviera also has a team of five staff employed in the training department. All apprentices, including school-based are given training plans, which cover the first, second, third and fourth years of their apprenticeship. From that, the TAFE trainer revolves his



timetable around what the apprentices are doing each year. Over the 12-month period, apprentices will have between 9 and 13 competencies delivered to them off-the-job so that by the time they commence their full-time apprenticeship they are well into their first year competencies, with a fair amount of experience behind them. Each competency equates to a number of days off-the-job training, ranging from one to several days. Some of this training is done during the extra time students are required to complete during school holidays.

On-the-job training is conducted through team work. A group of apprentices are assigned to work on a boat at a certain stage of production depending on the stage at which they are at in their apprenticeship. They are assigned a mentor who is either a senior apprentice or a qualified tradesman, who allocates their daily tasks and supervises their work and progress. School-based apprentices work mostly on fibre-glassing and flow-coating, and are not permitted to use large machinery such as band saws and drop saws until they commence full-time employment. School-based apprentices are given monthly performance appraisals like any other Riviera employee. If students are found to be falling behind in their skills acquisition, production managers will spend time one-on-one bringing them up to the required level. Riviera also spends time ensuring their apprentices have good communication skills and are willing team players, as the company views these soft skills as very important.

Benefits of the Program for Employers

As with many of the other case studies conducted, the commonly perceived benefit for employers was the ability to use the program as a means of recruiting suitable apprentices. This benefit includes the time and money saved in advertising positions, interviewing, trialling and employing apprentices. This is further supported by The Riviera Group's commitment to employing apprentices solely through the school-based new apprenticeship scheme. To obtain an apprenticeship with Riviera through any other means is virtually unheard of due to the significantly higher drop out rates experienced with such employment mechanisms.


Supervisor: *I think it's just a strategy that we've used to get people to be apprentices, and I think we've gone that way because society has changed with regard to the apprenticeship, the way people used to do it, leave year 10, now we expect them to finish school*

Supervisor: *I guess in a sense they get to lock in some kids before they leave school, because there could be other opportunities that pop up when you get out of school, but making that decision in grade 11, you sort of don't worry about going looking for anything else.*

Other commonly reported benefits were that SBAs enabled young people to be trained in the values and ethics of the company, without prior exposure to other companies, and before developing a poor work ethic.

CEO: *We are able to pick the best students direct from school before they have been exposed to the range of bad habits that tend to develop post-school and they readily embrace the 'The Riviera Group' culture.*

The young people were commonly viewed as being good workers, and hiring them enabled the company to save money, through government funding provided for school-based employees. Other benefits for the company mentioned by participants included addressing the skill shortages, especially for the Marine Industry, and easing the workload of other full-time apprentices and tradesmen.



The school-based Australian Apprenticeship scheme at Riviera is an example of exemplary practice. The program enables students to complete an extended period of paid work experience prior to signing contracts ensuring their satisfaction with and suitability to the career. The program also provides students with a direct pathway into full-time employment and a trade qualification, obtaining time off their apprenticeship in recognition of the time spent in the school-based portion. Students receive quality training as well as much support from staff at Riviera in their transition into the workplace.

In a highly competitive market, Riviera sees it as critical to build in company loyalty with its employees. The pathways from school to work and extended in the company so that employees have career pathways whilst at Riviera. The practices identified in this project are embedded in the ethos of the company.

Trevor West Hair Works

Since 1997, Trevor West, the owner of Trevor West Hair Works has been training hairdressers on the Gold Coast. Trevor is a certified teacher whose philosophy is to grow his own in order to ensure qualified, cutting edge staff. He also believes that training encourages staff loyalty, thereby reducing staff turnover and providing a career path for his employees, rather than just a job. For three consecutive years, Trevor West Hair Works has entered the Queensland Training Awards Regional Small Employer, winning the past two. Trevor also sends his staff to the annual hair expo in Sydney to encourage and develop their skills and loyalty.

Training is a key priority at Trevor West Hair Works, where they partner with the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE to train apprentice hairdressers. The case study at Trevor West Hair Works was small with only three interviews conducted, including one with Trevor West, and two with apprentice hairdressers. Although the sample is small, it is representative of small business and typical of owner-operated salons.



Recruitment Process

Trevor West maintains a close relationship with Industry Liaison Officers at local schools, and advises them when a vacancy becomes available for a school-based apprenticeship. Trevor also endeavours to provide work experience opportunities for students interested in hairdressing.

Students who are interested in a school-based apprenticeship in hairdressing are required to attend a trial as well as go through an interview process in order to ensure suitability.

Owner: *Sometimes you don't know what sort of perception they have. Typically they come along and say that I've always wanted to do hairdressing. I do make-up and do the hair on my doll, and I do the dog at home or whatever, and their concept of what hairdressing is is really like nothing to do with the fact that they want to do hairdressing.*

The recruitment of school-based apprentices has enabled Trevor to recruit full-time apprentices. The process of recruiting through SBAs has also provided Trevor with a level of staff loyalty as well.

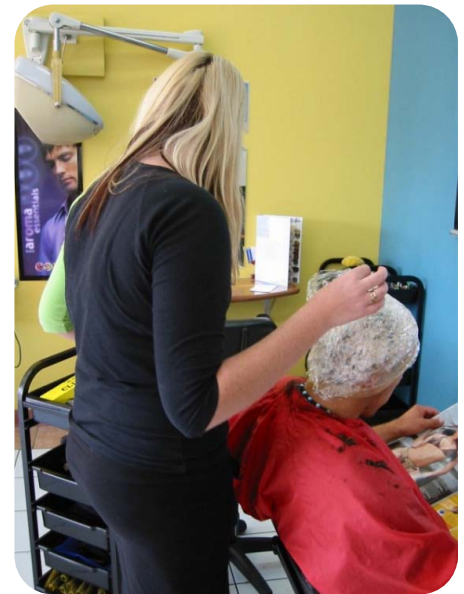
Training Process

As the winner of multiple training awards, Trevor West puts training first and foremost in his salon. His philosophy of 'growing his own' staff means that substantial time and money is invested in training.

The training policy at Trevor West is hands on and practically-based. Trevor gets his apprentices working as soon as possible, starting small, with showing students how to hold a pair of scissors, then basic cuts until they are ready to progress further.

Parents, family and friends are often invited in at no charge for the school-based apprentices to learn on. At the end of each day and week, Trevor likes to ask all his apprentices what new things they learned that week to ensure responsibility and accountability for their own learning.

Students completing a school-based apprenticeship with Trevor West do their off-the-job training at the local TAFE College. Students are required to attend classes once a fortnight, which means they have three days off school per fortnight – two to attend the workplace and one to attend the TAFE College. Off-the-job training is stipulated by the training provider, in this case Gold Coast Institute of TAFE, and entails students doing work books and modules then practicing techniques on models.



Benefits of the Program for Employers

Due to the small sample of respondents at this small salon, only a few benefits were discussed as they related to employers of school-based apprentices. The major benefit of the program for employers was the ability to use the program as a recruitment tool. The program enables the business owner to effectively screen potential employees prior to signing them on for a full-time permanent position. This is especially important for trade positions due to the lengthy time and financial commitment required from employers. The owner also described that due to the pressures and life changes occurring amongst young people of that age, the program enabled the young person to trial the career path and either continue on to the full-time apprenticeship or move on to other avenues prior to a large commitment being made by either party.

Owner: *The benefits are that you can actually indenture them for Cert II, not Cert III, so that if they're not suitable within that maybe 6-12 months you can identify that. So that is a benefit because there is an unknown quantity. I've trained a lot of apprentices, and I probably have a 50% success rate, and I don't know whether that's good, average, or what. But that's because sometimes, they're in a stage of their life where there's a lot happening, a lot of changes taking place, there's a struggle for independence, and they don't always make good choices and decisions. Or they lose their way; they become uncertain about what they're doing. They get, you know a contract of an apprenticeship is four years, it's a long time in their lifetime. For me it's not a very long time at all. I'm conscious, very, very conscious of my responsibilities in making sure that they can do what they need to do at the end of that contracted time, and that we've made the most of our opportunities, and of their talents and training. But then sometimes they just, you know, they stop putting in, and sometimes they get boyfriends who are not good influences who may be unemployed. They*

don't go to work, so why should the girl, and so you know they play the system to find their way through. A lot of different reasons, but you know, probably about 50%.

Respondents also described the program as providing employers with the ability to train young people to the demands and needs of their particular business. This was conducted prior to young people learning too many “bad” habits in other workplaces.

All respondents described school-based apprentices as providing an extra pair of hands in the salon, enabling other staff to get on with their job, and easing the pressure on the staff. For this reason, employers can choose the busiest day to employ the school-based apprentice in order to help alleviate the pressure.

Apprentice: *They just make so much of a difference, even answering the phones and rinsing off colours. You don't know how important it is until you have no one to do it.*

Like the other companies providing almost guaranteed employment for apprentices following the satisfactory completion of their school-based new apprenticeship, Trevor West Hair Works is an excellent example of the potential of school-based apprenticeships. The seamless transition of young women into hairdressing (though opportunities exist for males, the typical young hairdresser is female) provided by Trevor West Hair Works as well as the commitment to excellence in training is an example of exemplary practice and provides a model for other employers. As a small business operator, Trevor West has taken the school-based transition into the overall, long-term planning for his business.

Zupps

Zupps began in Queensland in 1948, when Percy Zupp opened a small garage in Ipswich, west of Brisbane. Since then, Percy's son, John has significantly expanded the company – with several outlets across Brisbane and the Gold Coast, including ten vehicle dealerships, three truck centres and a parts distribution network ranging as far north as Townsville. Zupps employs over 600 staff and sells over 11,000 new and used vehicles every year. The company is Queensland's largest privately owned motor group, with a strong connection to the community of South East Queensland. Zupps specialises in new Holden, Kia, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Peugeot, Saab, Subaru and Suzuki, and sells an even larger variety of used vehicles. All Zupps dealerships also supply parts and apparel as well as service most vehicle makes and models.

Zupps boasts having the most up-to-date automotive technology available and pride themselves on servicing vehicles to the highest levels. Zupps has a strong commitment to training and development, with the establishment of the Zupps Training Institute in the late 1990's for training staff across all areas of the company.

Interviews were conducted with seven members of staff at one Gold Coast outlet of Zupps including two school-based apprentices, one graduate of the program, three trainer/supervisors and one member of management.





Recruitment Process



The recruitment process for School-based new apprentices at Zupps is similar to the process used by The Riviera Group in that Zupps hold an information evening at their head office in early September for parents, students, careers counsellors and any other relevant and interested parties to attend. The information night presents information on the programs offered at Zupps, but also gives attendees the opportunity to tour the workshop with stations displaying the different aspects of the mechanical trade. Students who attend this evening are given an information pack with an application form which is submitted along with a resume to Head Office. Head Office then distributes the application forms out to the relevant store, depending on the location of student. The local Zupps outlet is then responsible for interviewing suitable applicants and selecting two or three students for a school-based new apprenticeship.

When recruiting school-based apprentices, Zupps looks for students who are keen and lively, as their philosophy is you can teach anything to someone who is keen and interested. The company is also trying to promote mechanical trades to students who are bright enough to attend university, but would prefer a hands on career as the mechanical trade is increasingly becoming more computer oriented. This option enables students to complete a trade and progress on to engineering at university, if desired, to work in the manufacturing of cars. This process has been successful to date, with students progressing on to full-time apprenticeships on completion of year 12.

Training Process


As with many school-based new apprenticeships, especially those within larger companies, students are required to complete a formal induction as well as on-going training. The full-day induction into the company is held at Head Office in Brisbane, and enables staff to be fitted for uniforms, provides a general induction into the company and covers the Health and Safety regulations.

At Zupps, students in school-based apprenticeships are given a full overview of the mechanical trade and are heavily involved in the trade aspects of the job during their school-based portion of the apprenticeship in an effort to prevent dropouts after becoming full-time. The training involves working with a qualified tradesman and assisting them with daily jobs, and enables apprentices to be autonomous workers, who can complete many tasks independently. Students are often given jobs to do on their own if they are competent, which are checked by their supervising tradesmen on completion. It is not until they go full-time that apprentices are given jobs such as sweeping floors and tidying up. They then do these 'menial' tasks for the remaining six months of their first year apprenticeship, before they move back into mechanical repairs and servicing.

School-based apprentices at Zupps attend the local TAFE College for the off-the-job component of their learning. Students are expected to attend the TAFE College for one full day a week, as well as their full day on-the-job.



Benefits of the Program for Companies



Representatives of the company indicated that the company benefited in numerous ways through employing high school students in school-based new apprenticeships. The largest benefit to the company was the ability to use the program as a recruitment method for future staff members. The process enabled the company to trial future employees, to see their work ethic and affinity towards the mechanical trades prior to employing them permanently. The program also enabled the company to employ full-time staff members who knew the job. The students had become familiar with the company and worksite over their 12-24 months in the SBAA, so no time was lost when they became full-time, and the young people knew how to do the job.

Some representatives felt that SBAA provided the company with an extra pair of hands on the day they attended the work site, and that the students were good workers, and valuable on the floor.

SBAA: *At the end of it [SBAA] they'll get a fully qualified mechanical technician. So then they've got you for the four years as an employee and then after that.*

Supervisor: *Also for us too, if they're nothing but horrible, why put them on. We're not going to waste our money and time on him. We can go see you later, or make the decision to train him more. Really, it's a try before you buy type thing for them [the students] too.*

Manager: *To get kids that are keen on doing this sort of work, the complaint usually is that the kids you get to interview for trades have missed out on moving to their next goal, at university or whatever it is, so this is their second choice. We want to make it their first choice, so we want a better style of kid, a better quality kid.*

Trainer: *Like we get the say two years, and then we get them in the shop, they're already experienced, they already know what's what, and they can, they should be already at a higher level by the time they so instead of them, say they go two years there and they've really got another 6-12 months of the lower levels, the basic training sort of thing, before the start doing the car stuff, but they've already got a bit of an idea*

As the sample was small for the case study at Zupps, there are few benefits reported for the company, however the program was seen as highly valuable.



7b. Case Study of Rural Victoria and New South Wales



This case study will focus on the school-to-work transition programs implemented in local high schools in the North East corner of Victoria- from Seymour in the South, Echuca in the West, Wodonga in the north and Bright in the East, as well as the Riverina district of New South Wales. The case study examined the specific issues that face rural communities in providing school-to-work transitions and alternative pathways for students as well as the benefits unique to rural communities.

Schools were invited to participate in the research project initially through a letter addressed to the principal. Most schools in the region elected to participate in the study, however some schools had other commitments on during the time interviews were scheduled. Interviews were primarily conducted via telephone due to the significant distances from the university. Our thanks go to participating schools for their time and cooperation.

Programs Offered in Rural Regions


Traditional work placement programs were offered in rural schools, including work experience, Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools programs and work education. While most schools in rural Victoria offered school-based Australian apprenticeships to students, schools in New South Wales did not tend to offer these options to students on a regular basis. Barriers to SBAAAs in NSW were mostly related to the curriculum, timetable and HSC requirements; however, this will be explored further later.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) subjects are offered in almost all schools across Australia, and the regions included in this case study were no exception. The subjects are offered as part of the VCE or HSC curriculum and usually reflect local employment needs, including primary industries; IT; Hospitality; and construction. The subjects involve the student undertaking a set amount of hours in the workplace.

All schools participating in the study offered work experience to their students, with most schools offering it as a block placement. Due to the limited options in many small rural towns, many schools organised placements in nearby or readily accessible major towns and cities, such as Newcastle, Sydney and Melbourne. For some students in smaller country towns, regional centres such as Wagga Wagga or Albury/Wodonga were towns in which they sought placements. In some cases students were required to make these arrangements themselves, and in most cases, placements depended on the student having a family friend or relative to stay with in the city.

Many schools offered other programs outside of work experience and VET in Schools. Often the programs depended on the state, with Victoria commonly offering school-based Australian apprenticeships and the MIPPS program, while NSW schools have “The Real Game” and “Plan-It Youth”. Schools in both states also offer specific programs for at-risk students. Some schools across both states also have work education subjects in place within the schools, in some cases it is embedded in other subjects, while in others it is a specific subject. Furthermore, some schools offer it is a compulsory subject, while for others it as an elective.

The Managed Individual Pathways Program (MIPPS) is offered only in Victoria, and is a program designed to assist students in making career choices then



working towards them during their senior years of schooling. In some schools, the students are first surveyed in Year 7 with the process becoming more complex towards their final years of schooling. Interviews are conducted in Year 10 and then again at 6-12 month intervals to discuss their career goals and how to achieve them. The process is designed to assist students in subject selection and arranging relevant work experience.

The “Real Game” is a teaching unit focussed on imparting the skills of life onto students. The unit covers areas such as budgeting, investing, working life, resumes and similar skills students will require for success in life. “Plan-It Youth” is a mentoring program for students in Year 10, where community members mentor students, and students have excursions to different workplaces in the local area.

Programme Set-Up and Monitoring Processes

School-based Australian apprenticeships in Victoria are arranged similarly to the methods used in Queensland. However, in NSW work placements for students doing VET subjects, work experience and SBAAAs tend to be arranged through a district office. The schools provide information regarding options offered through the district office, and students then approach district office for further assistance. Some schools elected to place students as part of their VET subject themselves. These schools tended to have a coordinator who arranges these placements through contacting employers.

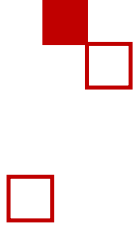
In both states students can arrange their own work experience in other regions, such as Sydney, Melbourne, or nearby larger towns, but these students must also have somewhere to stay during their time away. Due to the nature of the communities in rural areas, many students use family connections to gain work experience. However, most schools reported that local employers were extremely supportive of work placement initiatives.

One school in New South Wales arranged annual trips for students to Newcastle. These work placements were arranged for students who expressed interest. Students were sent by train to Newcastle for a week, with accommodation arranged by the school, and students monitored via telephone throughout the week.

Benefits of School-to-work Transition Programs

The benefits of transition programs are many and varied for all stakeholders, depending on the nature of the program. This section will examine the benefits afforded specifically to rural communities through the school-to-work transition programs. Due to the varied nature of programs offered across the two states, these programs will be referred to as ‘workplace experiences’ unless describing a specific program such as the SBAA program or work experience.

Many of the benefits reported in rural areas were similar to those reported in Queensland, including motivating students at school; improved behaviour in the classroom; and providing opportunities for students. This section will focus on the benefits specific to rural regions. Developing community relationships was viewed as an enormous benefit not only for schools, but for students, employers and the community as a whole. This sense of community was empowering for many rural communities, enabling opportunity and a sense of responsibility of the community towards the future of their youth.



Lois: *You build up partnerships with the local community and education is then seen not just as a function of the school. It's that education has a really broad meaning or connotation. It's everybody's responsibility not just the schools' responsibility. It's also the communities'. (Vic)*

Jane: *It builds up really good relationships in the community. I think, we're very lucky in [town name] that most of the employers see it as a positive thing to have the students come and do work experience... I think the links between the schools and businesses are an important thing. (NSW)*

Linking in with industry was seen to not only help schools better understand the needs of industry but also enabled industry to better understand the school environment and culture, resulting in more tolerant and committed employers. The programs were also seen as good public relations for the schools in two ways. Teachers reported that having responsible students in the workplace enabled employers to have a positive view of the school as a whole. The programs also showed the community that schools were doing something tangible through enhancing the employment opportunities of young people in the community. This reflected positively back on the schools image in the community. This in turn enhances the social capital of the community through the creation of strong links between schools and industry.

Many teachers in rural regions felt that a major benefit for students in workplace experiences were the opportunity for students to get out of the country and experience life in the city, or a larger town. The programs enabled students to experience city life for a few weeks; to learn how to use public transport; and experience something completely different to life in the country. The programs also enabled students to develop links with people and companies in the city, enhancing their social capital and therefore their future opportunities.


Andrea: *It's a great eye opener. They go somewhere bigger than [town], we are only 3000 people. So, we run a work placement program to go to Melbourne. There's a huge difference between working in a restaurant in Melbourne to working at the pub here, so it broadens their horizons. (NSW)*

Belinda: *Well because we come from a small school they have to live away from home, they have to work out, start thinking about transport and accommodation and just meeting new people, get out of their environment where they know everyone or every local employer is an uncle (NSW)*

Some teachers also felt that these work placements enabled students to become more employable, especially students moving to the city to study at university. The skills and qualifications gained through the work placement would assist them in gaining a part-time job to help support themselves. As many families in rural Australia are struggling financially, especially due to the drought, the ability of young people help support themselves through university can relieve a burden from families who send their children away to university.

Other Benefits

Gaining social capital was seen as an excellent benefit for students in school-based Australian apprenticeships and other work placement programs due to the



contacts and networks resulting from them being in the workforce. This networking was seen as essential for young people in rural areas – whether it meant linking in with local employers, or developing networks outside the community to broaden their horizons when leaving school.

Geoff: *I think the other thing, the beneficial thing really for the students is that it gives them a bit of exposure and if they create a good impression, if they are keen then local employers will know they are probably looking for work, lot of these students are actually, if they were offered work they would probably leave school. So it puts them out there in the public domain (NSW)*

Tania: *Because it is a rural community, employers love the fact that their own children have a future ... that their own son or daughter might be in that program. It means that the local youth - their sons and daughters, friends, relatives are able to gain work. So for a rural community this is an important issue that probably isn't in an urban setting. In a rural community it's something that they feel strongly about. Because they really take ownership of the young people and they say our young people get jobs. And for employers in a rural community that's important. (NSW)*

Allowing young people in the community to obtain workplace experiences enables employers to contribute to the economic capital of the community through providing employment in the town. This provision of employment within the community allows young people to stay in their community and prevent the youth drain currently occurring in many regional towns in Australia. Furthermore, workplace experiences reportedly had a positive impact on the entire school body, motivating other students to succeed.



School-based Australian apprenticeships reportedly changed the way the community viewed young people. One teacher in a Victorian school reported that young people were given a lot of bad press resulting in largely negative views of young people, but linking young people with the community through workplace experiences, this view had been altered.

Issues Associated with Transition Programs

This section will examine specific issues encountered by rural schools. While such initiatives do encounter other problems, many of those issues have already been considered in previous sections of this report, including timetabling issues, the lack of time allocated to administer such programs, and the attitude of other teachers and school staff towards such initiatives. Therefore this section will focus on specific issues facing schools located in rural areas of Victoria and New South Wales. This section will consider these limitations collectively for schools, students and employers as many of the issues facing one group directly affect the other groups and the nature of the programs. How these problems are circumvented will also be discussed.

Size of the Town

The size of the town was a significant factor to the implementation of workplace experiences. Many of the schools participating in this case study had populations under 5000. Due to the limited number of employers as well as types of industry, placing students could be a very difficult task with teachers often having to rely on



students having contacts outside the town. This also had implications on monitoring students in the workplace – the distance meant teachers could not go out to the employer to check up on the progress of the student.

Diane: *One limitation is that we are a small country town and to try and place students in some areas of employment for experience is very difficult. We don't have a scope of occupations that a bigger centre would have, so we do get to the stage where you know, we say to the kids, do they have relatives in a larger centre so that we can send them elsewhere. (NSW)*

George: *There are no SBAA's operating at [name] High School, because there are few available industries to participate in the scheme. The town has only retail or hospitality opportunities and for example doesn't offer hairdressing, which is in high demand. One student started an SBAA in 2005 as a mechanic but had to drop it because he didn't have a license and couldn't get transport. (NSW)*

As opportunities are quite limited in small towns, many students may not have access to their desired career path in town. Due to this, many schools offer students the opportunity to leave town to do work experience in larger towns and capital cities. For placements a long distance away, students are required to have family or friends with whom they can lodge. For placements out of town, such as on a nearby farm, students are required to have transport. Due to the lack of infrastructure in small towns, this can be limiting for students who do not have access to networks outside their town, and for students without a drivers license or car.

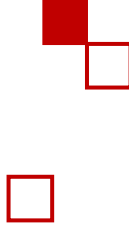
Andrea: *Well if kids are interested in an industry or career which is not in [town name] they basically have to have family or friends they can go and stay with, in a larger centre, and getting into places in larger centres is often, well impossible, unless you know somebody. So if you're interested in doing Law, the local solicitors here won't take anyone. The CPS at the courthouse can't take anyone. So, unless you have a friend or family member who works in a legal practice somewhere else, it's basically impossible. (NSW)*

Joanne: *Yeah, in a small community, we send them in all different directions depending on where they want to go. We access businesses in Wagga. We access businesses in Temora which is down the road that way. I mean quite frequently the odd student will go further afield like to Canberra or even to Sydney. So being small, we don't have many opportunities in the local community because it is so small. (NSW)*

Justin: *Transport can be an issue. We're a rural town and we're a bit of a distance from the city. Sometimes there are opportunities for jobs that students just can't access by public transport and parents aren't able to assist and they're not old enough to have their license. (Vic)*

The financial cost of sending students away for work placements was also quite restrictive for parents of students. Parents would be required to pay for travel, accommodation, meals and so forth in order for their child to be placed outside the region. For many families, this cost was prohibitive, though some families were able to have their children billeted with family or friends in larger cities.

Obtaining an appropriate training provider was also difficult for schools in rural areas. The training facilities simply did not exist in many small towns. Any training



modules were delivered by correspondence, so the support for students studying those modules was very limited, which in turn placed a lot of pressure on schools to provide the necessary support for such students.

Drought-Related Issues

The effect of the drought in rural Australia had resulted in many businesses and employers having to downsize or close down in the towns involved in this study. The same was true for many government agencies and this not only impacted on the ability of many schools to find employers able to take students for workplace experience, but also resulted in many families, professionals and other community members leaving town to find opportunity elsewhere.

Janice: *We have a very small town with low employment. The major employer was the Abattoirs. They closed down in the drought, for a long time. Then it re-opened for six months and now they've closed down permanently, so there goes one major employer. This has affected the whole town. We've lost a lot of students from school, families from the town, teacher numbers have dropped, and the businesses in town are finding it very tough. Many of the builders have given up the building trade, gone off to work in private enterprise somewhere else... A number of employers closed their doors in the retail shops in [town name]. A number of the builders and plumbers have just retired or gone to work elsewhere. Most students have to travel for work experience to Young or Cootamundra.*


Lois: *They closed the CES and you have actually had the middle management stream decimated in this town... the Dept of Natural Recourses was huge here and it's about half the size of what it was and the CES is no longer in the town and so our school population is falling. (Vic)*

One teacher saw the shrinking town as being to his advantage in that it meant fewer students to be placed in employment, but also enabled him to get to know students individually and design a more personalised program for them.

Bureaucracy

Teachers in regional New South Wales schools further reported experiencing difficulties with the amount of paperwork required by the department of Education prior to students being allowed to attend a workplace. The level of bureaucracy in New South Wales in particular was reported to be extremely limiting for initiatives such as school-based Australian apprenticeships. Many teachers reported that the amount of paperwork had increased annually with more requirements for schools, employers and parents. The time required to complete such paperwork was considered a limiting factor in many cases.

The increasing amount of paperwork required by employers was seen as problematic due to the imposition on an employer's time in order for them to complete such necessary paperwork. This paperwork included Occupational Health and Safety requirements, which will be further discussed in the following section. The lack of funding and staff provided to rural schools by state and federal departments further impacted on the importance of strong community relationships on the success of transition programs.



Furthermore, schools in New South Wales also reported that they lost funding for students who were placed in school-based Australian apprenticeships; therefore the schools were reluctant to promote such options to their students. This is particularly important for rural schools who already receive very limited funding from the Education Department.

Occupational Health and Safety

Schools reported that Occupational Health and safety was often an issue they faced due to the nature of work on farms and the 'casualness' of such workplaces. The lack of safety and protective equipment as well as the handling of heavy machinery and potentially lethal chemicals on farms by students created issues for many schools. OH&S was also considered an issue in industries such as construction, where students were required to have completed a safety induction prior to be allowed on any site. This was problematic in that finding someone to deliver the course at the appropriate time was often difficult in small rural towns. Many industries simply did not allow students to work in them due to occupational health and safety regulations. The electrical industry was commonly mentioned as not enabling students to gain work experience, while the animal husbandry industry in Victoria reportedly did not allow students to handle animals. The large amount of paperwork required for OH&S regulations was also seen as a prohibitive factor for employers.

Other Issues for Rural Towns


Environmental concerns were further affecting employment opportunities within the small towns in rural New South Wales and Victoria. In the case of one town, the State Government had designated a large portion of forestry as national park, which has a potentially damaging effect of the major timber industry of that region. In a region already stressed by the drought, this created a further issue in the employment of not only young people, but many people in the local communities.

Many of the schools participating in the case study were considered border towns in that the town was located close to the New South Wales-Victorian border. This location also created a number of issues related to sending students for work placements to towns and cities on the other side of the border. The different systems used; regulations in place; and paperwork involved on opposite sides of the border meant that students and teachers had to be prepared well in advance if students wanted to participate in work experiences in another state.

The availability of work in small towns was variable due to the seasonal nature and weather-dependence of many major industries in rural towns, for example agriculture, along with increasing transportation costs due to petrol price rises. This made strong relationships an even more important consideration for the success of programs in such towns.

Recommendations

The recommendations offered by teachers in schools in NSW and Victoria was relatively similar to that of advice offered by teachers, employers and students in Queensland. They advised employers to ensure students were occupied and adequately trained, and to keep in mind that the students were only young with limited experience. Schools were advised to be supportive – in their attitude towards alternative programs and to provide support and monitoring of students in



such programs, especially with many students leaving town to attend a workplace. Communication was seen as an essential component of successful workplace experiences, between all stakeholders – parents, teachers, students, employers and Registered Training Organisations.

For rural schools, it was especially important to have a supportive community due to the limited number of employers in small towns. Furthermore, with many towns affected significantly by the drought, and with opportunities becoming increasingly limited, having strong links with the community and employers both within the community and in nearby communities was imperative to success. Teachers identified the need for schools to cultivate strong relationships with local employers in order for the programs to succeed.

Kylie: *There is a real culture and expectation and excitement and anticipation about it all I think. Everybody knows, the kids all know because they all talk to one another about it and parents talk to one another about it because we are a small community and lots of the parents are involved in it because they have businesses. (NSW)*

Advice given to students before getting involved in such experiences was very similar to that provided by teacher in Gold Coast schools – that it is a great opportunity, but there are responsibilities involved, and that having appropriate behaviour in the workplace was extremely important. This was especially true for rural schools, if a student created a bad impression on an employer, often it would mean losing that employer for future students, something schools in these regions could not afford.

Monitoring students was seen as extremely important, especially when students were sent out of town for their workplace experience. Teachers often provided students with their out of hours contacts, so that teachers could be reached at any time of the day or night if a problems arose for the student. These details were also provided to parents of students going away.

One of the major problems experienced by teachers, especially those in New South Wales was the amount of paperwork required for such programs. This is something the Department of Education needs to consider as a major limitation for schools in getting employers interested in the program. This is especially limiting for rural schools, where there is already a limited pool of employers.

All workplace experiences were seen as valuable for students, employers and the schools involved. School-based Australian apprenticeships in particular were seen as excellent opportunities by teachers in Victoria, as well as some teachers in New South Wales. The limitations in terms of timetable flexibility, HSC requirements and funding given to schools based on students' attendance should be reviewed in New South Wales.



7c. Regional Case Study Red Rock Region in Central Queensland

This case study was conducted in Red Rock² of Central Queensland. The area was recognised for its unique approach to linking schools with industries. The region has numerous partnerships that aid the skill development and transition of young people from high school to employment and contribute to the social capital of the community. This section of the report will focus on the partnerships that have been established in this region and the benefits they bring to the community.

The Impetus for Partnerships

A number of factors precipitated the partnership model in the Red Rock region. The partners had very different needs but were aligned in their goal of ensuring that young people were provided with quality opportunities that would enable them to be “work-ready” upon completion of schooling. Until 2001 schools had worked predominantly as individual entities and were in competitive modes of operation. However, the need for a new engineering skills facility; the vision of one principal; and the commencement of a community development fund by one of the major industries in the region, led to the establishment of a number of key partnerships and strategies for maintaining these links. Spreading engineering resources over all schools in the region mean that each school could only offer a limited program. Having a facility on site in one of the larger industries in the region meant a high quality facility that provided an authentic learning experience for students. In 2006, an Information Technology Skills Centre was established and is managed by one of the other local schools. A further Skills Centre in Construction is planned once the IT centre has become operational.

The Need for Change in the Community


The partnerships were established due to a community-wide need for young people to make a successful transition into the workforce. This request came from industry, schools, parents, and the students themselves. One of the main drivers for the initial Skills Centre was the need for a facility in which students could experience authentic engineering trade experiences due to the prime nature of industry in the region. The local power station had a training facility that had lain vacant for five years and was due for demolition. However, there were many machines in the facility that were superior to those in schools and were much more representative of what students would experience once they entered the workplace. To this end, one of the principals commenced negotiations with industry to secure the facility for the use of students.

Furthermore, many members of the community recognised that developing employability skills through such centres offered considerable opportunities for enhancing both the learning and employment opportunities for school leavers. This aspect was explicitly identified predominantly by participants at the “Engineering Skills Centre³” (ESC). Perhaps due to its direct links to industry and

² Red Rock is a pseudonym for the town/region as per University Ethics guidelines

³ Name used for the Centre created for the development of engineering skills. Similar naming processes will be adopted for the other skill centres in the region.





high rates of employment of students, with the ESC loses approximately 40-50% of year 11 students to apprenticeships.

Industry Rep: *There was an identified need that industry was looking for a quality apprentice. What they were getting from school, even though they were taking them, they probably weren't up to the standard they were looking for. They didn't have the industry awareness. Their knowledge of workplace health and safety in an industry environment was lacking. Obviously, they'd never been out there before. Their work ethics – obviously you don't know what to expect, you don't know to tuck your shirt in, you don't know that you start at this time and you go looking for work and that sort of thing, so the ESC⁴ started to address those needs.*

Industry Rep: *These kids are work ready. They've proven to an employer that this is what I really want to do so it takes that element of risk out for the employers. These kids are living and breathing it for almost two years. They're getting picked up really quickly.*

Industry Rep: *Out here they're working under total industry situations. When they're finished here they will hit the ground running. They're used to wearing hard hats, they're used to wearing glasses, they're used to wearing long clothes, steel-capped boots, so that they are industry ready.*

Industry Rep: *Well, in the industry skills, we can get that through the ESC and other work programs like workplaces through SAIN. But we are also really short of IT and other business areas. We can't get kids with the office-type skills and what they need for those workplaces. The RIT Centre will go a long way for helping there.*

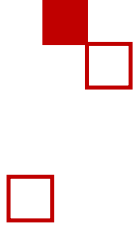
The Red Rock region is in a unique but precarious situation in terms of employment. For the employers, it can often take eight months to fill positions due to the skill shortage in the area, particularly in those skill areas needed for the operations being undertaken. In some cases, such as trade skills, these are aligned with national trends, but in others, such as IT, they are counter to national trends. Furthermore, some employers, especially in the IT industry have been unable to fill positions at all. The establishment of the two Skills Centres was seen to help alleviate this problem by providing a pool of skilled future employees for industry. Students also felt that the Skills Centres enhanced their employability, through providing a direct link to employment post-school, as well as giving them a competitive edge over other students.

In addition schools recognised that the formal context of school did not provide the authentic experiences that supported students to understand the demands of the workplace. This was not possible to achieve within the context of schooling as students remained in 'school-mode' while they were on-campus, whereas taking them off-campus created an entirely different attitude with more focus towards work.

Industry Rep: *We could do it at school and tried to but when their mates were out playing, they wanted to be with them. At RIT they are in a work environment and work to that context.*

Student: *The difference here is that we are not distracted by the other students.*

⁴ Acronym inserted to replace name of centre as used by participants in the interview. The acronym is for the pseudonym created for this report.



Student: While you're out here you're kind of like a school-based apprentice and it teaches you all different tools. Like you're actually doing jobs for a company, so it's like you're an apprentice.

There was also recognition that schools could only provide limited resources and that the Skills Centre could provide students with access to machinery that would not be possible in schools. This was seen as invaluable to students gaining real life experience. It was the combination of all these aspects within the community that led to the establishment of the Engineering skills centre.

The Need for Community Relationships

As part of their vision statement, Rio Tinto/Comalco has a strong position on its relationship with the community. In 2002, Comalco established the Community Fund through which it allocated \$1 million over the three year period. Comalco sought projects that enabled them to build strong links with the local community groups. The initial project sought support for the establishment of the Engineering Skills Centre to enable students to experience workplace learning superior to that possible in the school setting. It also facilitated all local schools gaining access to the facility. In 2005, further funding was allocated to the establishment of the RITS Centre in order to address the local skills shortages in business and Information Technology.

The corporate vision of community was evident in the interviews with all Comalco staff but had also filtered into the comments of participants at the RITS Centre (staff and students).

Industry Rep: *Our future sustainability relies on our relationships with the community. You can have all the other things right – safe work environment, profit, but if the community does not want you here, you can't stay. ... We see ourselves here in another 30 years so we have to have community support for our viability.*

Industry Rep: *Community is central to our work. We need to support the activities in the local community. They have to be ones from a group – not an individual. They have to be sustainable. We have moved beyond sponsoring the local sports team. We are after projects that put something back into the community, that have community support, that are sustainable.*


This corporate view was identified among other participants outside the Comalco group. Students realised that the Centres were funded through the Community Fund as part of their community service role

Student: *Comalco does this because they have to be seen as part of the community and doing things for the community. That is part of their business. We are just lucky that they helped build the Centre.*

Education Rep: *It is part of the Rio approach – to be seen to be giving something back to the community. Most of the people here work with Comalco in some way or another. If they don't they know someone who does or there is someone in the family who works for them. So they are a part of our lives – they need us and we need them.*



Opportunities



The needs of the community also become the opportunities. The needs of industry become the opportunities for schools. The needs of schools- such as the provision of quality, authentic learning, became an opportunity for industry. The Comalco Community Fund became a significant opportunity for schools. The amount of funding provided by Comalco is significant and did not require the paperwork required by Education Queensland. This fund enabled the schools to work with local industries to provide the quality learning facilities needed in the region. This process also enabled local industries to have pathways into their workplaces for young employees. Thus there was a very synergistic relationship between the schools and local industries.

Skills Centres

Engineering Skills Centre

The Engineering Skills Centre was established in 2002 through substantial grants from the Comalco Community Fund and central government funding through ANTA. As part of the funding agreement, the Centre had to become self-sufficient in three years and in 2006 has secured pledges from local industry in the region allowing students to complete fee-for-services projects. The Centre commenced with the students from Toolooa State High School but now has students from most of the schools in the region, and is also involved in training of young people from other schools from surrounding regions.


Established in the disused training centre at the Power Station, the Engineering Skills Centre provides hands-on experience for young people in a realistic setting where they gain general employability skills as well as the skills and dispositions for many of the engineering trades. With a success rate of 93% of students securing apprenticeships during their time or by completion of Year 12, the scheme has gained considerable recognition within local industry for its excellence in training.

Students in the senior years of schooling can attend the Centre. The general format is for them to attend the Centre for 1½ days per week and one full day in a workplace setting. These two experiences help develop the work skills and ethic needed for the workplace. Students also attend their high school for approximately two days, where it is recommended they study maths A and English Communication.

RBITS Centre for Excellence

The Red Rock Business and Information Technology Skills (RBITS) Centre opened in April 2006 and was created in conjunction with one local high School, the Community Fund provider, Education Queensland and local industry in response to a local skills shortage. The Centre is located on-site at one of the smelters in unused section of the administration building. The site is a campus of Education Queensland but part of the smelter site. Being on-site, students are required to comply with rules of both partners.

A key focus of the Centre is the development of employability skills so that students exit school with an appreciation of the demands and expectations of workplaces. While at the Centre, students undertake school studies that are part



of their senior curriculum alongside enterprise studies where they develop projects for external bodies.

The Centre commenced operations with one school but as the practices of the Centre become established, the other local schools will be able to participate in the program. The Community Fund contributed \$250K to the establishment of the RBITS Centre which was used to refurbish the management block and provide students with an environment similar to what they would experience in the workplace. Funding was also provided for computers. As with the Engineering Skills Centre, the RBITS Centre must become self-sustaining in 3 years.

Partnerships within the Red Rock Region

In this section, the nature of the partnerships will be discussed. There were many partnerships within the region which often interconnected with other partnerships. As such, the clearly identified partnerships will be discussed. These will then be considered in concert with the other partnerships.

RRASSA: Red Rock Area State School Alliance

The RRASSSA is a consortium of the three local state high schools in the region. The Alliance was a strategic move so that there was a public and united face to the State High Schools in the region. This was particularly valuable when it came time for schools to interact with industry. The Alliance is an excellent example of partnerships of schools within a region. While there is the RRASSSA group for state schools, a similar one for both state and independent schools also exists. As there is significant potential for schools to compete for scarce resources, the Alliance works actively to ensure that such competition is avoided. This is especially important in a region such as IT, where resources are limited.


Education Rep: *It was important for industry to see us as a collective and not fighting among each other. Industry would not see that favourably and would want us to get our act together so it was necessary for us to appear as a united voice.*

The three schools work as a united group and have agreed to a number of principles which include that they act as a team and no school attempts to undertake arrangements that exclude the other schools without previous consultation. The Alliance also works hard to ensure that any new principals within the region are inducted into the group and accept this way of managing local schools due to the critical nature of the alliance to the success of the programs and community relationships that currently exist.

Education Rep: *One of the things that we all do is to not go behind each other. If we start something up, we talk about it first and then we go ahead. We had it once where one of the new principals tried to do things outside the group but it did not work. It got us offside and industry offside.*

Each innovation has been the responsibility of a school but then are opened up to the others as they become established and teething problems ironed out. The Engineering Skills Centre is well established, the RBITS Centre is in its first year of operation and a building skills centre is to come on line.

The three principals meet regularly and have now included the ten deputies from across the three schools into the group. Their inclusion has two major roles – the first is to be able to operationalise the ideas of the principals:



Education Rep: *We brought the deputies on board as we – principals - can have the right ideas, but it is the deputies who have to operationalise them. With them now included, they are able to provide the feedback as to whether or not ideas are workable, the issues etc. This gives us better insights into the work.*

The second relates to the sustainability of the group. Principals will come and go in the region but if there is a core of staff, then one key staff member coming in to the region will have less potential to change the group dynamic.

Education Rep: *The deputies attend the Alliance so that there is now all staff involved. This means that all management staff are aware of what is happening. If a new principal comes on board, the deputies are able to support the new person into the role and into the region.*

The Alliance plays a strong role in presenting a coherent face to public education in the region. The strength of the group is its potential for linking with industries. Rather than being in competition with each other, the Alliance is able to present as a unit thus making it easier to liaise with the local industry representatives. The Executive Director also links in with the group so as to ensure that there is consistency in the messages that are conveyed to the wider community. The united voice is a strength of the group.

Education Rep: *The power of the group is that they work together and are able to talk as a united voice. This is unique among principals within a region.*

Education Rep: *One of the great things about the Alliance is that we are able to offer a quality education to students. Many parents opt to send their children to state schools rather than the private schools because we can do this. It is counter the trend here.*


Industry Rep: *One of the great things about being here is the united face of the school principals. I have been in other places where the principals are all fighting with each other. That makes it hard for industry to work with any of them. I have got better things to do with my time than to deal with principals trying to out vie each other.*

Having the united voice and working collaboratively had particular benefits to the overall impact on the work of schools and industries. As noted by a provider of services, the common approach of the schools made for a strong coherence of programs and hence sustainability of work experiences in the region.

Community Rep: *The three high schools are very closely linked. They do work very well together, which makes my job very easy because I don't have people trying to compete, even though there will still be competition there. They do try to work in, I mean they've even restructured their lessons so that they all have the same breaks to make things easier for trying to organise things when kids have got to leave school that they're all going to things at the same time. So, you know, it's very, very good.*

Links between Industry and Schools

The links between the two sectors are very strong and tangible. The links were in many forms and were well recognised and articulated across all the stakeholders.



Community Rep: *When I go and talk to other {name removed} at different conferences and things, it's very easy to see that Red Rock is very different to a lot of other places. Because we a huge industry base, there are an extra lot of places for kids to start work. But we also have the community commitment here in Red Rock is very strong, so its very easy for schools to link with industries. Certainly through structured way for the workplace learning but there are other ways as well. Industry comes into schools to do mock interviews, to do all sorts of things and they're more than willing to help.*

Industries were tied to many of the projects across the region and made significant commitments within their organisations to such projects. In one instance, the CEO was involved in presentations with a school, with representatives of both travelling to Brisbane together. This was seen as a huge commitment on the part of the industry, and appreciated by the school. It is commitments such as these that enhance the community capital that exists in Red Rock.

Many industries were keen for their employees to see their role in the company as being a company representative in the community. This may not have been directly related to employment but also about the fields in which companies excelled and/or undertook work. Staff were frequently encouraged to visit schools and other community organisations to promote the industry, present information about their positions and liaise in general with the community.

Industry also sought the input from schools on high level management committees. This sent a strong message to participants of the value of education within industry.

School Rep: *When they were setting up the Management committee, they called for expressions of interest. The other two community members are high profile business people. They have also got an education person on board. This shows their commitment to schools and the value they place on our perspectives.*


The long-term sustainability of Centre relies on the capacity to seek community support. In 2006, many large and medium sized companies pledged \$20K each for projects to ensure the on-going programs within the Skill Centre. The pledges are for work to be undertaken by the students so as to enable a viable program but also the valid work practices of enterprise work to be continued. Within the Skills Centre, industries also donate machinery, consumables and time.

Industry Rep: *Sometimes I come in and there is a donation from one of the local companies, sometimes they are small things, other times its substantial equipment. And its not just [the larger companies], if we need people to come out and have a chat to the kids in regards to apprentice applications, about what's expected, what they should be doing, where their focuses should lie, they'll come out and talk to them. Drug and alcohol testing, we had one of the guys from [company name] come out and do that for us. He comes out every year, and speaks to the Grade 11s and 12s and the electrical kids. So they'll come out to the kids come and speak to the kids.*

The Skill Centre also relies significantly on local industries to support work placements of students. As there is a requirement that students undertake one day a week in the workplace, the support from local industry is vital for the program. It is this level of industry support for the programs that enables them to continue.



SAIN: Schools and Industry Network



SAIN is an organisation that takes responsibility for work placement of students. All local schools support the organisation for the placements. All of the principals (in all the schools – state, Catholic and independent) serve on the SAIN committee. SAIN placed approximately 1500 students in work experiences in 2006. The role of SAIN is comprehensive in the Red Rock region, where the organisation takes responsibility for all work placements in the region – from work experience through to structured learning.

The community is supportive of the organisation and recognises that while they could organised many of the placements themselves, to do this would mean all schools would start to organise placements themselves, and SAIN would become defunct. Thus the community feels responsibility to support other enterprises within the community.

Community Fund

The Community Fund was established in 2002 and is managed by a representative board of three company staff and three community representatives. The money allocated by the parent company has leveraged a further \$4million from other sources. Bids for the funds are received and reviewed by the Committee according to nominated criteria. Such criteria require that the bids are from partnering teams and not from individuals; and that they are located within and generated by the local community.


As part of its corporate identity, the parent company has a commitment to the local community in which it is located. The Community Fund is not limited to the direct interests of the company but appears to focus on projects that have a community benefit. These have included volunteering programs, environmental programs, women in business, crisis accommodation for men; employment and training programs outside the parameters/interests of the parent company; supporting fruit growers; after school sports program; and midwifery scholarships.

Contained Industries

A unique feature of the region is the strong presence of one major industry. This company employs approximately 20% of the population directly but significantly more if indirect measures were adopted. This high profile in the community and strong representation in five of the key industries in the region is an enabling feature of the community. For schools, this meant that they are able to access one key employer.

Community

As a contained region, there is a strong sense of community. The separation of industry, school and the local community is not possible. Members of the community meet the staff from other sectors in a range of local settings – shopping, sport, and functions. This tight knit feature of the community creates a sense of responsibility of each community member for the other, and is a plausible explanation for the success of the community partnerships and programs developed in the region.



Industry Rep: *Many of the employees here have their children in the local schools so if there is something happening, we hear about it – good and bad.*

School Rep: *We have [site manager's] kids at our school so we are kept on our toes.*

As a tight community, there was a strong sense of responsibility and accountability to the community. As the RBITS Centre began its operations, it needed to undertake enterprise projects. However, as there are many small businesses in the region undertaking similar work, the management committee of the Centre were concerned that such businesses not see the work of the students as a threat to their viability. The Centre Coordinator felt it important to visit all local businesses to explain what the Skills Centre was doing in order to ensure businesses remained on side and supportive of the program. There was also a sense of reciprocity, where the skills centre looks after IT's industry and employment needs first, despite the opportunities available in other regions.

Being part of the community was also seen to help in building the links between the various participants. The strong community knowledge and reputation within the community was certainly an advantage in building the links between the various organisations.


Community Rep: *I'm extremely lucky in the sense that I'm locally born. For 45 years I've lived in this town, a lot of people know me. I know that when I took over from my predecessor, he'd tried to bring some certain employers on board and you know, they didn't want to do it. When I took the job over from him, he would ask, "How did you get that I've been trying to do that for years?" But because they know me, and maybe because my selling and my personality was able to win that, and I am very successful here. There's no doubt about it. I mean I don't know that I would have been as successful if I moved, say I had to move to Brisbane or Maryborough. I imagine the job would be much more difficult.*

As this participant acknowledges quite specifically, having such strong community links is a key factor in making the partnerships in this region work.

While the tight community links that were noted in this report are very strong, it was also noted that this was not always the case. In the interview with a leader in the community, it was seen that the catalyst for such strong community links came through the opportunity afforded by a District Plan for the Youth in the area. The whole of community approach involved a range of key stakeholders associated with the youth in the region including, social support networks, network members including community development officer, Centrelink, youth justice, as well as representatives from small, medium and large employers, along with job network providers. This project enabled key stakeholders to come together and create community links in order to develop effective pathways for youth within the community.

Learning Opportunities

The two Centres provide considerable learning opportunities for the student, albeit quite different in their nature and form. The Engineering Skills Centre is based on practical skills for workplace-bound students, whereas the RBITS Centre appears, at this stage, to be offering more academically-orientated students practical experiences in a simulated work environment. Participation in the off-site learning Centres enabled students to experience the workplace and the demands of the



workplace, particularly in relation to work ethic and workplace settings. However, learning is not contained to the students. School staff and industry representatives reported gaining considerable insights into the life worlds of their counterparts.

The restructuring of programs on-site have required the students to develop self-sufficiency. As such, they have had to embark on realistic projects dealing with real demands and real people. People from the community provide tasks – such as the design of membership cards or the construction of tables for industry sites. These activities have been highly educational for the students in terms of learning the skills for the tasks but also other life skills. They also provide students with links to the community, thereby enhancing their social capital. Similarly, students also recognised the value in the real tasks in providing a range of skills:

The links with industry have provided schools with opportunities to understand current workplace demands and practices. Using this learning, programs are possible that have this learning as a core activity.

Reshaping School Curriculum to Fit Industry

While the partnerships have focused significantly on present developments, there are new developments emerging in relation to curriculum. Schools have recognised that current subject offerings may not be the best for the preparation of young people for work, particularly in the electrical areas. In consultation with industry, the principals and teachers have been working to identify the knowledge and skills required for these areas. Through this process, a new subject will be developed that meets the demands of the trade and provide a strong pathway into the industry.

Currently, the content of much of the curriculum in mathematics, science and physics is not necessary for the electrical trades. Having a collapsed subject that more directly meets industry requirements seems to offer considerable potential for all stakeholders.

Within this context, the schools have formed a partnership with industry to develop the new syllabus that has direct relevance for the electrical trades. This development will demand involvement of school administrators, Heads of Departments and teachers.



Conclusions

From the data collected in this case study, it demonstrates that there are very unique partnerships in the Red Rock region that support pathways from school to the world of work. Some of these partnerships were evident in some of the other regional case studies, they tended to be more sporadic. In the case of Red Rock, what was clearly observable was the strong social capital in the region. That is, there were strong links between industry and schools so one could argue that there was strong bridging capital where two very different types of organisations had sought to develop links between the organisations to enable productive relationships. Similarly there was

strongly bonding capital evident in the Alliance formed by the principals. In times where competition between schools is increasing, the Alliance formed by the principals enabled them to negotiate more productively with the local companies. This was a strategic move in that there was a united voice working among both industry and schools, thus enabling better communication of needs and possibilities.

While many of the partnerships noted in this case are by design linked to school-to-work relationships, there is an emerging pathway into University and tertiary sectors being provided through the RBITS Centre. This pathway is focused on the IT and Business sectors but provides another pathway for students into work. In many cases, this is a delayed entrance into work and yet to be tested in terms of its success in bringing graduates back into the local work communities.

Unlike any of the other regions studied in this project, the strength of the social capital in this region is commendable. While some of the other regions in the rural case study may have similar features in terms of geographic location, Red Rock presented with unique features. The overwhelming sense gained from this study was the strong links between community, schools and industries. Red Rock is in a unique position in terms of being a contained region with a high industry base. This helps to maintain a sense of opportunity in the region – for young people, families, industries, businesses and schools. Through the strong networks, there is a very palpable sense of commitment to the region and the people. Industry philosophy of sustainability and their sense of how important community is to that sustainability has created opportunities for stakeholders to engage in activities sponsored through community funds from those industries. These funds enable projects that would not otherwise be possible. In so doing, a stronger sense of community is fostered and builds greater capital within the region.





8. Phase Three: Economic Analysis

This final phase of the project sought to identify the direct and indirect costs and benefits to industry. A consultant was employed for this aspect of the project. It was found that companies did not keep accurate records of costings against SBAAAs.

Industry Type	Industry Size
Food industry - bakery	Small (16)
Construction	Large (40)
Automotive	Sales and service – large 180 Automotive service- large 145
Electrical	Large (30)
Panel Beating	Medium (20)
Hairdressing	2 small (10, 10)
Cabinet making	Small (6)
Marine Industry	Large (>1200)
Hospitality	Large (350)
IT	Small (2)
Joinery, shop fitting	Medium (22)
Automotive Mechanic	Small (3)
Steel manufacture and retail	Large (330)

Table 8.1: Sites for Economic Analysis

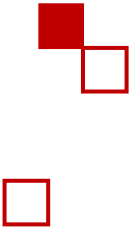
Direct Benefits

Direct economic benefits to employers are defined by the Australian Government's Australian Apprenticeships Incentive program.

Incentive Payment	Depending on the level of training being offered, an employer is able to qualify for a payment of \$1250 for Cert 2 or \$1500 for Cert 3 or 4. This is paid at the commencement of the SBAA.
Retention	\$750 is payable to employers who retain students who have obtained a Cert 3 or 4 after he/she has completed Year 12

Table 8.2 Direct Economic Benefits (provided by external consultant)





All employers taking on a SBAA received a cash payment. These varied in remuneration depending on the level of qualification. It ranges between \$2000 and \$2500

Indirect benefits

The indirect economic benefits of the SBAA's could not be quantified but encompassed a range of areas. These were greater, smaller or non-existent depending on the industry and size. These indirect benefits were cited to include:

- Increased productivity
- Not having to advertise/recruit – cost for recruitment can be \$2000
- Staff retention – staff stayed on, low turnover implied low costs and improved productivity
- Shorter training
- Lower turnover of staff.

Longer Term Benefits

Employers noted that economic benefits often did not occur in the first years of the training but in subsequent years. Once the trainee/apprentice had completed the introduction to the trade/vocation, productivity was enhanced so that while there may be costs in the first part of the apprenticeship, this was reversed in subsequent years. As such, a longer time frame is needed when considering the costs/benefits of the programs.

Direct Costs

Depending on the ways in which companies organised their work placements, very different direct costs were incurred. There did not appear to be any trends across sites, size or industries.

Salaries

Under new WorkChoice legislation, school-based employees are guaranteed minimum wages (Australian Government, 2007).

Wages	Per hour	Per annum
Upper	7.30	\$2628
Median	6.60	2375
Lower	5.23	1883

Table 8.3: Direct costs – wages (Provided by external consultant)




Training

Depending on the organisation, training was a direct cost. In smaller companies, the use of RTOs was commonplace. In contrast, many of the larger organisations had developed on-site training facilities and provided their own on-site training. These companies were RTOs themselves – in some cases providing training for their employees only whereas in other cases, they offered training to other companies.

Indirect costs

Employees noted a range of indirect costs which varied from site to site, industry to industry. There was no notable pattern across industries. Employers were not able to impute a direct monetary value to these cost-items but recognised that they were costs.

Indirect costs included:

- Wastage caused through mistakes
- Extra supervision
- Uniforms – this varied across the sites – in some cases this was provided by the employer, in other sites it was subsidised and in other sites it was a full cost to the employee.
- Training facilities and upkeep of same
- Information evenings for students and families
- Liaising with schools
- Inductions and training

Conclusion

While it was not possible to calculate direct and indirect costs/benefits for SBAAAs, it was clear from the data collected that where SBAAAs were integral to the long-term planning and staffing for a company, there were benefits to the organisation. Where companies undertook SBAAAs to supplement income generation, this was not a viable option for the company or the employee. As such, SBAA need to be a part of the longer-term sustainability of a company.

Economic Benefits for Smaller Companies

Smaller companies saw the SBAAAs as a way of ensuring the right candidates are selected for apprenticeships. By carefully selecting when a young person would be taken up in the organisation, what days he/she would work and how the training was conducted, smaller enterprises were able to incorporate the employee into their economic sustainability. For example, in hairdressing, the SBAA was taken up after the Christmas/New Year slump, employed later in the week when the salons were busy, and offered extra hours to work on Saturdays which traditionally are busy days. Employing the SBAA under these conditions offered maximum return for the business while providing the employee with an exciting experience in a busy salon.

Where smaller companies were taking on SBAAAs to enhance their income generation through the provision of incentives and cheaper labour, these arrangements were not contributing to the economic well being of the company, or to the employee. It was reported that some companies saw the SBAA as a way to

gain access to extra money and cheap labour. However, this short-term vision fails to account for the costs associated with the candidature as well as the immediate labour intensive training at the start of the traineeship and the longer-term benefits of having a well-trained employee.

Economic Benefits for Larger Companies

The larger scale of the big companies allowed for economies of scale. While start up costs associated with parent information evenings, on-site training facilities and so on were high, these costs were off set by the considerable gains for companies. For one large company, their recruitment of apprentices is solely through SBAs. The company has established life pathways for employees so that they transition from SBAs to full apprenticeships to full employment. In many cases, full employment transitions into tertiary education (degrees) and result in new employment opportunities within the company. The loyalty that this process fosters ensures a viable and vibrant workforce which is highly competitive. Ensuring staff sees themselves as part of the company helps to guarantee a stable workforce.





9. Pathways as Capital Building Enterprises

Forms of Capital Building

Participation in the SBAA program offered considerable benefits to the various stakeholders. Through the programs, students were able to develop new or different dispositions towards work, schools and the wider society. We have framed this as cultural capital by drawing on Bourdieu's notion of dispositions. Through the practices of the SBAA's, the participants were able to build new dispositions that were valued within the field – whether education or work – and thus be seen more favourably by others as well as themselves.

Cultural Capital – Building dispositions

From the interviews, it became clear that the SBNAs created opportunities for young people to develop particular dispositions that were not evident prior to commencing the traineeship. The dispositions were ones that were valued in the fields of education and/or work and would work to position the participants more favorably by those with control in the field.

As identified in the literature, many young people disengage with schooling due to the lack of relevance or interest. This has consequences for their progression through school and into work. Habits and dispositions valued in school and work can be exchanged for other goods – success in school through higher grades or employment within a workplace.

Through many of the interviews, dispositions such as responsibility, time management, confidence and communication were noted. As can be seen in the responses show these dispositions being made possible through participation.

Teacher: *It teaches them responsibility. It also teaches them, well basically it teaches them to be more committed to what they are doing and to organise themselves a lot better. We find that in some ways their studies improve because they're getting the training side of it, and they've got to be regimented with their training to get their modules completed. (Keebra Park)*

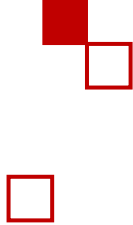
Teacher: *They tend to improve their communication skills and their time management skills. Usually it takes a little while but usually it improves. Some of the students have been wasting their time here at school, but they start to learn the relevance of what they are learning at school. (Robina)*

Student: *I am much more confident at school. I used to be very timid about asking questions, and now it's "so what do you mean by that?"*

Student: *It has helped with my communication skills, being able to talk to people, being able to understand what they need. It has made me more confident.*

Work ethic, as noted in the final comment below by an employer was common across all stakeholders and is illustrated by this example.

Employer: *We are training somebody to our ways, giving them a good work ethic which we think we have good work ethics here. We take them from babies to five-year old children so they [SBNAs] realise the developmental stages [of babies] and things like that. They are really*



learning about the job. It's a very hard field, the study is not easy and we get low wages, and they realise that from the start. (little angels)

As these comments indicate, the dispositions that were developed through participation in the SBNAs were ones which auger well with the fields – education and work – where there were multiple benefits for all stakeholders in both contexts.

To understand how such dispositions were developed, insights into the practices of the workplace that were instrumental in the students' growth were evident in some comments offered by participants. As can be seen in the comments below, employers reported that having young people working in adult contexts where they were treated as worthy individuals was a key process in such developments.

Employer: *When you're at school you're with other students and you're like a flock of sheep really. You're not an individual and we treat them like they are individuals. We show them some interest and initiative in them and they like it so much. (Kitchen cabinet-making)*

Teacher: *I think the social aspect of work is a big one –they sort of learn a lot of maturity. We find that kids that are involved in traineeships, are much more focused [in school]. They seem to be a little bit more mature because they working not with peers but people older than them which tends to turn their thoughts around. (Southport)*

While there is a sense that students build particular dispositions that are valued in both the workplace and in school, the SBNAs allow the development of those dispositions that are sought by the field. In these cases, the respondents recognised the capital building of the industries and the payoff to the industries. Stakeholders recognised that by having young people in their workplaces, they were able to build the dispositions that they valued and thus create a more valuable worker.

Teacher: *Companies benefit from the programs as having a student there than they can mould into the type of person they want working in their workplace. (Keebra)*


Teacher: *In the workplace, it gives the employer the opportunity to take somebody raw and develop them and train them the way they would like to have them trained. (Merrimac)*

Employer: *We can mould them to the way we want them so that there are no bad habits. The habits we are teaching them are the ones we want them to have.*

In considering the building of attributes of cultural capital that are valued by the field, students, teachers and industry representatives articulated dispositions that were valued and made possible through the participation in the SBNA programs. While some dispositions were generic, others were more related to particular industries and could be seen to be more skills-orientated. For this reason, we have created a new form of capital that aligns with cultural capital in that these are dispositions very clearly related to particular sites. In the following section we discuss such attributes.

Intellectual Capital

Within the framing adopted in this paper, intellectual capital is often seen as the capital developed within formal schooling. However, within the field of work,



particular sorts of knowledge are valued. These may be different from that developed within the school context. However, the intellect of the field of work demands that participants have forms of knowledge and knowing that are valued within that field. These may often be different from that which is constructed within schools. One only has to consider the teaching of measurement in schools where the practice reinforces the use of centimetres as the unit of measure. However, within the field of work, the unit of measure is millimetres. As such, there is a clear differentiation between what is valued in one field to another. Thus, the intellectual capital sought in the field of work may be quite different from the intellectual capital taught in schools. In this section, comments are identified that illustrate how the SBNAs create opportunities for young people to develop industry-relevant skills, knowledges and dispositions. In many industries, students were able to develop particular skills that were desired by those sites. In the case below, the student was able to develop the skills needed for printing. In this case, the employer used many of the tools of the printing industry so that the student was able to experience and learn a broad range of printing skills. For this student, the experience provided a rich repertoire of experiences that would position him well for entry into many other printing sites.


Employer: *We do everything here – Apple Mac, IBM, we do all the printing, all the plates, we do film, we do everything that a lot of other printing houses don't do. We do everything in house. They learn they whole business, not just graphic art on an apple Mac. They learn how to do everything.* (Printing)

As this employer indicates, the experiences possible within this printing site built substantial intellectual capital for the young employee. These forms of knowing would enable him to exchange such skills and knowledge for employment options in other sites should he wish to move to another company. Students were astute in recognising the ways in which the experiences built their industry-relevant capital. As Hargreaves (2001) notes, the capital gained in one field has greater strength when it is transferable between contexts. He argues very strongly for the transferability of knowledge and skills as a marker for intellectual capital. In the example below, the experiences of the student in the one hotel resort were recognised as exchangeable, that is, the skills made her employable for other hotels. In this case, the experience of working in the hotel industry created the opportunities to 'know what it's like to be in a resort'. These are skills and knowledges that would not be possible in school-settings.

Student: I think it is good because you get to know what it's like to be in a resort and how it work. I reckon you have a better chance of getting a job in places if you have had like experience. (Suzanne)

Many of the participants recognised the incongruence between school and work. In this process, they articulated the different forms of knowledge and knowing that were required in the workplace that could not be gained in the formal school setting and yet it was these skills that were valued by the workplace. The learning of skills and ways of working were seen as valuable attributes to have when it came to seeking work beyond school.

Student: *While you are at school [doing the SBNA] you're learning things like if you want to follow a business career or if you're learning to manage thing how to run a business, you're learning about people, how they feel. You're learning leadership skills, how to lead them. That's good. It's a really good start.* (Salem)



Student: *It is getting the work experience. Like in the office was good, like getting all the computer, the filling and that kind of experience. Otherwise, just working with people, like organising events, like I help with sports day and we have a football carnival here that I help with, do the drinks and stuff. (Kerryn)*

Student: *It's good, it's a lot of hands-on work. And you can say you've been employed by someone and get a certificate as well. It's all good. (Robert)*

As the comments below indicate, often employers want to develop the skills and habits that they value in the workplace. As the first sentence indicates, the employer inducts them into the patterns of work valued within the industry. This is extended even further as they move through their subsequent training and of considerable value to the company upon completion of their full qualification.

Employer: *We train them the way we want them to be. Often, once they have got through the apprenticeship to the third or fourth year we sent them off to Mitsubishi training or Suzuki or Subaru training so they are also trained by the manufacturers themselves. They've got more product knowledge so if they stick with us, that is a huge benefit for us. (Motor mechanic)*

Employer: *We have invested almost 400 hours of training into these guys and if they come out the other end you know, hireable, then we've got trained staff that are utility staff. I can use them in any department because they have been all over the place. They are well-rounded employees and that is great for us. (Hotel)*


The experiences that build the cultural and intellectual capital are internal and not formally recognised. However, as will be discussed in the next section, other aspects of the SBNA enabled students to gain formal recognition for the skills and knowledge they acquired through their participation in the SBNA. This formal recognition came in a number of guises.

Institutional Capital: Gaining Relevant Accreditation

In this section, we draw on comments that highlight the importance of formal qualifications as a consequence of participating in the SBNA. There appeared to be two main forms which students engaged with within the SBNA. While there is a sense that the SBNA are for those students who are not engaging in formal schooling and seeking to gain employment in vocationally-orientated careers; for others who were seeking academic pathways, the SBNA offered an alternate trajectory.

Academically-Orientated Trajectories

Traditionally students who are seeking entrance to university avoid vocational programs, seeing them as inferior to academic programs. With the SBNA as they are structured within the Queensland system, students are able to complete the five subjects needed for a tertiary entrance score and use the sixth subject as a SBNA. For these students, the option of taking a vocational subject added to their repertoire of skills. This was found to be particularly common among students who were seeking to enrol in hotel management and/or business management programs.



Student: *The course is great for me as I get hands-on experience in the hotel which will help me when I go to Uni to do hotel management. I will know about the industry and that helps. I will also be able to get a job in the industry while I am at uni as I have experience. That will help me more with my studies while I am in uni coz I'll be able to link what I am learning at uni with what I do when I am at work. I am sure that that will help me get a good job at the end of my studies.*

Vocationally-Orientated Trajectories

As noted in the opening sections of this paper, the increasing demand for young people to remain in school has meant that the curriculum is often irrelevant to them. At this point in time, the Australian employment market is strong and employment high. This has resulted in a significant drop in student demand for university places. This suggests that it is even more pertinent to offer programs that cater for the needs of students and the market. To re-engage and/or retain young people in schooling, courses that cater to their needs and interests are desperately called for. The provision of SBNAs allows students seeking a vocational career to undertake senior studies, gain formal recognition of successful senior completion and to have a further qualification – that is, industry-relevant documents. These supplement and extend their senior certificate. By having dual certificates, graduates of the vocational programs can be seen to have institutional capital added to their graduation qualifications.

Teacher: *They're learning real skills in a real work environment. They are also able to gain their senior certificate at the same time. They also gain a nationally recognised certificate. (Nerang)*

Employer: *When she finished Year 12 she was also a qualified dental assistant. So she became immediately employable. (Dental)*


Student: *When I finish I get a builder certificate and am fully qualified at the end of it, when I finish [Year 12]. (Ben)*

Student: *I think you've got better job opportunities if you get a certificate or something. I think I could do retail. You've got a lot a better job opportunities in different workplaces. (Dylan)*

The dental technician here identifies that the SBNA provided considerable institutional capital for the student. In this case, the qualification (ie dental assistant) was a certification made possible through the participation in the program and increased the student's employability upon completion of year 12. This form of capital could be exchanged for other goods – in this case, immediate employment as a dental assistant, and the concomitant salary that goes with the appointment. Not only did the certificate provide a formal recognition of their capital but stakeholders saw the certification being supplemented by the experiences in ways not possible in the formal school context.

Employer: *Before they finish Year 12 they've got a Certificate III in hospitality which is a pretty good qualification and is nationally recognised. So the training they get, the hands-on training, is great training. It's not just a classroom situation; most of the training is actually hands on. (Hospitality)*

In some cases, it was noted that the institutional capital that students gained upon completion of the SBNA could be exchanged for other goods. In the cases below, these included advanced entry into other programs (including university or TAFE)



Employer: *I had a couple of Year 11 girls last year who managed to get compensation so they didn't have to do Year 12 and they've gone straight on to uni to get a diploma in Hotel Management. We have had others who have moved to other hotels. We are a big chain which gives us a bit more leeway. We get people that if they get to a point where they can't go any further here, there's always the opportunity for them go sideways to another hotel. It's a great experience being a big hotel.* (Hotel)

Student: *Well actually I have got direct entry into TAFE next year. I am doing a double diploma of hospitality and even management and that will go into a Bachelor of Hotel Management at Griffith* (Blake)

In other cases, the direct link to economic capital is overt and immediate. In the comment below, the student was pleased to have immediate economic gains from participating in the program. As other students also noted, this was a very pleasant aspect of their participation in the programs.

Student: *It's great being in these programs because we get paid to go to school. My friends are jealous that I go to work in school time and they stay home and study. I get paid to go to my work, they don't.*

While the immediate gains in money was an incentive for participation, other students commented on the increased status they gained among their peers while participating in their programs. In some cases, this was directly related to their income, but in most cases, it was that they were gainfully employed and working in 'real' jobs.


Economic Capital

For Bourdieu, economic capital relates to the accumulation of money. In the context of the SBNAs, there was evidence to suggest that participation in the program was productive for young people in that they were able to gain access to money as part of their programs. For students, this was a bonus in that they often saw the payment as a reward for study. In other work we have undertaken, the payment given to school-based work programs was seen with envy by their peers in schools. For those students who were undertaking academic streams of study, they were sceptical of the payment of their peers, often arguing that it was unfair that others were paid to work while they perceived themselves as working harder without payment, or having to work after school hours to receive remuneration. Within the school context, those receiving payment for their work within school hours were often seen as having greater status than their non-paid peers.

Forms of economic capital identified in this project came in a number of forms. At the simplest level, this was where students gained payment for the work they undertook during school hours. In the comment below, the student identifies the remuneration as an incentive for participating in the program. However, he also identifies other bonuses for such participation.

Student: *You earn a bit of money on the side, you get a year taken off your apprenticeship and you get your Year 12 certificate which I want for later on.*

However, there were more complex versions of economic capital. In the comment above, the fact that time is taken off the apprenticeship means that the students gain higher salaries earlier in their apprenticeship and complete their qualification earlier, thus moving on to full tradesman salary earlier than peers who have not undertaken school-based work. This later point is evident in the comments below



where the students recognise that the SBNA provides a pathway to employment immediately beyond school and then beyond the completion of the trade.

Student: *It is a massive kick start really because by the time I get out of school, I walk into a full-time job, getting paid five days a week and overtime if I want it. It is an assurance for yourself because you know that after you've finished Year 12 you have a job. And after you finish your apprenticeship you've still got a job, like you don't have to go. Like you finish your apprenticeship, you don't have to stress about looking for a job. You walk straight into one, you stay here at Riv and they are not looking to kick you out.*

Student: *You know what you are going to do at the end of Year 12. You've got your future covered. You're going to learn, you're going to be a head start on everyone else. Here you can be out earning money from a younger age. Others might earn more money in the long run, but they have got 4 years of uni. I like how everything is done at Riviera, on site. You don't have to come back and go out.*

In this final comment, the student also recognises that while his academically bound peers may earn more money later in their lives, the apprentice has had four years of earning and no overheads (university fees) that will need to be paid.

Less obvious is the recognition that the SBNA adds particular forms of industry capital to the apprentice/trainee which enables them to command a higher salary. Further, the student also articulates the exchange of intellectual capital for economic capital when she argues that those students who undertake an SBNA will have experience that will make them more marketable than peers without such experience. Indirectly, these experiences can be traded for employment opportunities less likely to be available to their non-SBNA peers who lack the workplace experiences and knowledge:

Student: *I suppose you get paid more having had that experience. You'll find it easier to get jobs. People want people to have experience and it is hard to accept just anybody that's just come out of school.*

While the economic benefits of the SBNAs are obvious to students, employers also recognised that there were economic benefits to companies. By training staff into positions within the company, time and money were not being spent on recruitment processes, thus generating economic advantages for the company.

Employer: *Obviously we train them up and if you know there is a position, or if we know there is going to be a position, we're able to fill that position with that school-based trainee. That makes it a lot easier than going out and getting somebody and them up and so on. We also get incentives for them as well.*

The closing remark by this employer also highlights the direct benefits to the company. In this case, he identifies the direct economic gains to the company through the incentives offered to industries for participating in the program. However, it should be noted that throughout the interviews, both teachers and employers indicated that the money offered through the incentives did not cover the actual costs of the program.



Social Capital



Social capital is a term that is gaining considerable credence within the fields of education and policy. However, it has a number of interpretations. From a Bourdieuan perspective it is more individualistically framed and refers to the social connections to which a person may have access.

Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that can accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Pierre Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.119).

Furthermore, the ways in which social capital gains its value is through the connections to which the participant is connected.

The volume of social capital possessed by an individual agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he [sic] can effectively mobilise and on the volume of capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected (P. Bourdieu, 1983, p.248-249).

In contrast to this view of social capital which Kilpatrick et al see as a “resource use for the benefit of those individuals who have access to it” (Kilpatrick, Field, & Falk, 2003, p.420), they argue for a more communitarian view, these authors propose an alternative view, drawing on the work of Coleman (1988) where social capital is seen as the potential of individuals to work collectively to advance their common interests. Within these framings of social capital, issues of trust and reciprocity between participants are seen as key aspects of the concept (Hargreaves, 2001).


In considering the individualistic position offered by Bourdieu, it was clear from the data that participation in the SBNA enhanced the social capital of the participants. For many of the young employees, the networks to which they were exposed offered enhanced chances of employment. The two comments below indicate how students came to be better positioned within networks that were more enabling from being involved in the SBNA program:

Student: *It [SBNA] provides you with job offers after school, especially with Seaworld. They're recognised as a great training facility so that has given me lots of options. I've actually been offered a night shift at the Marriott for \$20.50 for 5 hours. So, that's a good option.*

Student: *I was speaking to this guy the other night at my work and he works on ocean liners doing all navigation. He aid I should come and work for them on the boat. He goes, you'd get a job real easy because they want younger people. He said they want a lot of people working the retail shop because he knew I worked at Brothers Neilson [surf shop]. I said I am doing hospitality, and got a Certificate 2 in Hotel Management, and he's like “really, cause you'd easily get a job”. (Anna 2)*

Similarly, the comments below indicate how the connections that the students had in industry supported their employment options. In both cases, the students articulate how networks enable access to information and/or connections through these contacts:

Student: *Both my mum and sister work at Versace so they sort of need people at the end of Year 12. I'm going to put in my CV in there and hopefully end up somewhere in the hotel industry.*



Student: *I'm planning to work here full time for 6 months [when I finish school], or at least in hospitality. Depends on if I get a job offer somewhere else, like the Marriott. I am looking to travel overseas. I've got some friends that have connections in 5-star hotel in China. I'm hoping he can pull some strings because I would like to get a bit of cross cultural experience and stuff so, you know, you get a bit of overseas work behind me as well.*

While these comments have highlighted the Bourdieuan notion of social capital as it applies to the individual, there were comments that aligned within the communitarian view of social capital. In these cases, participants highlighted the ways in which the programs enabled better networks and sharing of knowledge and resources between schools and industries. As Hargreaves (2001) noted in his communitarian view of social capital, that when there is strong social capital and intellectual capital, there is potential for knowledge transfer. As there is often a gap between school knowledge and vocational knowledge, the SBNA program has potential for students to learn and apply knowledge learned in one context to the other context.

In the comment below, the teacher further extends this notion of transferability between the two contexts so that the network between school and industry offers benefits to both contexts. There were many comments of this form where teachers and students indicated quite strongly that participation in the SBNAs had been enabling for the students in that they felt valued in the workplace, this built their self-confidence in schools, they could see the relevance of what they were learning in school (social and academic); and that the knowledge that they built in both contexts was transferable to the other.

Teacher: *We are getting students out of classrooms that don't want to be there, that academically struggle or the curriculum is not relevant or interesting for them. They are more engaged to come to school. They're out of school one day a week, they come to school, they can see where its taking them and it also helps us as well as them to see the relevance of school. (Miami)*

Other teachers commented more specifically about their own learning about industry and reported that participation in the SBNA program had enabled them to establish networks in industries that would not have otherwise been possible.



Conclusion



Programs which support the transition from school to work offer considerable potential for capital adding. Using a model that documents the forms of capital adding that are possible through transition programs enables a rich analysis of the multiple ways in which such programs facilitate a smoother transition into work. As evident in the comment below, the capital that can be added through the SBNA program can vary from changing the individual dispositions of the student (cultural capital); providing institutional capital (certificates); growing the intellectual capital (workplace learning) and developing their social capital (networks).

Student: *You've got certificates to fall back on, you're getting work experience and you're getting paid for it. I have got many benefits from [the SBNA] that you won't find everywhere. Like I have made really good friends where I work, I feel really comfortable working here. I have built up confidence that I did not have when I started. (Steven)*

Using a model that considers the learning through participation in such programs as building capital enables the opportunity to consider the multi-faceted learning made possible through engaging in quality programs. As this aspect of the research has illustrated, the program offers considerable benefits to students – benefits that would not be possible through a school-only program. The exposure and mentoring made possible through the transition program has been enabling for all participants, but particularly for the young people.


Where the data have been used to highlight the ways in which the SBNA program built various forms of capital among the participants, what was not evident in the data was the capacity for building community social capital. Clearly the individual stakeholders have gained from participating in these programs. Students have gained considerably in terms of enhanced employability through their increased capital; schools have gained in terms of being able to offer programs for students who would otherwise disengage with schools and employers have gained in their capacity to train young, potential employees to their needs and in so doing have a pool of potential employees. What is clear from the data is the need for greater capacity to build social capital as outlined by Hargreaves (2001) and Kilpatrick et al (2003) where there is a stronger synergy between schools and industries. The reciprocity between the two fields is developing but the lower status of vocationally-orientated programs in schools means that within the field of education, such programs do not have the institutional capital that enables them to compete with the academically-orientated programs. The data presented in this paper, and evident throughout the larger project, suggests that the social-capital building capacity of the program is unilateral and favours industry learning. There is little evidence to suggest that schools are learning and incorporating industry-based knowledge into school programs. There appears to be little reciprocity in terms of learning. While there is considerable potential for mutualistic learning, the transfer of learning that was suggested by Hargreaves (2001) does not emerge in the data from this project. As such, it would be a useful extension of transition projects such as this that the community aspects of social capital as advocated by Coleman take a stronger focus in future projects.



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